

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing
Part XIII: God's Indictment Of Judah's Individuals
(Jeremiah 5:1-6)

I. Introduction

- A. God's judgment on a large group of people like a nation can be expected due to a nation's sins. However, one may ask how God can judge even a nation if some people in it are upright and do not deserve to be punished.
- B. This concern bothered Abraham when God told him about His coming judgment on Sodom where Abraham's nephew Lot and his family lived (Genesis 18:20-24).
- C. However, God judges **individuals** even in a nation's judgment, what Jeremiah 5:1-6 explains for our insight:

II. God's Indictment Of Judah's Individuals, Jeremiah 5:1-6.

- A. God's indictment of **individuals** at the grassroots level of Jerusalem's society, Jeremiah 5:1-3:
 - 1. In seeking to show mercy on wicked Jerusalem, God ordered the prophet Jeremiah to "go up and down the streets of Jerusalem," to "look around and consider" to see if he could find even "one person who deals honestly and seeks the truth," Jeremiah 5:1a,b NIV.
 - 2. If he were to find just one man in this category, God promised, "I will forgive this city," Jer. 5:1c NIV.
 - 3. This gracious offer was greater than the chance that Sodom had in the days of Abraham and Lot: back in Genesis 18:23-33, Abraham had bartered with the Lord to save Sodom where Lot lived if God found just **ten** people there who were righteous, but this offer for Jerusalem in Jeremiah's day was **ten times greater!**
 - 4. Jeremiah heeded God's offer, traversing through the city streets but finally coming to the conclusion that even though the people took oaths to assert they were honest in saying, "As surely as the Lord lives," they still swore falsely, Jer. 5:2 NIV. Jerusalem was in a worse shape than was Sodom in Lot's era, for the Lord had rescued relatively "righteous" Lot and his daughters from the city before destroying it, Gen. 19:15-25.
 - 5. Knowing that the Lord looked for truth in His people, Jeremiah recalled how God had already struck them with preliminary, warning trials, but they had felt no pain; He had crushed them in such trials, but they had refused correction, making their faces harder than stone in stubbornly refusing to repent, Jer. 5:3 NIV.
- B. God's indictment of **individuals** among Jerusalem's **leaders**, Jeremiah 5:4-5:
 - 1. Jeremiah himself ("I myself" (emphat. pron. '**ani**, Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 712) concluded that since the common people and the poor were "foolish" (Jer. 5:4 KJV, NIV), the verb **ya'al** meaning "active insensibility and opposition to the known righteous behavior God desires" (H. A. W., Theol. Wrdbk. O. T., 1980, v. I, p. 357), Jeremiah would go to Jerusalem's leaders and speak with them, that surely he would find them knowing the way of the Lord and the requirements of their God, Jeremiah 5:5a NIV.
 - 2. However, Jeremiah found the spiritual state of the city leaders was worse than that of the common people:
 - a. The introductory expression to verse 5b translates "Howbeit [**ak**, Ibid., p. 36 "in contrast to the previous idea" that the leaders would be expected to be aligned to God's way and requirements], they (emphat. pron. **hemah**) (the **leaders** were worse than the common folk in having) broken off the yoke and torn the bonds of God, not just actively being insensible to and opposing His known righteousness as had the people!
 - b. The leaders had "all together" (**yahdaw**, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 403) aggressively broken off the yoke and torn off the bonds of accountability to God and His Word, Jer. 5:5b.
- C. "Upon the grounds of such a(n apostate) condition" (**'al-ken**, Ibid., Kittel; Ibid., B. D. B., p. 487), Jeremiah predicted that (figuratively) a lion from the forest would attack them, a wolf from the desert would ravage them and a leopard would lie in wait near their towns to tear to pieces any who ventured outside the city, for their rebellion was great and their "turning backs, apostasies" (**meshubah**, Ibid., p. 1000) were "numerous, vast" (**'asom**, Ibid., p. 782), Jeremiah 5:6 NIV. God's fierce wrath would surely fall on such rebellious people!

Lesson: *When God had Jeremiah go up and down Jerusalem's streets in search of even one person who dealt honestly and who sought the truth that He might graciously forgive the whole city, Jeremiah found only those who still swore falsely even if they cited God's name in taking their oaths. When Jeremiah thought he might find some righteousness in Jerusalem's leaders only to discover that they were worse in all together rebelliously thrusting off God's Law and ways, he realized that God's judgment had to fall severely for Jerusalem's numerous apostasies.*

Application: (1) *May we recall that God mercifully spares the righteous individual even if the group turns to sin.*
(2) *May we make sure that we PERSONALLY heed the Lord even if we function in a group that is entirely wrong!*