

Title: **JEREMIAH**
“Israel hath not been forsaken of his God”
Text: Jeremiah 51:5
Subject: *The Mystery of Divine Providence*
Date: Tuesday Evening—July 22, 2003
Tape # X71a
Readings: *Larry Criss and Bobbie Estes*
Introduction:

Suppose some preacher today stood in his pulpit week after week and asserted relentlessly that God had set his face against the United States of America, that he was raising up an army in a foreign land under the command of a barbaric dictator, to conquer this great nation and make us servants to a massive empire. Suppose the preacher asserted boldly that our Constitution and our nation were an abomination to God, that everything we value and uphold as a society is offensive to him.

Then, suppose that preacher were to go from place to place and publicly urge all Americans not to resist the will of the enemy, but to renounce the homeland and willingly move into that foreign land and bow as servants to that cruel tyrant! It would be surprising to none to see that preacher publicly humiliated, ridiculed, spit upon, and even imprisoned.—Would it? But he is one of those crack-pots who just will not shut up. While in prison, shut-up in the hole in solitary confinement, he not only refuses to retract a word, but also manages to find a way to write his message in a book and have the book read in every church in the land.

If you can imagine such a thing, you will have a pretty good idea what the Book of Jeremiah is about. Only, Jeremiah was no crack-pot preacher. He was the prophet of God in the land of Israel in his day, the voice of God to the nation. He was, in my opinion, the boldest, most courageous, most valiant for truth man

in history. No preacher ever faced more opposition and discouragement with less to give him encouragement than God's prophet Jeremiah.

JEREMIAH

Jeremiah began preaching as a very young man, during the days of Josiah. He was God's spokesman, God's prophet to the nation, through the reigns of four more kings, until the Jews were carried away into Babylon, by the will of God. He faithfully served the Lord our God and his generation by the will of God for more than forty years; and he did so in the face of relentless and almost universal opposition.

He wept much. His heart was in constant, great heaviness because of the iniquity and relentless rebellion of his people and because of the impending judgment of God upon the nation he loved. Yet, he never flinched from his duty. He never failed to declare the Word God put into his mouth. Imprisoned repeatedly, put into stocks (20:2), lowered by ropes into a miry dungeon (38:6) mocked, derided (20:7), a man of strife and contention to the whole world (25:10), accused of treachery to his country (38:4), opposed by false prophets (23, 28) confronted by angry mobs of religious people (prophets and priests included) who clamored for his life (26), carried against his will into Egypt (43:7), under all these circumstances Jeremiah was relentless in obedience, seeking the glory of God, delivering the Word of God, serving the people of God from the day of his calling until the day of his death.

He faithfully exposed Israel's sins, called them to repentance, and warned them of judgment, asserting that the wrath coming upon them was fully deserved. Yet, he never ceased declaring the goodness and mercy of God. Even as he denounces Israel's wickedness and prophesies the nation's utter destruction, he

declares the immutable faithfulness of God to his people. He even declares that the very judgment of God upon the nation is for the specific purpose of saving his own elect within the nation (51:4-5; 50:33-34).

(Jeremiah 51:4-5) "Thus the slain shall fall in the land of the Chaldeans, and *they that are* thrust through in her streets. {5} For Israel *hath not been forsaken*, nor Judah of his God, of the LORD of hosts; though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel."

(Jeremiah 50:33-34) "Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The children of Israel and the children of Judah *were* oppressed together: and all that took them captives held them fast; they refused to let them go. {34} Their Redeemer *is* strong; the LORD of hosts *is* his name: he shall thoroughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon."

THE TIMES

We cannot appreciate the labor or faithfulness of any man unless we understand the times in which that man lived and served the Lord. Never was apostacy pursued more eagerly and fully by men and women who professed to worship the Lord our God than in Jeremiah's day.

Manasseh, Josiah's wicked grandfather, led the nation into such vile idolatry that they never really recovered from it. Josiah's reforms were little more than a bandage covering a deep cancer. They only touched the surface and were but for a brief time. After Josiah's death the nation sank back into the worst forms of idolatry and into every kind of iniquity. The whole nation was on the downward spiral of apostacy. Jeremiah's

mission was to call the people back to God. But judgment was at hand.

God raised up Nebuchadnezzar to execute his wrath upon Judah. He gave him universal dominion. He even called him “My servant” (25:9; 27:6; 43:10). Nebuchadnezzar was the unwitting servant of the sovereign Lord God in all that he did. It was because God revealed this to Jeremiah that we find him advocating submission to Nebuchadnezzar, and it was for this that his people accused him of treachery. After the destruction of Jerusalem, Jeremiah was given his choice whether he would go to Babylon or remain with the remnant that were left in the land. He chose the latter. Days of darkness followed. Jeremiah exhorted his people to obey the voice of the Lord and remain in the land, and not flee into Egypt. But they refused to obey, and they carried Jeremiah with them into Egypt, where, tradition says, he was stoned to death.

JEREMIAH'S MESSAGE

That is the story of this Book; but what is its message? What does God the Holy Spirit intend for you and me to learn from this Book, as we read it? How does this ancient word of prophecy apply to us? Obviously, I cannot in one message declare to you everything that Jeremiah prophesied in forty years. But there are some things that are crystal clear.

CHRIST

Jeremiah's message was not gloom and doom, as most seem to think. His message was mercy and grace, salvation by God through the sacrifice of his dear Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jeremiah himself was a type of Christ. This fact is so obvious that some mistook Christ the Man of Sorrows for Jeremiah the

weeping, broken-hearted prophet (Matt. 16:14). He wept over his people as Christ wept over them (9:1). His faithfulness brought him reproach, rejection, sorrow, and suffering as it did our Lord. He compares himself to a lamb or an ox brought to the slaughter (11:19). Throughout this Book we see glimpses of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ...

- as the Fountain of Living Waters (2:13),
- as the Great Physician (8:22),
- as the Good Shepherd (31:10, 23:4),
- as the Righteous Branch (23:5),
- as David the King (30:9),
- as our Redeemer (50:34),
- as the Lord our Righteousness (23:6).

At the very time that David's throne appeared to be on the brink of destruction, and justice and equity were gone, the prophet announced the coming of a King of the House of David, a righteous Branch, who should reign and prosper, and execute judgment and justice in the earth. "*In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*" – Jehovah-tsidkenu. In this majestic name the Godhead of our Savior is declared, and, as a descendant of David, his humanity.

In chapter 31, the prophet of God even speaks of the incarnation of Christ for the everlasting blessedness of his people (31:20-26).

(Jeremiah 31:20-26) "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD. {21} Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps: set thine heart toward the highway, *even* the way *which* thou wentest: turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities. {22} How long wilt thou go about, O

thou backsliding daughter? for the LORD hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man. {23} Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; The LORD bless thee, O habitation of justice, *and* mountain of holiness. {24} And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they *that* go forth with flocks. {25} For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul. {26} Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me."

In chapter 32 Jeremiah typified Christ as our Kinsman Redeemer, exercising the right of redemption to buy back the field his uncle had lost, thereby displaying his confidence that that which God had promised his people would not and could not be lost, though the nation itself would be destroyed and carried away to Babylon.

A PROPHET

Christ is the message of Jeremiah. The prophet of God is declaring the absolute certainty of grace and salvation to a chosen nation, the royal priesthood, the church of God's elect, through the Lord our Righteousness. And there is much to learn in this message.

In chapter 1 we see how a man becomes a prophet and what a prophet is.

(Jeremiah 1:5-9) "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, *and* I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. {6} Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I *am* a child. {7} But

the LORD said unto me, Say not, I *am* a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. {8} Be not afraid of their faces: for I *am* with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD. {9} Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth."

(Jeremiah 1:17-19) "Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them. {18} For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen 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."

JUDGMENT

Chapters 2-25 show us the cause of divine judgment. Judgment is never an arbitrary thing. It is always the just response of God to man's rebellion and sin.

- Blame goes first to the people who rebel.
- But they were led in rebellion by their kings.
- And the people and the kings were taught to rebel by their pastors, prophets, and priests.

LIVING IN BABYLON

Here is how we are to live in this world, in this generation under the wrath of God.

(Jeremiah 29:4-7) "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have

caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon; {5} Build ye houses, and dwell *in them*; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; {6} Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished. {7} And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace."

Here is the hope God sets before his elect remnant.

(Jeremiah 29:10-14) "For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. {11} For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. {12} Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. {13} And ye shall seek me, and find *me*, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. {14} And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive."

PROVIDENCE

The mystery of God's providence is unfolded in chapters 30-33.

- God has not forsaken his people. He is saving them.

(Jeremiah 30:16) "Therefore all they that devour thee shall be devoured; and all thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go

into captivity; and they that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee will I give for a prey."

- He is fulfilling his covenant (chapters 31-33).

(Jeremiah 33:14-16) "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. {15} In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. {16} In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this *is the name* wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness."

THE NATIONS

Chapters 34-49 describe the Lord's dealing with the nations that despise him, to consume them in his wrath.

BABYLON

In chapters 50-52 we see the mystery of Babylon unravelled wondrously.

(Jeremiah 9:23-24) "Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: {24} But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD."

(Jeremiah 50:20) "In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and *there shall*

be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve."

(Jeremiah 51:5) "For Israel *hath not been* forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the LORD of hosts; though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel."

(Jeremiah 31:17-20) "And there is hope in thine end, saith the LORD, that thy children shall come again to their own border. {18} I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself *thus*; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the *yoke*: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou *art* the LORD my God. {19} Surely **after that** I was turned, I repented; and **after that** I was instructed, I smote upon *my* thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. {20} *Is* Ephraim my dear son? *is he* a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD."

(Jeremiah 52:31-34) "And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, in the five and twentieth *day* of the month, *that* Evilmerodach king of Babylon in the *first* year of his reign lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah, and brought him forth out of prison, {32} And spake kindly unto him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that *were* with him in Babylon, {33} And changed his prison garments: and he did continually eat bread before him all the days of his life. {34} And *for* his diet, there was a continual diet given him of the king of Babylon, every day a portion until the day of his death, all the days of his life."