

## Journey through Jeremiah Part 19 The Sin of Judah

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney, Th.D. – Wednesday, April 26, 2017

### † Jeremiah 17:1-27

Tonight, Lord willing, we will look at all of Chapter 17 of the Book of Jeremiah which details the sins of Judah.

(1) The sin of Judah *is* written with a pen of iron, *and* with the point of a diamond: *it is* graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars;

This is a description of just how permanent Judah's idolatry was. Their worship of false gods had permeated their lives so much that it was as if they had written the names of their false gods upon their very own hearts with an iron chisel and cut it into themselves like they would cut glass with a diamond.

So, they have chiseled the names of their false gods upon their hearts instead of God. It won't be until later on in our studies that we will see God give them a new covenant in which he says this: **Jeremiah 31:33** But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Our text says in the last part; *and upon the horns of your altars*; Now, the good King Josiah had pulled down all of the altars that were built for worshiping the false gods but by this time this was happening he had been dead for several years and his evil son, **Jehoiakim** reigned for 11-years. During his reign, he reinstated the false worship and they rebuilt the altars to the false gods.

(2) Whilst their children remember their altars and their groves by the green trees upon the high hills.

This is a sad commentary on how bad things were. Their children had been brought up under idol worship and they remember the altars and groves that had been erected to the false gods and they practiced idolatry as well.

It doesn't take but one generation to affect many generations to come. That is why we see such a decline in morals in the country which we live in. Generation after generation gets more wicked and kids being brought up these days don't know of a time when it wasn't wicked like it is now. This is normal to most kids these days. Well, it's not normal for me. The world we live in today is nothing like it was when I was growing up. There is no more innocence.

(3) O my mountain in the field, I will give thy substance *and* all thy treasures to the spoil, *and* thy high places for sin, throughout all thy borders.

"O my mountain in the field," is either referring to Jerusalem which is on a hill or the Temple. Either way the meaning is that the LORD is going to allow the enemy to plunder and take all of the treasures.

(4) And thou, even thyself, shalt discontinue from thine heritage that I gave thee; and I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in the land which thou knowest not: for ye have kindled a fire in mine anger, *which* shall burn for ever.

Because of their sin, they have "discontinued" their heritage that the LORD gave them. That means they have removed themselves from being able to receive the

blessings that the LORD gave them. He will cause them to become slaves to their enemies in the land which they know not, meaning Babylon.

(5) Thus saith the LORD; Cursed *be* the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

"Cursed *be* the man that trusteth in man." The Jews have always trusted in man more than they have God. They trusted in Moses more than God. They trusted in Abraham more than God. They trusted in the Egyptians more than God. They trusted in the Assyrians more than God. Here they trust in the ways of man more than God and because of that they are "cursed."

Things are no different today than they were then. Man still trusts in man more than they do God. That is evident by the way that God is forsaken but man is trusted. When something happens to someone they go to some other man for help instead of going straight to the LORD for help.

(6) For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, *in* a salt land and not inhabited.

Here it is referring to the "cursed" man that trusts in man – he will be a like a dried up tree in the desert. The word "heath" means "a stripped bare tree, mainly the juniper tree or shrub trees." It is a picture of a tree in the desert dying from lack of water and wasting away in the barren salt lands where no one lives.

(7) Blessed *is* the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.

Here we see the blessings given to the man that trusteth in the LORD. He is very different than the man that trusteth in man. He has hope in the LORD and not hope in man. He will not be like a dying tree in the desert, instead, look at our next verse:

(8) For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and *that* spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

What a difference in the two different men. The cursed man that trusted in man was like a dying tree in the desert but the blessed man that trusted in the LORD is like a great tree planted by the waters that gets plenty of nourishment and flourishes and grows strong. He also produces fruit but the cursed man produces none.

Judah could have had it all. They could have flourished and been a mighty nation and received the continuous blessings from the LORD if they had only trusted in Him instead of man and their false idols.

I believe the United States of America is experiencing the same thing right now. For 200 years, the USA was a nation that trusted in God but over the past 40-years things have drastically changed. It has been in steady decline for a long time but in the past 10-years the speed of decline has rapidly increased. That is why we are now seeing all the wickedness that we are seeing in our land. That is why there is no peace and there are so many hate filled and sin field individuals in our country today. They do not trust the LORD.

People nowadays worship nature instead of the creator. They worship celebrities instead of the LORD Jesus. We are paying for it under the curse just as Judah.

(9) The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

This verse is a very telling verse on the depravity of man. Man bases all of his emotions and beliefs and how his heart feels. The problem is, the LORD says that our **heart is deceitful above all things**. That means that our hearts are deceptive, scheming, lying, and evil. He says that our heart is “**desperately wicked**.” Not just wicked but “**desperately**” wicked. In other words, “**madly, furiously, wicked**.”

Not only is it deceitful and desperately wicked but he asks, “**who can know it?**” Even man himself cannot know his own heart. That’s why the man will say “***I love you with all of my heart***,” and 2 months later he will say “***I hate your guts***.”

Jesus described man’s heart in the Gospel of **Luke 6:45**: **A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.**

But there is One that knows the thoughts and intentions of man’s heart and we read that in the next verse.

(10) I the LORD search the heart, / I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of his doings.

The LORD searches our deceitful, desperately wicked hearts and he find the truth. **Psalms 44:21** Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.

He says; “*I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*”

God looks into the very recesses of our heart where even a heart surgeon cannot get to and he knows those that have a true heart toward him and who doesn’t.

Jesus also spoke on things that come out of the heart of man in the Gospel of **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.**

Friend, you cannot hide anything from God. Listen to what the Bible says in **Hebrews 4:12-13**: **For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (13) Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.**

(11) As the partridge sitteth *on* eggs, and hatcheth *them* not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.

A comparison to a partridge that sits on eggs but does not hatch them, for whatever reason, whether it was because the partridge was busy fluttering around not paying proper care to the eggs or the partridge was sitting on the eggs of another bird and not it’s own, but the eggs never hatch. He compares that to a man that gathers

riches and wealth but not by his own right, he didn’t work for it, and he loses it all and ends up being a fool.

(12) A glorious high throne from the beginning *is* the place of our sanctuary.

Here Jeremiah interjects this verse and proclaims that God has a glorious throne and it is the place of sanctuary. Only the man that seeks after God will be able to enjoy and partake of that.

(13) O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, *and* they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters.

But the man that does not seek the LORD but instead seeks after man and false idols, he will not enjoy the fountain of living waters that can only come from God.

(14) Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou *art* my praise.

This verse is the pleading of Jeremiah to heal him and save him. Jeremiah is constantly facing the battle on the front lines for the LORD. He is exposed to the wickedness and evil of the people around him constantly. He is crying out to the LORD to protect him from the enemy and keep him from sin himself. He recognizes that God is the only One that can save him and he praises Him.

(15) Behold, they say unto me, Where *is* the word of the LORD? let it come now.

Jeremiah constantly was ridiculed for standing for the LORD. They would stand in his face taunting him. This was obviously before any of the prophecies that he had proclaimed had come to pass, so they were making fun of him.

(16) As for me, I have not hastened from *being* a pastor to follow thee: neither have I desired the woeful day; thou knowest: that which came out of my lips was *right* before thee. (17) Be not a terror unto me: thou *art* my hope in the day of evil.

Despite the taunting, Jeremiah stood strong and firm with the LORD and continued to prophecy coming destruction if they did not mend their ways. He tells the LORD that he does not want to see that awful day come about when the prophecies do come to pass.

(18) Let them be confounded that persecute me, but let not me be confounded: let them be dismayed, but let not me be dismayed: bring upon them the day of evil, and destroy them with double destruction.

Jeremiah cries out for the LORD to let him remain with a clear mind and not to waiver. He asks the LORD to keep him from the things that are going to happen to those that will be under His wrath when it comes to pass.

(19) Thus said the LORD unto me; Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem; (20) And say unto them, Hear ye the word of the LORD, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates:

The LORD’s answer to Jeremiah is that of more warning to the inhabitants of Judah. He instructs him to go and stand in the gate where people pass in and out. This would be at the entrance of the Temple and at the entrance of the City.

(21) Thus saith the LORD; Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring *it* in by the gates of Jerusalem; (22) Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers.

The command is specifically concerning keeping the Sabbath holy. They knew the Law and God's Law was that no work be performed on the Sabbath. We find this command in what we commonly refer to as "**The 10 Commandments:**"

#### **Exodus 20:8-11**

(8) Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

(9) Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

(10) But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates:

(11) For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Obviously, they had neglected to keep the Sabbath and this had invoked God's anger. They were coming in and out of the City and buying, selling, doing unnecessary work, and treating the Sabbath as any other day.

You know, the same way people treat the Christian Sabbath these days. Just like it was any other day of the week. Of course, this leads people to ask the question: "**Are Christians still obligated to observe the Sabbath day**" (which by the way would be Saturday for us) and "**why do Christians worship on Sundays and not Saturdays?**"

Well, the answer to that would be: We believe that the observance of the Jewish Sabbath was under the ceremonial law and not under God's moral laws. The ceremonial law including the sacrificial system and Levitical Priesthood was done away with through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross which ushered in the New Covenant. **Hebrews Chapter 8** talks about the New Covenant and the Old Covenant now vanishing away.

But you will find people even today that wants to bind the Christian back under the old covenant, especially the 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist cult, they will say things like; "**The true Sabbath is on Saturday and you are sinning by working on Saturday and not worshiping.**"

Well, that's the same thing that Paul had to deal with too and here is what he said: **Colossians 2:16-17:** Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: 17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ. -- In other words, the observance of the abstaining from meats, eating only things subscribed under the Law of Moses, keeping the Sabbath and the Holy Days were all shadows of what was to come... meaning Jesus Christ. That is why Jesus Himself said: **Matthew 5:17** Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

The truth is you will not find a command for the Christian to observe the Sabbath anywhere in the New Testament.

Also, in the New Testament we find the Church meeting on Sunday: **Acts 20:7:** And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

So, why do we choose Sunday to worship the LORD on? Simply, because it was the day that the LORD arose from the dead. We do not call it the Sabbath, we call it the Lord's Day because it is His day.

Well, I spent more time on that than I should have so let's move on with Jeremiah:

(23) But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction.

Of course, the inhabitants of Judah would not listen or obey what God said and they refused to observe the Sabbath and continued on with their everyday lives. He refers to them as being stiff-necked people again. They were very stubborn and refused to submit to God's authority.

(24) And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the LORD, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein; (25) Then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and this city shall remain for ever. (26) And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south, bringing burnt offerings, and sacrifices, and meat offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise, unto the house of the LORD.

The LORD told them what would happen if they would obey him. He would allow them to flourish. He would allow the City to be prosperous. It would be a bustling, thriving city which would remain forever. Jews from all over would come to the city and worship in the Temple.

(27) But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.

Then He tells them what happens if they disobey him. He will cut them off and devour the palaces and set fire to everything. In other words He will allow them and their city to be destroyed.

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