

Journey through Jeremiah Part 18

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney, Th.D. – Wednesday, April 19, 2017

† Jeremiah 16:1-21

- (1) The word of the LORD came also unto me, saying,
(2) Thou shalt not take thee a wife, neither shalt thou have sons or daughters in this place.

This marks another prophecy for Jeremiah. Here the LORD tells Jeremiah that he is not to marry or have children in Judah. It was no unlawful for Prophets to have wives but in Jeremiah's case the LORD forbids him to have one.

The reason being is because of the hardship it would place upon him during the time of desolation. It would be people he would have to look out for and make sure they are fed, clothed, and housed. Jeremiah is going to be too busy and is going to be involved in some pretty life changing situations and having a wife and children would not be the best thing for him.

- (3) For thus saith the LORD concerning the sons and concerning the daughters that are born in this place, and concerning their mothers that bare them, and concerning their fathers that begat them in this land; (4) They shall die of grievous deaths; they shall not be lamented; neither shall they be buried; but they shall be as dung upon the face of the earth: and they shall be consumed by the sword, and by famine; and their carcasses shall be meat for the fowls of heaven, and for the beasts of the earth.

Here we get an insight of why the LORD did not want Jeremiah to have a wife or children. Look at what would become of them. The same thing that is going to become of the women and children in all of Judah. – They will die grievous deaths, and be left unburied in heaps in the fields where birds of prey and wild animals will eat on their dead carcasses.

- (5) For thus saith the LORD, Enter not into the house of mourning, neither go to lament nor bemoan them: for I have taken away my peace from this people, saith the LORD, even lovingkindness and mercies.

Here we see that Jeremiah is also forbidden to attend any funerals for the dead or even cry over them. God's anger is so kindled that he doesn't even want anyone to mourn over the dead ones. He has withdrawn (in his own words) "lovingkindness and mercies."

- (6) Both the great and the small shall die in this land: they shall not be buried, neither shall *men* lament for them, nor cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them:

The LORD says that both great and small shall die; this includes women, children, men, all age groups and all social statuses will perish – death will come to all families and households.

He is very adamant that they remain unburied. They will not be "out of sight out of mind." It will be a gruesome reminder of the consequences of their sin when they see these stinking, bloated, dead bodies lying in heaps throughout the land of Judah.

- neither shall *men* lament for them, nor cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them. (7) Neither shall *men* tear themselves for them in mourning, to comfort

them for the dead; neither shall *men* give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or for their mother. – the practice of cutting one's self has been around a long time. Some do it in times of grief to try and transfer the pain they feel in losing someone to hurting themselves. The LORD strictly forbids doing this. The Children of Israel were already forbidden to do this according to the law:

Deuteronomy 14:1 Ye are the children of the LORD your God: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead.

Leviticus 19:28 Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD.

The heathen people all around Judah practiced the sin of cutting themselves. Tattooing has been around for a long time and started with the heathens. They would tattoo images of their false gods on their skin as a sign of worship. There have been men that have discovered natives on islands where no outside influences have been on them and the natives are covered in tattoos of their false gods that they worship.

Listen, I don't want to upset anyone in here or anyone listening to this sermon online but this craze going on today of people getting tattoos in memory of someone that has died, is a sin. They are doing precisely what God said not to do, cutting themselves and printing marks upon themselves for the dead.

No, I don't spend a lot of time preaching against things such as tattoos because I know a lot of people got them not knowing better and a lot of people got them before they were saved and now they are permanent, but the truth is no Christian should be cutting or marking their body.

- (8) Thou shalt not also go into the house of feasting, to sit with them to eat and to drink. (9) For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will cause to cease out of this place in your eyes, and in your days, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride.

It was also customary in that culture, as well as our present-day culture, to have a food banquet after funerals and weddings. Often times the Church will prepare food for the grieving family and folks will come and it is a time to sit with them and talk and eat.

Also after weddings, it is customary to have a "reception" where food is served and family and friends come together to talk and eat.

The LORD forbids Jeremiah from participating in any of these. The man of God was not going to be present and give his approval because the LORD wants absolutely no consoling for the grieving or joy for the living.

- (10) And it shall come to pass, when thou shalt shew this people all these words, and they shall say unto thee, Wherefore hath the LORD pronounced all this great evil against us? or what is our iniquity? or what is our sin that we have committed against the LORD our God?

When all of this starts happening to the people they will ask Jeremiah why the LORD has done such a thing to them? They will try to act innocent, as if they had done nothing wrong. It's kind of like trying to convince an abortionist that they are wrong, They are so blind to their sin that they actually ask what they have done wrong?

(11) Then shalt thou say unto them, Because your fathers have forsaken me, saith the LORD, and have walked after other gods, and have served them, and have worshipped them, and have forsaken me, and have not kept my law; (12) And ye have done worse than your fathers; for, behold, ye walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto me:

The LORD tells them exactly why this is happening to them and why He is punishing them. Because they are even worse than their idol worshiping, sin filled, god forsaken ancestors. They could care less about God until it comes time of punishing their sins. All of their lives they have walked after the imagination of their own evil hearts.

Men are no different today. In fact, the Lord Jesus gives us a list of things that are done from the evil of men's hearts: **Mark 7:21-23: For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, (22) Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: (23) All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.**

(13) Therefore will I cast you out of this land into a land that ye know not, *neither ye nor your fathers*; and there shall ye serve other gods day and night; where I will not shew you favour.

Then the LORD pronounces sentence upon them. He will allow their enemies to take them captive into a strange land and they will be forced to serve false gods day and night. While they are there God will not show them any favor. They will be on their own with the enemy. Oh how terrifying it would be to be in the hands of the enemy and not have the LORD God on your side.

Now we come to some hope for Judah and all of Israel.

(14) Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be said, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; (15) But, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers.

In the midst of all of the tragedy, death, destruction, and misery, the LORD does give a glimpse of hope for the future. The LORD will have mercy on His people eventually and when He does it will no longer be said that He is the LORD that brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, but He will be called the LORD that brought the children of Israel out of the Land of the North, meaning Babylon.

As great as the exodus was from Egypt out of the hands of their taskmasters, it will be even greater how the LORD brings an enslaved people out of the hands of their captors in Babylon.

He renews His vow to restore them to the land in which He gave their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But before that happens, he will cause them to pay for their sins as we see in the next verses:

(16) Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the LORD, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks.

The LORD is going to send the Chaldeans into the Land of Judah to hunt down the people like animals. He makes a comparison to a fisherman fishing. They will cast a net on Judah and pull in everyone. Then he makes a comparison to hunters who will come in and track down every single inhabitant no matter where they have run to hide; in the mountains, hills, holes, and rocks, they will come for them. There will be absolutely nowhere for anyone to hide.

(17) For mine eyes *are* upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes.

Try as hard as you may, you can never escape God's all seeing eye. The Psalmist understood God's omnipresence. **Psalm 139:7-12: Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? 8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; 10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. 12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.**

(18) And first I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double; because they have defiled my land, they have filled mine inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable and abominable things.

Not only is the LORD going to punish them for their sins and idolatry, He says that He is going to double their punishment due to the abundance of their sin. He said that they defiled His land and filled it with the carcasses of their detestable and abominable things. - Let me read you what John Gill says about this in his exposition of Jeremiah: "*with their idols, which were not only lifeless, but stinking, loathsome, and abominable; or unclean creatures, which were sacrificed unto them; and some think human sacrifices, the bodies of men, are meant: places of idolatrous worship were set up everywhere in the land, and therefore it is said to be filled therewith; and it was an aggravation of their wickedness, that this was done in a land which the Lord had chosen for his own possession, and had given to Israel as an inheritance.*"[‡]

(19) O LORD, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and *things wherein there is no profit.*

When the LORD restores Judah from out of the Land of Babylon, they will renounce their false idols and so will many of the gentiles when they see the power of the LORD. They will realize that they have been worshiping their false gods in vain and they will turn the Lord of the Israelites.

(20) Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they *are* no gods? (21) Therefore, behold, I will this once cause them to know, I will cause them to know mine hand and my might; and they shall know that my name *is* The LORD.

The LORD will be known for Who He is and all will know his power.

[†] All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version of the Bible

[‡] John Gill's Exposition of the Bible, Jeremiah 16:18