

Jeremiah: Jesus our Righteousness

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We come now to the second book of promises and for the most part people wouldn't have liked these promises found in Jeremiah. Jeremiah lived 60 years after the days of Isaiah and was the son of a priest who only lived two miles from Jerusalem and was called at an early age to bring a message to a nation who would hate him for it. His ministry would span 47 years during a time that would correspond and overlap that of Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Daniel and Ezekiel. His prophetic ministry would be towards a nation that would go through five kings and only the first of those, "Josiah" was a spiritual reformer. His first 22 years the messages God had him proclaim were a series of 12 messages concerning coming judgment at the very time Judah was being threatened by Assyria and Egypt. This was followed by 19 years where prophesied to Judah of God's coming discipline and captivity while they were first threatened then besieged by Babylon. The final eight years of Jeremiah's messages were spoken while he was in Jerusalem and Egypt to after Judah had been taken captive. His ministry was one characterized by misery and a call to have faith during times of failure. He more than all the other prophets is the most courageous as he was called to speak the truth to those who didn't want to hear it. And instead of responding to the truth and turning from the destruction that was

coming to God they chose rather to destroy the messenger because they didn't like the message. For 47 years he spoke to the nation a message of destruction to people whom he loved and only response was to seek his destruction and during those 47 years he never once saw any fruit from his message. Yet during those 47 years he didn't become bitter and instead remained broken hearted and he did so alone as the Lord told him not to marry (16:2). In his public role he never waivers and is fearless both in his message and to whom he shares it with regardless of the consequences. But privately he is alone and feels forsaken, rejected and hated by all. What He says before God give us great insight into the battles of his heart dealing with such discouragement. His life is a balancing act where though called by God to speak the truth he suffered tremendously because he at times failed to draw from God's love for him. Simply put at times Jeremiah forgot who called Him and what he was called too. So God would remind him that he was called to speak God's Word, he was not called to be popular or successful in the nations eyes. No, God called him faithful only to Him and to find his comfort in his relationship with the Lord.

I. Chapter 1 Jeremiah's Call

Here in this first section we see how Jeremiah became if you will Jeremiah the prophet. In 1:4-5 though already a young man during the reign of the youthful king Josiah the word of the Lord came to him, saying: *"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations."* Jeremiah is concerned with such a calling at a young age to which the Lord responds by saying in 1:7-8 *"Do not say, 'I am a youth,' for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with*

you to deliver you," says the Lord." He is assured that the Lord will put His Word in Jeremiah's mouth but that the message will be to *"root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant."* Oh dear ones sometimes God calls us to root out and pull down before we can build and plant but as long as it His Word in our mouths by His Spirit we can know that it will bare fruit. Why such a message? Well we are told in 1:16 *"Because they have forsaken Me, burned incense to other gods, and worshiped the works of their own hands."*

III. Chapters 2-25 Twelve sermons against Judah

First Sermon 2:1-3:5 Jeremiah speaks of Judah's willful sins but first he mentions His love for them and their love for Him saying in 2:2 *"I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your betrothal, when you went after Me in the wilderness, in a land not sown."* Then in 2:11 God says through Jeremiah *"Has a nation changed its gods, which are not gods? But My people have changed their Glory for what does not profit."* And to clarify this He says to them in 2:13 *"For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns--broken cisterns that can hold no water."* Dear ones can you hear the Lord's loving heart towards a nation that had forsaken God's love for that which could never satisfy the longing of the heart? God says in verse 2:19 that they had *"forsaken the Lord your God, and the fear of Me is not in you"*. In Chapter 3:5 God says of the nation, *"you have played the harlot with many lovers; yet return to Me, says the Lord."*

Second Sermon 3:6-6:30 Here Jeremiah warns of the coming judgment if the nation won't repent. In 3:12-13 the Lord says to them, *"Return, backsliding Israel," says the Lord; 'I will not cause My anger to fall on you. For I am merciful,' says the Lord; I will*

not remain angry forever. Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the Lord your God, and have scattered your charms to alien deities under every green tree, and you have not obeyed My voice,' says the Lord." He promises in 3:15 that He will *"give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding."* Then in 4:3-4 God says to them, *"Break up your fallow ground, and do not sow among thorns. Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your hearts."* Then in 4:14 He says to them *"Wash your heart from wickedness, that you may be saved. How long shall your evil thoughts lodge within you?"* In chapter 5:1 God asks, *"If you can find a man, if there is anyone who executes judgment, who seeks truth, and I will pardon her"*. But Judah's personal sin and failure was being aided according to 5:13 by *"the prophets that become wind, for the word is not in them."* And because of a lack of repentance God tells them in 5:24-25 that because *"They do not say in their heart, "Let us now fear the Lord our God, who gives rain, both the former and the latter, in its season. He reserves for us the appointed weeks of the harvest." Your iniquities have turned these things away, and your sins have withheld good from you."*

Have you ever stopped to consider what our foolish choices have cost us? Have you wondered how you might receive more of His precious promises towards you? Well why not try surrendering your life to Him. Listen to God's evaluation of Judah in Jeremiah 5:30-31 where He says, *"An astonishing and horrible thing has been committed in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their own power; and My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end?"*

Third Sermon chapters 7-10 Here Jeremiah expresses his own grief over the nations idolatry and sin. In 7:3 God pleads saying, *"Amend you ways and your doings, and I will*

cause you to dwell in this place". In 7:9-11 God call the nation on the carpet for their hypocrisy because they stole, murdered and committed adultery as they worship Baal and then stood before God in the temple declaring that they were delivered from all the sins they kept on practicing. God says that His house had been turned into a den of thieves and that He has seen it. In 7:23-24 God says that He "*commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.'* Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward." Then in 9:23-24 God warns them saying, "*Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the Lord.*" In Chapter 10:8 God says to them, "*A wooden idol is a worthless doctrine.*" But in comparison in 10:10 He says that "*the Lord is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth will tremble, and the nations will not be able to endure His indignation.*"

Fourth Sermon Chapters 11-12 Here Jeremiah speaks of Judah's faithlessness in breaking its covenant with God. In 11:3 God reminds them of what He had told them at Sinai "*Cursed is the man who does not obey the words of this covenant.*" In 11:11 the Lord says, "*Behold, I will surely bring calamity on them which they will not be able to escape; and though they cry out to Me, I will not listen to them.*" Then in 12:2 He says of Judah "*You have planted them, yes, they have taken root; they grow, yes, they bear fruit.*

You are near in their mouth but far from their mind.” Then in 12:11 God tells them *“The whole land is made desolate, because no one takes it to heart.”*

Fifth Sermon Chapter 13 Jeremiah uses a ruined sash and wineskins to symbolize God’s judgment. In 13:11 God says, *“For as the sash clings to the waist of a man, so I have caused the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah to cling to Me,” says the Lord, ‘that they may become My people, for renown, for praise, and for glory; but they would not hear.”* Then in 13:17 God says, *“But if you will not hear it, my soul will weep in secret for your pride; My eyes will weep bitterly and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock has been taken captive.”* In 13:23 God asks, *“Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil.”*

Sixth Sermon Chapters 14-15 Here God uses the illustration of a drought to describe His coming judgment. Yet God says in 14:14 *“The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; they prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart.”* And in 15:1 the Lord said to Jeremiah, *“Even if Moses and Samuel stood before Me, My mind would not be favorable toward this people. Cast them out of My sight, and let them go forth.”* As Jeremiah has been faithful to say these words for God he is being beaten and persecuted saying in 15:15 that *“for Your sake I have suffered rebuke”* and in 15:16 Jeremiah says, *“Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts.”* Dear ones what comfort God’s Word affords us when as His instrument we are persecuted and harassed.

Seventh Sermon Chapters 16-17 Here in these chapters Jeremiah explains why he isn't married. As we are told in 16:2 the Lord tells him, "*You shall not take a wife, nor shall you have sons or daughters in his place.*" Because judgment is coming and with it destruction, God spares Jeremiah the heartache that would be associated with this judgment if he was to marry and have a family. In 17:5 the Lord says, "*Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord.*" Then in 17:9-10 God says that "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.*" But with this Jeremiah cries out saying in 17:14 "*Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved, for You are my praise.*"

Eighth Sermon Chapters 18-20 Here in this section God compares His dealings with Judah with a Potter working with clay. Saying in 18:6 "*O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?" says the Lord. "Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel!"* What a wonderful picture as God takes our broken dysfunctional life and on His wheel reshapes us and makes us whole and useful. Ah but if we become harden in a dysfunctional way they there is nothing that the potter can do for us. Are you moldable in the Potters hand or do you resist His loving hands shaping you into His image? Don't become hardened to His touch or God forbid you may remain unpleasing to the Potter.

Ninth Sermon Chapters 21-23:1-8 Jeremiah speaks against the evil kings of Judah and of a yet future King from David. There in Jeremiah 23:4-6 the Lord says "*I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed,*

nor shall they be lacking," says the Lord. "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

Tenth Sermon Chapter 23:9-40 Jeremiah attacks the false prophets of the nation.

Saying of them in 23:16 *"Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless; they speak a vision of their own heart, not from the mouth of the Lord."*

Eleventh Sermon Chapter 24 Here Jeremiah compares God's good people who were carried away by the Babylonians (such as Daniel) with those wicked ones left in Jerusalem calling them good and bad figs. Of the Good figs God call them in 24:7 *"I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart."*

Twelfth Sermon Chapter 25 Here Jeremiah look forward into the 70 years that Judah will be captive in Babylon. But he looks beyond the captivity to a future restoration saying in 25:12 *"Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity," says the Lord; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation."* It is this chapter that Daniel referred to in 9:2 saying, *"I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the Lord through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem."* It was from this understanding and repentance of Daniel that God looked forward to 1948 and a time

when Israel would again repatriate the nation and beyond this to yet future time when as Daniel describes it in 9:27 that *“Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.”*