

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing

Part XII: God's Description Of The Babylonian Invasion To Elicit Repentance

(Jeremiah 4:11-31)

I. Introduction

- A. Though God's infinite righteousness demands that He punish those who refuse to repent, the Lord takes no delight in administering His judgment: He much prefers to express His compassion and mercy, Exodus 20:5-6.
- B. For this reason God had the Old Testament prophets give so much of their writings to warning of God's discipline. This thrust is evident in Jeremiah 4:11-31, and we view it for our insight and application:

II. God's Description Of The Babylonian Invasion To Elicit Repentance, Jeremiah 4:11-31.

- A. First, the Lord Himself described the coming invasion of Babylon, urging Judah to repent, Jeremiah 4:11-18:
 - 1. Likening the invading Babylonians to the dry, hot "sirocco" wind that blew in from the desert, a wind too strong for winnowing and too dry for the good of Israel's crops, God warned of this judgment, Jer. 4:11-12.
 - 2. The Lord then provided Jeremiah a prophetic vision of the invaders coming on like an approaching storm cloud, their chariots driving like the whirlwind, their horses swifter than eagles, a sight so terrifying Jeremiah himself responded to the vision by saying, "Woe to us, for we are ruined!" (Jeremiah 4:13 ESV)
 - 3. To get His people to repent, the Lord then urged Jerusalem to wash her heart from evil that she might be saved and asking, "How long shall your wicked thoughts lodge within you?" (Jeremiah 4:14 ESV)
 - 4. As the invaders made their way in God's prophetic vision to Jeremiah, coming down from the north toward Judah, a voice from northern Israel in Dan and then again from Ephraim halfway through the land warned of the invaders (Jer. 4:15-16a) as they shouted against Judah's cities and came at them from all around since they had rebelled against God, a description that was the warning of the Lord Himself, Jer. 4:16b-17.
 - 5. God added that Judah's ways and deeds will have brought her this judgment, that it was her doom, a bitter one that reached to her very heart to terrify and cause her to be dismayed, Jeremiah 4:18 ESV.
- B. Jeremiah reacted to this vision from the Lord, expressing his personal grave concerns, Jeremiah 4:19-31:
 - 1. Continuing with God's claim that the invasion will have terrified Judah's heart, Jeremiah repeatedly expressed his own anguish of heart, his pain, the wild beating of his heart that he could not keep silent, for the sound of the alarm of the trumpet followed by sounds of crashings in battle conflict where the whole land is laid waste by the noise of the conflict in the vision was too much for Jeremiah to bear, Jer. 4:19-21.
 - 2. God interjected this prophetic vision in Jeremiah 4:22 NIV to give His evaluation of the people He was punishing, claiming they were foolish, they did not know Him, they were senseless children with no understanding, having a wisdom only to do what was evil while not even knowing how to do good.
 - 3. Jeremiah described the effects of the invasion as being so catastrophic, it reminded him of the original state of the world before God created the creation we currently have: the earth would seem formless and empty, the heavens without light, the mountains quaking, the birds of the air fleeing, the fruitful land left desolate and all the cities of Judah laid in ruins by the wrath of God expressed through the Gentile invaders from Babylon, Jeremiah 4:23-26; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1136.
 - 4. However, lest someone think God would utterly destroy the land of Israel, the Lord predicted the land would be a desolation, but He would not completely annihilate it, Jeremiah 4:27. Nevertheless, the land would mourn because of God's judgment upon His people, Jeremiah 4:28; Ibid.
 - 5. As the Babylonian invaders approached the countryside, people in every town would flee for their lives, hiding in the thickets and among the rocks out in the countryside while those in Jerusalem would dress in fine clothes and jewels and paint their eyes to appear like harlots to allure the Babylonians away from attacking their city, but the invaders would only come at them this time to destroy them, Jeremiah 4:29-30.
 - 6. Indeed, the people would cry out in agony as a woman in labor, stretching forth their hands for help in vain as their murderers in the form of the cruel Babylonian soldiers would only attack and kill, Jeremiah 4:31.

Lesson: *In frightening imagery, God presented the trauma of His judgment in the Babylonian invasion, giving this moving description along with appeals for His people to repent that this judgment might not come upon them.*

Application: *(1) May we always recall our inescapable accountability to the Lord that we REVERE Him so as to REPENT and DEPART from sin to escape His discipline. (2) If God calls us to herald His truth to sinners in need, may we like Jeremiah have a HEART of COMPASSION for the sinful to URGE them to get right with God.*