

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing

Part XVII: The Inevitability Of God's Severe Judgment Due To Judah's Hardened Rebellion (Jeremiah 6:22-30)

I. Introduction

- A. When God disciplines His people, the discipline is often breathtakingly severe, and one may wonder how a God of infinite compassion and love would be motivated to exercise such severe discipline.
- B. Severe divine discipline comes on those in hardened rebellion against the Lord and His Word and Jeremiah 6:22-30 explains this truth as applied to Judah. We thus view the passage for our insight and edification:

II. The Inevitability Of God's Severe Judgment Due To Judah's Hardened Rebellion, Jeremiah 6:22-30.

- A. The prophet Jeremiah predicted the great terror of the coming invasion by the Babylonian army, Jer. 6:22-26:
 - 1. An army from a great nation from the north was being stirred up to invade Judah, Jeremiah 6:22.
 - 2. This Babylonian army would be armed with bows and spears, an army that was cruel and did not show mercy on any of their victims of war, Jeremiah 6:23a.
 - 3. The sound of their galloping horses was like the roar of the sea, horses coming in terrifying formation to attack Judah's people who are poetically called the vulnerable, precious Daughter of Zion, Jeremiah 6:23b.
 - 4. Simply hearing the reports of this army would cause the hands of Judah's people to hang limp in fear, for anguish to grip their heart as of a woman in strong labor, Jeremiah 6:24.
 - 5. People would warn others not to go out into the fields or walk along the roads, for the enemy had a sword and would use it indiscriminately, producing terror all around, Jeremiah 6:25.
 - 6. Accordingly, Jeremiah called his people to put on the mourning clothing of sackcloth and roll in ashes to depict grief, to mourn and wail bitterly as if grieving over the loss of an only son, for the destroying army of Babylon would come upon them suddenly, creating a devastating loss of human life, Jeremiah 6:26.
- B. Then, explaining **WHY** such a terrible invasion would occur, Jeremiah was called of God to test the people of Judah only to discover that they were gravely wicked, making this dreadful invasion just, Jeremiah 6:27-30:
 - 1. The Lord told Jeremiah that He had made him like a tester of metals and the people of Judah like ore that Jeremiah might test them and observe their ways to make a spiritual evaluation, Jeremiah 6:27.
 - 2. What the prophet found was that all were "rebels of the rebellious" (*sare sorrim*, B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 693-694), hardened rebels (v. 28a NIV), going about to slander (*rakil*, *Ibid.*, p. 940).
 - 3. The word *rakil* always means "slander" in the Old Testament, never the lesser meanings of "talebearer" or "gossip" that some versions sometimes render it, H. A. W., Theol. Wrdbk. of the O. T., 1980, v. II, p. 848.
 - 4. The sin of going about to slander was specifically prohibited by God in Leviticus 19:16, for it spread false information about another person's character that negatively and unfairly hurt his relationships with everyone else, negatively impacting his income, his acceptance and thus eventually his health and welfare. In fact, the ninth command of the Ten Commandments, though broadened by us to include all lying, actually prohibited this particular sin (Exodus 20:16) since it so damages those victimized by it.
 - 5. The people were all spiritually corrupt, like the baser metals of bronze and iron versus a precious metal like silver or gold (Jeremiah 6:28b; Jamieson, Fausset & Brown, Com. on the Whole Bible, 1977, p. 605).
 - 6. Jeremiah then saw that God had blown the bellows fiercely to heat the smelting fire with earlier trials in Judah to drive out the dross of the wicked lead from Judah, but to no avail; all the people were rejected silver; the Lord had rejected them because they were hardened in their wickedness, Jeremiah 6:29-30.

Lesson: *God's great, severe judgment in the form of the invading, cruel, merciless, terrifying Babylonian army was very just, for just as Jeremiah discovered as God's human tester of the spiritual nature of Judah's people, they were all hardened rebels, intentionally going about to slander one another, to destroy each other's reputations for personal gain no matter how many great trials God had brought thus far into their lives.*

Application: *(1) May we realize that God is fully able and willing to exact severe discipline for severe rebellion against Him that we repent of the sin for blessing. (2) May we especially repent of negatively misrepresenting the character of others in slander, for that wrong destroys another person's ability to relate adequately with others to his comprehensive, destructive harm, and God thus hates that sin as one of utter lovelessness. (3) On the other hand, may we do our best to AVOID sinfully, destructively misrepresenting another person's character not only because it does so much damage to that party's relationships, but because God's judgment of it is also very severe.*