

JEREMIAH 5

JUST ONE MAN???

What a sad state we find the Lord's people in, right in the very opening verses of this chapter! In Genesis 18, the Lord promised Abraham that if He could find as few as ten righteous persons within the city walls of Sodom, He would spare the whole wicked place for the sake of those faithful few alone. But alas! Terms that were even more gracious than wicked Sodom's are proposed for the sparing of Jerusalem – that “holy city” where the Lord's Temple stood, and where the Lord's professing people would surely be living in accordance with His righteous laws. “Run through the streets now,” says the Lord, “and see if you can find – not ten – but *only one person* who seeks the truth of God and endeavors to live in accordance thereto! And if you can find just one such person, I will pardon the iniquity of the whole city.” Surely, Jeremiah, you can do *that!* Surely there must be one person – *at the very least* – who loves the Lord and His ways!

But alas! Yes, there were many people up and down the streets of Jerusalem who called upon Jehovah's name and professed to be His obedient children. “The Lord liveth,” they all said. And yet the eyes of the Lord beheld the true state of things, and the true condition of these hypocrites' hearts – for hypocrites they were indeed, and nothing more. Their show of religion was only a sham and a cover-up for the deep dark wickedness of their corrupt and unrepentant hearts. No, not so much as one man or woman could be found, who behaved as an upright and Godly person. The Lord saw the true character of the people, despite all of their disguises.

Before leaving this section, let us consider the opening verse one more time. The thought of it is similar to the Apostle's commentary on the 14th Psalm of David, in Romans 3:10-26. But dear brother and sister! Cannot you and I find one Man Who *has* indeed executed righteousness and judgment in the earth? Is there not one Man in this world – this spiritual Sodom – Who can stand in the gap and turn away the wrath of God? Pause and consider! “What think ye of Christ?” O Jesus, Your name is Wonderful! You are He Whom Your brethren shall praise, and all Your Father's children shall bow down before You! (Gen. 49:8; Isa. 9:6)

Multitudes of souls are ruined by believing that God will not be quite as strict as His Word says He will be. In fact, it was by this very same lie that Satan brought mankind into ruin in the first place. The Lord charged the inhabitants of Jerusalem with this great sin and treachery against Himself (verse 11-13). But even today, it is very common for sinners to be unwilling to acknowledge anything to be God's Word, if it encourages them to part from their sins. Mocking

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ The people of God are reprov'd for their hypocrisy – verses 1-9
- ❖ They are assured that the destructions of their enemies shall come – verses 10-18
- ❖ They are reprov'd still further for their apostacy and idolatry – verses 19-31



and misusing the Lord's messengers and messages is a sin that speedily fills up the measure of a person's or nation's iniquity. Nevertheless, our God has mercy in store for His people; and therefore, He promises to set bounds to the desolating judgments that shall certainly overtake the wicked. Let

us not overlook this "nevertheless" in verse 18! This is the Lord's Covenant with His people! Hereby He proclaims His holiness and His utter displeasure against sin; and at the same time, He pardons and spares the repenting sinner who places his faith and trust in the finished redemption-work of Jesus alone (Ps. 89:30-35).

Unhumbled hearts are ready to charge God with being unjust in their afflictions, as we find in verse 19. If people or nations truly wish to know why the Lord sometimes does hard things to them, let them think of their sins. Even the restless ocean-waves obey the Divine decree that they shall not cross the line on the sandy shores; but obstinate and rebellious persons burst all restraints of God's law, and plunge themselves headlong into wickedness (verse 23). Nor do they consider their own best interests when they do so. Year after year, the Lord sends rain in its season to prepare for "the appointed weeks of the harvest" (verse 24). Men live on, continuing to be the recipients of His bounty; and yet they transgress against Him. Then they are filled with wonder when the Lord sends various chastisements to draw them back to a right relationship with Himself. Sin deprives us of God's blessings; it makes the heaven like iron, and the earth like brass, so that the rain does not bless the ground. Although evil people sometimes seem to prosper in their wicked ways, sentence shall indeed be executed against them. "Shall I not visit for these things?" the Lord asks (verse 29). Those who willfully walk in bad ways ought to remember that an end will surely come, and that it will be an end full of bitterness.

Let us pause over the concluding verses of this chapter, and then ask if the annals of the Church's history have ever heard or seen any similar times. Are there any prophets or preachers who are speaking falsely now? Sadly, there are many indeed. They hold up the merit of good works apart from Christ; and they speak peace, when there is no peace, to unawakened and unregenerated sinners. And despite how false and ruinous these doctrines are, yet they are so delightful to men's minds that they hate everyone who attempts to undeceive them. Let these points be considered as they ought! If things are found to be in such a state, then how pointed and unanswerable is the question that closes verse 31: "What will ye do in the end thereof?" What can such persons do, except lie down in sorrow? From all false guides, errors, and delusions which tend to fill our minds with vanity and hide Christ from our souls – O Lord, deliver us!

Lord Jesus, we praise You as the One Man Who is entirely holy. Thank You for Your perfect sacrifice, which is our means of acceptance before the Father! Amen.