

Message #9**Jeremiah 5:1-31**

One thing is clear from Jeremiah—if you are God’s people, you do not want to make God mad. Most people have a concept of God that believes He is so loving and gracious to His own people that He would never get mad and never do bad things, especially to His own family. The idea of God invented by many is that God is just a tolerant and loving God and His people don’t need to worry about anything. It doesn’t matter what they do or how they act. God is always their friend. So if they plunge deep into sin, God still loves them and it really doesn’t matter.

Well that concept of God does not come from the Bible and it certainly does not come from the hard-hitting truth of Jeremiah. Jeremiah is a prophet who certainly contradicts that idea. He shouts loud and clear that God gives people plenty of time to turn to Him, but if they don’t do that, He has a breaking point and He will crush even His own people. As God said in Jeremiah 4:4, Return to Me “or else.”

Now some may say well this is just O.T. teaching. That is what one commentator said. He said you cannot really warn the church with the warnings of Jeremiah. Well to this foolish and stupid commentator who has no understanding of God’s word (Jer. 4:22), we say that this O.T. teaching presents lessons we are to understand, learn and apply in N.T. times (I Corinthians 10:6). This is one principle that needs to be applied to both the O.T. and the N.T..

We know, for example, that God actually got so fed up with some of the Corinthians in the Corinthian church that He judged them with weakness, sickness and death (I Corinthians 11:30). We know that Jesus Christ warned the church of Thyatira that He had given the church time to repent and it did not do it, so He warned that He would start killing people in the church (Rev. 2:22-23). He said to the church of Laodicea, you have reached such a pathetic level that I will spit you out of My mouth (Rev. 3:16). So I would say to the people of God in any dispensation that you need to return to a close fellowship with God “or else.”

God is a God who will chastise His own people and when He finally decides to do it, He has plenty of just reasons for the action. Both God and Jeremiah wanted God’s people to know the reasons.

JEREMIAH GIVES REASONS WHY GOD WILL CAUSE HORRIBLE THINGS TO HAPPEN AS A JUDGMENT AGAINST HIS OWN PEOPLE.

One reason why God’s people don’t understand this is because Jeremiah has been neglected. Jeremiah is the prophet to the nations, but most nations don’t care what he has to say, and neither do most ministers.

It is clearly stated in this chapter that God will punish His people and avenge Himself (**5:9-10, 29**). God will punish but not totally destroy. It is specifically stated in this chapter what God says He will do to Jerusalem, Israel, and Judah.

He promises some very ferocious kinds of judgments. He tells His people why He will do it. If God's people are experiencing the chastising judgment of God, He wants them to know why.

There are two things He threatens to do here:

Threat #1 - He will cause predator animals to rip His people to shreds. **5:6**

I don't think most people realize the arsenal God has at His disposal to make things go bad for His own people. He can use diseases, sicknesses, and even animals for judgment purposes. God can destroy people any time He wants by any means He wants.

The lion, wolf and leopard are literal predator animals that can kill people and God says He will use them to kill people. This is a specific judgment that God promises upon His own people when they mock Him and His word and refuse to repent (Lev. 26:22; II Kings 2:24; 17:25; Ez. 14:15; Is. 5:29; Rev. 6:8)

Now some have said that this is figurative of nations whom God would use to destroy His own people. Certainly various nations did ravage Israel, Jerusalem, and Judah and did rip her to shreds.

However, since He specifically mentions a foreign nation (**v. 15**), it seems to me that this is a legitimate, literal threat. These animals "will slay them, will destroy them and will tear them to pieces."

God can cause the animal world to do things to kill people. It is His animal world. He can use a virus from a bat; He can use a sting of a hornet or wasp or a disease from a mosquito; He can use lions, tigers and bears. In fact, the thing that has brought disease to most people who have died has been rats. When God gets sick of His people, He can cause His people to get sick or worse and He has an arsenal of things with which he may work.

Threat #2 - He will cause foreigners to come into the land and ravage His people. **5:15**

When God permits foreigners to dominate His own people, it is a judgment. When God permits foreign people, foreign religion, foreign workers to take control of a land, it is a judgment of God.

Now what we may know for certain is that when God decides this is what He is going to do to His own people, He has some very real reasons for it.

God is a gracious God and He longs for His people to be right with Him and if He decides it is time for this kind of drastic chastising judgment, His people have gone way over the line.

In this one chapter, Jeremiah gives 22 reasons why God was going to permit horrible judgment kinds of things to happen to His own people.

REASON #1 – Because there is no one who does what is just and seeks what is true. **5:1**

This is one sad verse. The verbs are plural which means God is asking more than just Jeremiah to take a look at this. He wanted people in Jerusalem to see this.

Now Jerusalem was supposed to be the premier city of God. He wanted people to roam around Jerusalem to see if they could find one man who was really right with God. They don't have to find a few good men, just one.

What God says is see if you can find one person there who really sought Biblical justice and truth. God said if you can find one person, I will spare the city. I will pardon her and not send judgment to her. But Jeremiah could not find one person.

Can you imagine this? Not one person in Jerusalem was a truthful person. Not one person wanted to make just decisions. This is how sick a nation can become.

REASON #2 – Because they make false sacred promises. **5:2**

What Jeremiah found was a “superficial piety” of people who make false commitments and promises to God. He found a lot of religious talk. They talked a good game. They made all kinds of vows and oaths with their mouths, but did not back them up with their lives. They promised all kinds of things and never followed through with what they promised. They promised to behave, they promised they wouldn't do it again and then went back on their word. When people go to worship services and say things and promise things and they don't follow through, God sees it as spiritual perjury.

REASON #3 – Because they refused to respond and refused to repent. **5:3**

God looks for people who are after truth. God looks for people who are faithful. No matter what God did to them, they would not respond. They would not allow themselves to be corrected and they would not repent. They would not change. When God convicted them, they did nothing about it. They became calloused to conviction. No matter what the warning, they did not take it seriously.

REASON #4 – Because the lower class people do not know the ways of God or word of God. **5:4**

Jeremiah thought well you only find this kind of thing with the poor and ignorant of society. But that is not what he found. Some would say it is only the ignorant and the poor who are like this. They just don't know things about the word of God. They don't know about the ways of God. They don't have the skills and knowledge which is why they are the way they are.

Jeremiah said that the poor and foolish did not follow the word of God, so he would go to the leaders, who were the “great” men of society.

REASON #5 – Because the upper class people have broken the word of God. **5:5**

The “great ones” are the leaders. Jeremiah said we will look to find faithful people of God among the leaders. When Jeremiah went to the people of power, he found exactly the same things.

God says you can not only take a look at the foolish and uneducated, but also look at the educated and the successful. They, too, have broken My word. Doesn't matter where they come from, they are not interested in Me or My word. They do not know Me and they do not follow Me. They know My word and do just the opposite.

REASON #6 – Because their transgressions are many. **5:6a**

The word “transgressions” means to step off the right path of righteousness and go on the wrong path of sinfulness. God's people had done this many times.

REASON #7 – Because their apostasies are numerous. **5:6b**

Apostasy is a distinct moving away from truth. It is a willful departure from the truth into that which is false. God's own people had willingly wandered off the path of righteousness into a path of evil.

REASON #8 – Because you and your sons have forsaken Me. **5:7a, 19**

Both the fathers and the sons turned away from God.

REASON #9 – Because they have worshipped other gods. **5:7b, 19**

Both fathers and sons worshipped things other than the true God. They went after idolatrous things. They devoted their lives to other things other than the true God.

REASON #10 – Because they were involved in adultery and immorality. **5:7c-8**

God's people were immoral and went after immoral things. This language does refer to sexual promiscuity. **Two things that will cause God to destroy His own people are idolatry and immorality.**

REASON #11 – Because they have treated God treacherously. **5:11**

Any who deal treacherously with God will find themselves in serious trouble.

REASON #12 – Because they have lied about God. **5:12**

They lied about God which means they lied about the word of God. God reveals truth in His word about Himself and they made up lies. They basically said God will never do anything bad to us. God will never cause His people to be hit with misfortune. He will not ever bring some famine on us or cause violence against us in our cities.

REASON #13 – Because their religious prophets do not communicate truth. **5:13, 31**

The religious leaders of God's people were just a bunch of meaningless wind. The word is not in them and they do not accurately handle the word of God.

God says because you have spoken what is not true to My word, I am going to turn your words into a fiery judgment. I will actually cause you to be consumed by a nation that cannot even speak your language (**v. 14-15**). I will let them totally destroy you so that you are like an open grave (**v. 16**). They will devour your land, your food, your children, your vines, your trees and they will destroy your fortified cities (**v. 17**).

REASON #14 – Because they trust in their own cities. **5:17**

These were God's own people who did not trust in God; they trusted in themselves and in their cities. People on the verge of being destroyed by God think their security is found in something tangible here in this world. God's people need to always remember that their security is found in the Lord. Our security is not in a city, a state, a nation. It is not in a house or a property. Our security is the Lord.

REASON #15 – Because they do not see or listen to the word of God. **5:21**

Foolish and senseless people do not listen to the word of God. They are not interested in seeing or hearing truth. People who make God out to be something He is not are foolish and senseless.

REASON #16 – Because they do not fear God. **5:22**

People right with God fear God; those not right with God don't fear God. Foolish people live every day with no thought of fearing God or trembling in His presence.

God says don't you realize that I am the One who set the boundaries for the land and sea? I am the One who determines where the waves are permitted to go. This is a God to be feared. God says I can control things to come into your world that can level you and I can prevent things from leveling you. God's people need to fear God.

REASON #17 – Because they have a stubborn and rebellious heart. **5:23a**

These are God's own people and they have a big heart problem. Those who do not fear God have a big heart problem. The problem is instead of a heart that fears and reverences God, it is stubborn and rebellious. They may look good externally; their hearts are dark internally.

REASON #18 – Because they have turned aside and departed from God. **5:23b**

Instead of them cultivating a relationship with the God who can do so much, they turned away from Him.

REASON #19 – Because they never say in their heart they need to fear God. **5:24**

Foolish people never think in these terms. They never think we need to fear and reverence God who has done so much and can do so much for us.

REASON #20 – Because of your iniquities and sins. **5:25**

God says you are missing out on My wonderful blessings because instead of turning to Me, you turn to your iniquity and sin.

REASON #21 – Because you follow wicked people. **5:26-28**

God's people were fellowshiping with godless people. God's people were running with wicked people.

These are greedy people who will trap and steal. They excel in wickedness. They take anything they can. They will take from the orphan and widow. They do not defend the rights of the poor.

REASON #22 – Because the false prophets and false priests rule by their own false authority.
5:31

Look at **verse 31**: God says My own people love this. They love the false prophets and false priests. They love the lies. They love the distorted theology.

God says I have had it and I am sending My judgment against My own people.