

Jeremiah: Jesus our Righteousness

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Jeremiah, as you will recall lived 60 years after the days of Isaiah and was the son of a priest who only lived two miles from Jerusalem and was called at an early age to bring a message to a nation who would hate him for it. His ministry would span 47 years during a time that would correspond and over lap that of Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Daniel and Ezekiel.

- During his first 22 years the messages God had him proclaim were a series of 12 messages concerning coming judgment at the very time Judah was being threatened by Assyria and Egypt which we went over last week.
- This was followed by 19 years where he prophesized to Judah of God's coming discipline and captivity while they were first threatened then besieged by Babylon.
- The final eight years of Jeremiah's messages were spoken while he was in Jerusalem and Egypt after Judah had been taken captive.

His ministry was one characterized by misery and a call to have faith during times of failure. For 47 years he spoke to the nation a message of destruction to people whom he loved and only response was to seek his destruction and during those 47 years he never

once saw any fruit from his message. Yet he didn't become bitter and instead remained broken hearted.

- In his public role he never waivers and is fearless both in his message and to whom he shares it with regardless of the consequences.
- But privately he is alone and feels forsaken, rejected and hated by all. What He says before God give us great insight into the battles of his heart dealing with such discouragement.

His life is a balancing act though called by God to speak the truth he suffered tremendously because he at times failed to draw from God's love for him. At times **Jeremiah forgot who called Him and what he was called too.** So God would remind him that he was called to speak God's Word, he was not called to be popular or successful in the nations eyes. God had called him faithful only to Him and to find his comfort in his relationship with the Lord.

III. Chapters 26-29 The life of a prophet

Here in this section because Jeremiah proclaims faithfully the message God has given him he suffers personally for it. Suffering my friends is always a difficult thing for us to go through, sometimes we suffer because of something we have or have not done. Other times we suffer because of what others have or have not done. The there are the times when we suffer because of what God has called us to do and these are the most difficult to endure. When I've suffered because of what God has called me too I've wondered what purpose such suffering has for me. Paul makes a very interesting statement in Col. 1:24 when he writes, *"I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church".* By

such a statement we know that Paul is not saying that something “*lacked in the afflictions of Christ*” personally but that God in allowing Paul to go through a season of suffering because of what He allowed Paul to go through was supplying a personal insight into what Jesus went through and does go through because of the failure of those that He loved so much that He laid down His life for them. Such suffering inevitably makes us more like Jesus and better servants towards those He has called us to minister His grace towards. Jeremiah suffered from the hands of his fellow countrymen as well others who were called to a prophetic ministry. His reaction is to continue to boldly speak the truth which leads to the authorities to arrest him and pronounce the death penalty towards him.

When addressing the nations rage against what he had spoken as the coming judgment upon Judah he mentions the prophecies of Micah to Hezekiah 70 years earlier which spoke of the coming judgment upon them if they didn’t repent. Jeremiah asks the nation in 26:19 “*Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah ever put him to death? Did he not fear the Lord and seek the Lord's favor? And the Lord relented concerning the doom which He had pronounced against them. But we are doing great evil against ourselves.*” Jeremiah says, “**Hey folks, you are threatening to kill the messenger because you refuse to listen and heed the message!**” Then in 27:12-15 Jeremiah “*spoke to Zedekiah king of Judah according to all these words, saying, "Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live! Why will you die, you and your people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the Lord has spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon? Therefore do not listen to the words of the prophets who speak to you, saying, 'You shall not serve the king of Babylon,' for they prophesy a lie to you; for I have not sent them," says the Lord, "yet they prophesy*

a lie in My name, that I may drive you out, and that you may perish, you and the prophets who prophesy to you.” In the 28th chapter Jeremiah address one of the prophets specifically, Hananiah who said that their captivity would only last two years in Babylon saying to him in 28:15 *“Hear now, Hananiah, the Lord has not sent you, but you make this people trust in a lie.”* The in the 29th chapter Jeremiah writes a letter to those who have already been taken captive to Babylon men such as Daniel those familiar words of 29:10-13 *“For thus says the Lord: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”*

IV. Chapters 30-33 Promises to God’s people

In these chapters God speaks through Jeremiah concerning the future restoration of the nation. As not only will the city of Jerusalem be rebuilt but God will make an everlasting covenant with His people saying in Jeremiah 30:8-9 that *“it shall come to pass in that day, ' Says the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from your neck, and will burst your bonds; foreigners shall no more enslave them. But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.”* A time in which God declares in 31:2 that; *“The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness -- Israel, when I went to give him rest.”* Then in 31:13-14 God describes this “Grace” saying that it shall be a time when *“the virgin rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old, together; for I will turn their mourning to joy, will comfort them, and make them rejoice*

rather than sorrow. I will satiate the soul of the priests with abundance, and My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, says the Lord.” And in order that they would know that God will do this He proclaims through Jeremiah in 31:31-34 “*Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah-- not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.*” The in 32:27 God proclaims, “*Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?*” And just in case one may think that the only thing too hard for God is our heart He says in 32:39-41 “*I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.*” And all of this will be accomplished through a mysterious person who will be a descendant of David called the “**Lord our Righteousness**”, 33:16-17.

V. Chapters 34-45 Falling on hard times

In these chapters Jeremiah speaks to a new king Zedekiah who had no regard for God and allowed those his officials to pursue and arrest Jeremiah and place in a cistern full of mud. He would be released only to again speak of Judah's captivity and destruction. To the nation Jeremiah speaks in 35:15 *"I have also sent to you all My servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, 'Turn now everyone from his evil way, amend your doings, and do not go after other gods to serve them; then you will dwell in the land which I have given you and your fathers.' But you have not inclined your ear, nor obeyed Me."* In the 36:2-3 Jeremiah was to take a scroll and write on it all the words that God had spoken against Israel, against Judah, and against all the nations that *"It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the adversities which I purpose to bring upon them, that everyone may turn from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin."*

Saints; that is a great picture of the Lord's heart towards us in Him given us countless times to listen to Him and get our heart right. Yet the people reacted to this according to 37:15 by being *"angry with Jeremiah, and they struck him and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe. For they had made that the prison."* In 44:15-18 we are told that *"all the men who knew that their wives had burned incense to other gods, with all the women who stood by, a great multitude, and all the people who dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying: "As for the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not listen to you! But we will certainly do whatever has gone out of our own mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. For then we had plenty of food, were*

well-off, and saw no trouble. But since we stopped burning incense to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything and have been consumed by the sword and by famine.” There was a worship of expedience based upon what they gained personally out of such worship. In the 5 verse chapter 45 Jeremiah speaks to his only friend and scribe Baruch saying that God had added “*grief to my sorrow*” and that he “*fainted in my sighing, and found no rest*”. God’s response to Jeremiah is 45:4-5 “*Behold, what I have built I will break down, and what I have planted I will pluck up, that is, this whole land. And do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them; for behold, I will bring adversity on all flesh,*” says the Lord. “*But I will give your life to you as a prize in all places, wherever you go.*”

VI. Chapters 46-52 They have fallen and can’t get up

In chapters 46-49 Jeremiah prophecies against many other nations all of which will be also invaded by Babylon. Then in chapters 50-51 Jeremiah says that Babylon will also be defeated and then in the 52nd chapter Jeremiah speaks of the last days of Jerusalem and as such all that he and spoken of for the last 47 years were fulfilled. Of Babylon Jeremiah says in 51:37-40 that it will “*become a heap, a dwelling place for jackals, an astonishment and a hissing, without an inhabitant. They shall roar together like lions, they shall growl like lions’ whelps. In their excitement I will prepare their feasts; I will make them drunk, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep and not awake,*” says the Lord. *I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams with male goats.”*

This would come to pass in Daniel chapter 5 when king Belshazzar (Nebuchadnezzar’s grandson) sees God’s hand writing upon the wall as the Medes dammed up the river that flowed through the city and gained access under the fortified wall of Babylon.