

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing

Part XXI: Jeremiah's Heartfelt Comprehension Of The Awful Effects Of Apostasy (Jeremiah 8:18-9:6)

I. Introduction

- A. Spiritual defection from the Lord, what we know as apostasy, is an awful thing in every way, and considering its awfulness works to motivate us to stay true to the Lord in our lives.
- B. Jeremiah 8:18-9:6 presents the awful effects of apostasy and Jeremiah's heartfelt comprehension of it, what works to motivate us in our era to stay true to the Lord in our lives (as follows):

II. Jeremiah's Heartfelt Comprehension Of The Awful Effects Of Apostasy, Jeremiah 8:18-9:6.

- A. Using the noun *mabeligit* that appears only here in Scripture and means "Source of Cheerfulness" in reference to God (B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 114), Jeremiah told the Lord in Jeremiah 8:18a that though God was his Source of Cheerfulness, his heart was faint within him, Jeremiah 8:18b NIV.
- B. The explanation for this overwhelming grief though God was Jeremiah's Source of Cheerfulness was the plight of the people of Judah in their apostasy, their departure from obeying the Lord, Jeremiah 8:19a-20:
 - 1. Jeremiah urged God to listen to the cry of those of his people in a land far away in captivity, for they were saying, "Is the Lord not in Zion? Is her King no longer there?" Their plight had led those in captivity to question God's power as God since His people had been taken captive by foreigners! (Jeremiah 8:19a)
 - 2. God's response was direct and quick: He asked Jeremiah why His people had provoked Him to anger with their idolatrous images and vain foreign idols. The people had been taken to captivity not because God was weak, but because He was disciplining them for their apostasy, Jeremiah 8:19b.
 - 3. Jeremiah responded by citing those in captivity as lamenting, "The harvest is past, the summer has ended, and we are not saved," Jer. 8:20 NIV. Those in captivity who had "learned the consequences of sin too late" to avoid captivity thus voiced their loss of God's blessing, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1141.
- C. In view of this tragedy, Jeremiah expressed intense grief over what Judah's people faced, Jeremiah 8:21-9:1:
 - 1. Since his people were crushed, Jeremiah felt crushed; he mourned and horror gripped him, Jer. 8:21.
 - 2. Jeremiah asked if there was no balm in Gilead to heal the wound of his people's hurt, Jeremiah 8:22a. This balm was "the resin of the storax tree that was used medicinally," and "Gilead, east of the Jordan River, was famous for its healing balm (cf. Gen. 37:25; Jer. 46:11; 51:8; Ezek. 27:17)." (Ibid.)
 - 3. God's prophet asked why there was no physician there, no healing for the hurt his people faced, Jer. 8:22b.
 - 4. Summing up his grief, Jeremiah said, "Oh, that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears! I would weep day and night for the slain of my people," Jeremiah 9:1 NIV.
- D. However, immediately following this expression of intense empathetic grief for his people, Jeremiah shifted to express his utter revulsion at their sin that had led to their suffering, Jer. 9:2a NIV: he wrote, "Oh, that I had in the desert a lodging place for travelers, so that I may leave my people and go away from them."
- E. Jeremiah then explained the awful sin of his beloved people that he so deeply abhorred, Jeremiah 9:2b NIV, ESV: he complained that they were all adulterers, a crowd of treacherously unfaithful men.
- F. Following Jeremiah's complaint about this sin in his people, God added His own description of their sins in Jeremiah 9:3 NIV: He said they made their tongues ready like a bow to shoot hurtful lies, that it was not by truth that they triumphed in the land, but they went from one sin to another and did not acknowledge Him.
- G. God then warned Jeremiah to guard himself from his own beloved but apostate people, Jeremiah 9:4-6 NIV:
 - 1. Jeremiah was to put up his guard even with his friends, not to trust even his brothers, for every brother was a deceiver and every friend a slanderer, Jeremiah 9:4.
 - 2. Friend deceived friend and no one spoke the truth, for they had taught themselves to lie and wearied themselves with sinning with such deception, Jeremiah 9:5.
 - 3. God informed Jeremiah that he lived in the midst of deception in Judah, and in their deceit the people of Judah had refused to acknowledge the Lord, Jeremiah 9:6.

Lesson: *Though the grief and suffering of Jeremiah's people who were already in foreign captivity overwhelmed him with grief, their equally revolting sins of idolatry, adultery and mass treacherous deceit revealed there was no alternative but for the people to face painful divine judgment in captivity.*

Application: *Apostasy produces awful hurt in relationships and awful pain in judgment, so may we avoid it!*