

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing Part XXIII: God's Infinite Superiority To Man's False Idols (Jeremiah 10:1-16)

I. Introduction

- A. 1 John 5:21 calls believers in Christ to keep ourselves from idols, and though we do not worship the idols that men in Jeremiah's era did, "(a)n idol is anything that substitutes for God" (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to 1 John 5:21), so that means we can make another person, wealth, health, national security, etc. into an idol.
- B. Jeremiah 10:1-16 reveals God's infinite superiority to the false idols of Jeremiah's era, so this passage bears a lesson and application that applies to us in our era (as follows):

II. God's Infinite Superiority To Man's False Idols, Jeremiah 10:1-16.

- A. Jeremiah 10:1-16 is a parenthetical section in Jeremiah's prophecies on Judah's future exile for idolatry, and it acts as "(a) scathing denunciation of idolatry" involving "a threefold contrast," Ibid., fn. to Jeremiah 10:1-16.
- B. That threefold contrast between God and idols can be summarized as follows, Jeremiah 10:1-16; Ibid.:
 - 1. First, the idolatrous pagan worship of Jeremiah's day "attached great importance to the sun, moon and stars (v. 2), though God made the heavens (v. 12)," Ibid.:
 - a. God through Jeremiah addressed the whole "house of Israel," including not only Judah but the Northern Kingdom of Israel that was already in Assyrian Captivity for idolatry, Jer. 10:1; B. K. C., O. T., p. 1142.
 - b. The Lord admonished His people not to learn the idolatrous ways of pagan Gentiles in getting terrified by signs in the sky, Jer. 10:2. Such "signs" would have included "unusual occurrences such as eclipses or comets which were thought to be signs of coming events given by the gods," Ibid.
 - c. God then addressed not only Israel, but these pagan nations by using the language of Aramaic, "the trade language of the day" in Jeremiah 10:11 NIV (Ibid., p. 1143) to tell Jeremiah's whole world of nations that their gods had not made the universe, that they would perish from the earth and from under the heavens.
 - d. Returning to the language of Hebrew, Jeremiah asserted that Israel's God had created the earth by His power, founding the world by His wisdom and stretching out the heavens by His understanding, Jer. 10:12.
 - e. Thus, it was this True Creator God Who caused and controlled the waters in the clouds of heaven, Who caused thunder in storm clouds and sent lightning with rain and great wind in storms quite opposite the belief of local Canaanite pagans who held that Baal did these things, Jeremiah 10:13.
 - 2. Second, the man-made graven images of pagan idols had to be stabilized by human hands (v. 4) but Israel's true God even controlled all the nations of men on the earth, v. 10, Ibid., Ryrie:
 - a. Jeremiah 10:3-5a NIV described the powerlessness of pagan idols that were made by cutting down a tree, then carved and decked with silver and gold, fastened with hammer and nails so they would not totter and like scarecrows in melon patches they could not speak, but were carried because they could not walk! Indeed, Jeremiah 10:5b added these idols were not to be revered, for they could do neither harm nor good!
 - b. In contrast, Israel's True God created the universe by His power, wisdom and understanding (v. 12), so He was like no other god of the nations -- great and mighty in power Who was to be revered, v. 6-7.
 - 3. Third, man-made pagan idols lacked intellect because they were inanimate (v. 8) in contrast to the living, omniscient God Who designed and created all things in the universe, v. 12-13; Ibid., Ryrie:
 - a. Jeremiah related in Jeremiah 10:8 NIV how pagan idol worshippers were "senseless and foolish" since they were "taught by worthless wooden idols" that skilled craftsmen and goldsmiths had made, then adorned with costly silver from Tarshish and pricey gold from Uphaz and finally dressed in blue and purple. Pagan idol worshipers were then self-deluded into letting themselves be impressed by the adorning of these pieces of wood by skilled craftsmen who used prized metals and cloth to impress worshippers!
 - b. In infinite contrast, Israel's true God had Himself made all things in the universe (v. 12), including the wood, precious metals, expensive cloth and the skilled craftsmen whose work impressed idol worshippers, so it was senseless to worship these things created by God versus worshiping Him Who had made them!

Lesson: *God and not man's idols is to be worshiped because (1) He made and controls all things, including what idolaters worship, (2) He is omnipotent versus impotent idols and (3) He is omniscient versus all man-made idols!*

Application: *May we worship God alone Who made and controls all things and Who is omnipotent and omniscient, for any other kind of false "idol" we set up has no such sovereign control, omnipotence or omniscience.*