

Jeremiah 15

Jeremiah has been told by God numerous times that the people are irrevocably sinful and there is nothing but judgment that lies ahead. Even the presence of Moses and Samuel, verse 1, wouldn't change what is coming. In verses 2 - 9, the case against the people is laid out. The end of this chapter, starting with verse 10, Jeremiah has reached his emotional breaking point. He has wept for the people and country, pleaded with God for them, yet, there being no hope, becomes depressed and blames God. The final verses, God tells Jeremiah to return to Him, His only refuge.

1 Then said the LORD unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth.

What an amazing indictment against the people. Why Moses and Samuel? Both mediated between the people and God (Exodus 32:9-14; Numbers 14:17-20; 1 Samuel 7:5-9; 12:19-23) so the people were spared.

Moses - Exodus 32:
 9 And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people:
 10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.
 11 And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand?
 12 Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.
 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever.
 14 And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

Samuel - 1 Samuel 7:
 5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD.
 6 And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.
 7 And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines.
 8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.
 9 And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him.

2 And it shall come to pass, if they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth? then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the LORD; Such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity.

If the people ask about what to do, the answer is that their sin has led to judgment that is unescapable.

3 And I will appoint over them four kinds, saith the LORD: the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the earth, to devour and destroy.

The "four kinds" are symbolic of God's judgment. The "sword" to destroy and the three animals/birds to destroy/devour the slain bodies.

4 And I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem.

Manasseh - 2 Kings 21:

1 Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzibah.

- 2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.
- 9 But they hearkened not: and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel.

In chapter 13 we saw that "The 'revival' of a nation doesn't begin with the citizenry but with leadership." Here, we see that evil starts from the head (the leaders) and engulfs the entire body (the people).

Removed into "all kingdoms of the earth" speaks of the coming world-wide dispersion of 70 A.D.

5 For who shall have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem? or who shall bemoan thee? or who shall go aside to ask how thou doest?

There is none that will care about the city of Jerusalem. Later, in Babylonian captivity, they realize what a blessing Jerusalem is.

Psalm 137:

- 1 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.
- 2 We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.
- 3 For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
- 4 How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a strange land?
- 5 If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.

Continuous sin can harden people to what is important in life, until what is important is removed.

6 Thou hast forsaken me, saith the LORD, thou art gone backward: therefore will I stretch out my hand against thee, and destroy thee; I am weary with repenting.

7 And I will fan them with a fan in the gates of the land; I will bereave them of children, I will destroy my people, since they return not from their ways.

In His mercy, God continuously sent messengers to the people.

2 Chronicles 36:

- 15 And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place:
- 16 But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.

But, as Jeremiah has been repeatedly told, the sins of the nation are so rampant, deliverance is impossible. God has given them many opportunities to repent, "I am weary with repenting," and they refused His gracious offers.

8 Their widows are increased to me above the sand of the seas: I have brought upon them against the mother of the young men a spoiler at noonday: I have caused him to fall upon it suddenly, and terrors upon the city.

9 She that hath borne seven languisheth: she hath given up the ghost; her sun is gone down while it was yet day: she hath been ashamed and confounded: and the residue of them will I deliver to the sword before their enemies, saith the LORD.

The men of the nation will be killed leaving many widows. Even the mother of seven will not have a son remaining because of the judgment, speaking of the extent of the judgment.

10 Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth! I have neither lent on usury, nor men have lent to me on usury; yet every one of them doth curse me.

Jeremiah laments his birth. Giving in to self-pity, he sees the entire world against him believing he is a man of strife and contention. The receiving and giving of loans can be a contentious issue. Jeremiah's use of this analogy, he has not received or given loans, is to express his dismay that the world hates him, though he has done nothing to deserve their hate. What can be learned by Jeremiah's depression and plight?

1. A godly life does not automatically result in peace and blessing. Understand that difficulty will be a part of life for those who serve God.

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," 2 Timothy 3:12.

2. Always be thankful.

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,"
Ephesians 5:20.

3. Focus on God and not yourself (your circumstances).

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth," Colossians 3:2.

11 The LORD said, Verily it shall be well with thy remnant; verily I will cause the enemy to entreat thee well in the time of evil and in the time of affliction.

In response to Jeremiah's depression, God promises that things will be okay for him and the ministry. Even the enemy will at times look to Jeremiah for answers - Jeremiah 21:1-6; 37:3; 42:1-6.

Jeremiah 37:

3 And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, Pray now unto the LORD our God for us.

12 Shall iron break the northern iron and the steel?

13 Thy substance and thy treasures will I give to the spoil without price, and that for all thy sins, even in all thy borders.

14 And I will make thee to pass with thine enemies into a land which thou knowest not: for a fire is kindled in mine anger, which shall burn upon you.

Judgment is coming and will also touch Jeremiah.

15 O LORD, thou knowest: remember me, and visit me, and revenge me of my persecutors; take me not away in thy longsuffering: know that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke.

16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

17 I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand: for thou hast filled me with indignation.

18 Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed? wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?

Jeremiah responds to God's coming judgment by defending his integrity and service of God, and asking why is his difficulties never ending. Has He, God, misled him in his service?

Vs. 15 Jeremiah asks for revenge against his persecutors because he has suffered for God.

Vs. 16 Jeremiah took God's words to his heart and it was his joy that he could serve God and be called God's servant.

Vs. 17 Jeremiah kept apart from the mockers and didn't rejoice over them.

BUT, then he starts to blame God for his difficulties, blaming God for his isolation and anger.

"I sat alone because of you" and you "filled me with indignation"

Vs. 18 Jeremiah laments that his pain is never ending, his wound incurable, refusing to be healed. He then asks God if He has lied to him and failed him.

Jeremiah 1:

18 For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land.

19 And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee.

Is God's promise in Jeremiah 1 just window dressing? Is it not real?

Jeremiah has let the circumstances surrounding him make him depressed, bitter against God, and feeling hopeless.

19 Therefore thus saith the LORD, If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them.

- Jeremiah had let his love and empathy for his people bring him doubt about God.

Jeremiah's depression and baseless charges will remove him from the blessing of serving God, if he doesn't repent and "take forth the precious from the vile." If he wants to continue as God's mouthpiece he must leave behind the evil people, letting them come to him for answers, but he can't join with them in their sins.

God's blessing in His service requires:

1. "If thou return" - confession of sin

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," 1 John 1:9.

2. "Then will I bring thee again" - restoration

3. "Take the precious [the word of God] from the vile [secular philosophies and religious error]

"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called," 1 Timothy 6:20

- "That which is committed to thy trust" -

1 Timothy 4:

- 1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;
- 2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

- "Avoid profane [heathen, wicked] and vain babblings [fruitless discussion]" -

Don't engage people, especially unsaved people, in empty discussions about politics, conspiracies, etc.

- "Oppositions of science [knowledge] falsely so called [untruly named]"

This is not speaking of the discipline of science, although this will be included, but the opposition of people who believe they know the truth, but are deceived, and want to engage in endless/fruitless discussion.

4. "Thou shalt be as my mouth"

Restoration and a focus on God's word brings us back to being God's messenger.

5. "let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them."

Don't let the world bring you into their thinking and discussion. Let the world come into your discussions.

20 And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brasen wall: and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

21 And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible.

The promise of Jeremiah 1:18-19 will still be his as he trusts in Jehovah.

For believers today, the promise of Romans 8:33-39 that we are "in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" even though "...tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter," is part of our lives.

To be delivered from the hand of the wicked and protected by God is from the eternal perspective that no one "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."