

Message #30

Jeremiah 26:1-24

Jeremiah 26 is very similar to Jeremiah 7. In both chapters, Jeremiah is at the Temple and publicly proclaiming the word of God as people come to the Temple. In fact, some have assumed that Jeremiah 26 is actually a description of what happened when Jeremiah proclaimed his message in Jeremiah 7. But I don't think so. Over the process of time, Jeremiah kept proclaiming the same message to the people over and over again. They were without excuse.

When these people went to the Temple they assumed they were right with God, just like most people who go to church and Jeremiah kept telling them they weren't.

What we suspect is that Jeremiah kept proclaiming his "amend your ways or else" message and by the time we get to chapter 26, the majority of people not only refused to amend their ways but they were so fed up with him they decided to put a stop to Jeremiah and his message.

What we learn here is that:

REGARDLESS OF WHAT THE PEOPLE THREATEN TO DO AGAINST THE PROPHET OF GOD, IT IS HIS RESPONSIBILITY TO WARN GOD'S PEOPLE OF THE TRUTH THAT IF THEY DO NOT CONFORM TO GOD'S WORD, HE WILL PUNISH THEM.

Verse 1 begins by dating this at the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, which was 609-608 BC. Now again we may observe that what Jeremiah is doing is by direct revelation from God.

We may notice from verse 2 that Jeremiah now is standing in the court of the Temple, whereas in chapter 7, he was standing at the gate (7:2). So although there is certainly a great similarity of message and thought, we assume these are two different episodes.

According to **verse 2**, God told Jeremiah that he was to stand in the court area of the Temple and address all the people of Judah who came from different cities. God told Jeremiah do not omit any word.

So he was to proclaim this message multiple times to various people who came from various cities in the courtyard of the Temple. **A minister has a responsibility to proclaim the actual "words" God gives and not omit any of them.**

In **verse 3** we learn why God wanted Jeremiah to do this. God is offering His own evil, sinful people **AMAZING GRACE**. **If the people would listen to Jeremiah and turn from their evil, God would change His mind about bringing the calamity that He was going to bring on them.** All God wants from His people is what is best for them and what is best for them is **that they listen to the word of God and obey His word.**

God is immutable in that He does not change, but He is not immobile because He does move. He moves in accordance to what His people do with His Word. This is an immutable, unchanging reality.

This is such an important point to understand. God extends amazing grace to His people who have blown it. Even when they have angered Him, if they will amend their ways and confess it and turn away from it and turn to obeying His word, they will experience His blessings again.

PART #1 – The message God gives Jeremiah to proclaim to all the people. **26:4-7**

In **verses 4-7**, God tells Jeremiah what he is to say. He wanted Jeremiah to give a series of conditional “if” clauses of what He would do if they would not respond to him:

Message #1 - If you don't listen to Me, I will destroy you and this temple and city. **26:4a**

God's people have the responsibility to listen to the word of God. You are not charged to listen to the band or the denomination or some ministers' view points on issues; you are charged to listen to the word of God.

Message #2 - If you don't walk according to My Word, I will destroy you, this temple and city. **26:4b**

God says if you do not obey My word, there will be very serious consequences. God does not give His word for the fun of it. He expects His people to understand it and make adjustments.

Message #3 - If you don't listen to My prophets, I will destroy you, this temple and city. **26:5**

The gifted men of God are responsible to communicate the word of God and when they do, it is the responsibility of God's people to listen to them.

In **verse 6**, God tells Jeremiah to say to the people again, that I will do to this city and Temple what I did to Shiloh.

Now Shiloh had once been the place where God was worshipped (Josh. 18:1; I Sam. 1:3). During the days of Eli and his sons, God allowed the Philistines to take the Ark of the Covenant from Shiloh and they destroyed it (I Sam. 4).

The lack of sacred worship and the immorality of Eli's sons and the people brought this judgment on them. This place will become known as a place cursed by God by all the nations of the earth.

Verse 7 is clear that the priests heard this message, the prophets heard this message and all the people heard this message. All of these people listened to what Jeremiah was proclaiming.

PART #2 – The response of the people to the message proclaimed by Jeremiah. **26:8-11**

Now when Jeremiah finished proclaiming this message to all the people in the courtyard of the Temple, you would think that they would have said we need to repent and turn from our evil ways.

We need to get right with God. If we get right with God, God will not judge us but will bless us. So let's do it. But that is not what they said.

Response #1 - The response of the people, priests and prophets. **26:8-9**

Now wouldn't you think that God's people and the priests and the prophets would want to know exactly what the word of God said? If any group should want to know the truth of God, it would be this group. Heathens certainly don't care; but you would think these people would.

But according to **verse 8**, when they heard Jeremiah's proclamation of the word of God, they seized Jeremiah and said he must die. In other words, they intended to kill Jeremiah for preaching the truth. It is clear that the priests and the false prophets were behind this. **They led the people to not only reject God's truth, but to want to kill God's prophet who is telling them the truth.**

Now according to **verse 9**, they make their own interpretation to what Jeremiah revealed. By the way, they did get the message right. They did know that he predicted that the Temple would be like Shiloh and would be completely destroyed. But they did not accept the message or Jeremiah.

They put their own spin on it. Their prophets had been telling them that they were at peace with God and that nothing bad would happen to them, and Jeremiah is telling them just the opposite.

I recently saw an ad by a TV minister who has made millions of dollars who has now come up with a new marketing scheme that you can buy for \$39.95. He has called this his "inspirational cube." You press a button and he says something positive to you just like these false prophets. One of the messages is that if you are discouraged you can know your best days are just around the corner.

Well if one is not dealing with sin, your worst days are just around the corner. That is what Jeremiah was telling the people and they did not like it.

Response #2 - The response of the king's officials. **26:10-11**

The king's officials got word that there was trouble at the temple so they immediately left the king's house and went to the temple area (**v. 10**).

When they got there the phony priests and prophets said we must give the death sentence to this man Jeremiah, because he is telling us that this sacred city and temple is going to be destroyed (v. 11).

PART #3 – Jeremiah responds to the all the officials and the people. **26:12-15**

Jeremiah did not back down. He defended what he was proclaiming. Charles Feinberg said, “The prophet defended the message directly, courageously, and appropriately” (*Jeremiah*, p. 540).

Defense #1 - God sent me to prophesy against this city and Temple. **26:12**

Jeremiah says look, I did not dream up the idea of coming here; I was sent here by God.

Defense #2 - God sent me to tell you to amend your ways and God will not destroy you. **26:13**

Why would you not want a message like this? This is a great message. The problem is the people do not want to make any changes in life. They don't want to amend anything, so when someone comes along proclaiming this message, they hate the message and the messenger.

Defense #3 - You can do to me whatever you want. **26:14**

Jeremiah said you can decide to do whatever you want with me and to me. Jeremiah was not afraid to die.

Defense #4 - If you kill me you will bring serious consequences upon yourself. **26:15a**

Jeremiah points out that if they put him to death, they would be shedding innocent blood. Jeremiah had not done anything worthy of the death penalty so to give him the death penalty would be a great misuse of justice that would bring about the anger and wrath of God.

Defense #5 - God is the One who sent me to speak all of this to you. **26:15b**

Jeremiah again reminds the people that he did not just dream up the idea of showing up and preaching that message. He was sent there by God. It is a very serious thing to mistreat a true man of God who has been called and gifted by God.

PART #4 – The king's officials and the people respond to Jeremiah's message. **26:16-19**

This is an amazing display of God's sovereignty. When the people and the officials heard what Jeremiah said, they sided with him. The Spirit of God gripped their hearts. They actually took a stand against the priests and the prophets.

According to **verse 17**, some of the Elders of the land actually came to Jeremiah's defense. They cited a couple of illustrations as a precedence for what they should do to Jeremiah:

Illustration #1 - The illustration of Micah the prophet in the days of Hezekiah. **26:18-19**

Micah had lived over 100 years before these days and he also had prophesied that the Temple and Jerusalem would be destroyed (**v. 18**). This happened during the days of Hezekiah (715 BC-687 BC) about 100 years before Jeremiah.

In the days of Hezekiah, when Micah warned the people, Hezekiah listened to him and God did not punish the people (**v. 19**). Had they done something to Micah, they would have incurred the great anger and wrath of God.

Illustration #2 - The illustration of Uriah the prophet in the days of Jehoiakim. **26:20-24**

This Uriah is not the same one that is connected to Bathsheba and David. That happened about 400 years before this in Jeremiah.

Uriah was a prophet from Kiriath-jearim who prophesied similar things like Jeremiah. He prophesied against Jerusalem and the land just like Jeremiah.

According to **verse 21**, when the king's officials heard his words, Uriah took off and fled to Egypt, and he was tracked down there, brought back to the king Jehoiakim, and he was killed (**v. 23**).

It seems to me that one of the main differences when threatened is that Jeremiah did not run, nor did Micah. This may have been a message that they were telling the truth. Whereas because Uriah ran, it may have caused the leaders to assume he was a false prophet.

So what we have here are two different illustrations of what happened to prophets when the king got involved.

Verse 24 makes it clear in this case, Ahikam, a key leader, was with Jeremiah and he did not die. So even though Jeremiah was greatly threatened, God saw to it that there were faithful people around him who supported him and protected him.