

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing

Part XXII: Heeding Scripture And Fellowshiping With God To Avoid Severe Punishment (Jeremiah 9:7-26)

I. Introduction

- A. At our Church, we often emphasize the need to heed God's written Word and to fellowship with the Lord.
- B. Though this directive is so simple and so often emphasized, whether we obey or disobey it carries with it in time vastly contrasting consequences, and Jeremiah 9:7-26 reveals this for our insight and edification:

II. Heeding Scripture And Fellowshiping With God To Avoid Severe Punishment, Jeremiah 9:7-26 NIV.

- A. In Jeremiah 9:7-11, a conversation between God and His prophet Jeremiah described the dreadful judgment that God would bring upon Jerusalem and the land of Judah for its people's departure from the Lord:
 - 1. God predicted He would refine and test His people through great suffering, rhetorically asking what else could He do because of Judah's terrible sins, Jeremiah 9:7.
 - 2. To explain, He noted their tongue was a deadly arrow in that they spoke with deceit, addressing one another's neighbors in a friendly way though in heart they set a trap for them, Jeremiah 9:8.
 - 3. God rhetorically asked Jeremiah if He shouldn't punish them for this, if He shouldn't avenge Himself on such a nation as this, Jeremiah 9:9. The reason for such divine vengeance is the fact that one's neighbor is made in God's image, that deceitfully misleading the neighbor to his harm is a sin against the Lord because the victim bears God's image (Genesis 9:6), and that requires divine vengeance on the wrongdoer.
 - 4. Jeremiah then replied that he would grieve over the mountains and wilderness pastures, for they would be left desolate and untraveled, the cattle and even birds and wild animals having gone away, Jeremiah 9:10.
 - 5. The Lord added to Jeremiah's lamentation His announcement that He would make Jerusalem a heap of ruins, a haunt of jackals, and lay waste Judah's towns so that no one could live in them, Jeremiah 9:11.
- B. Of note, Jeremiah 9:12-14 revealed that all this severe trouble would come upon Jerusalem and Judah because of the people's forsaking God's Word to follow their own stubborn ways and worship false gods:
 - 1. After asking what man was wise enough to understand it, who had been instructed of the Lord to explain it, Jeremiah asked why the land would be ruined and laid waste like a desert none could cross, Jer. 9:12.
 - 2. God answered that this destruction would occur because Judah's people had forsaken His Law which He had set before them that they might follow the stubbornness of their own hearts in heeding the false Baal gods just like their apostate fathers had taught them to do, Jeremiah 9:13-14.
- C. Thus, Jeremiah 9:15-22 continued to describe the sufferings Judah's people would face in divine judgment:
 - 1. The Lord said He would make Judah's people eat bitter food and drink poisoned water due to the effects of the Babylonian invasion, that He would scatter them among the nations that neither they nor their fathers had known and pursue them with the sword of Gentiles until He had destroyed them, Jeremiah 9:15-16.
 - 2. God thus called for the mourning women to come quickly and wail over Judah's demise until they were deluged with tears for having been shamed and made to leave their ruined land and homes, Jer. 9:17-19.
 - 3. God directed Judah's women to listen to His directive to teach their daughters how to wail, for death would have climbed in through their windows in the form of the attacking Babylonian soldiers, it would have entered their fortresses, slaying children in the streets and young men in the public squares, Jer. 9:20-21.
 - 4. Thus, the Lord predicted the bodies of the slain would dishonorably lie exposed to the elements like refuse in the open fields much as cut grain behind the reaper with no one to gather them for burial, Jer. 9:22.
- D. Once again explaining the basis of all this judgment, God in Jeremiah 9:23-24 asserted that Judah's people should not boast in their false, human wisdom and might that led to sin and judgment, but in understanding and knowing the Lord Who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness, in which things the Lord delighted.
- E. Returning again to describe Judah's judgment, God in Jeremiah 9:25-26 explained that He would one day punish all who were circumcised only in the flesh and not in heart, that these nations included Egypt, Judah, Edom, Ammon, Moab and all who lived in the desert in distant places along with the whole house of Israel. The failure of all these nations to heed God's Word and to fellowship with Him would be met with judgment.

Lesson: *Failing to heed Scripture and fellowship with God in time leads to dire sin that God must severely punish.*

Application: *May we always take very seriously God's directive that we heed and obey His Word and fellowship with Him lest we begin the long, slippery slide into apostasy that will result in terribly dreadful divine punishment.*