

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing

Part XXVII: Understanding God's Heart Of Love Amid His Judgment Of The Nations (Jeremiah 12:7-17)

I. Introduction

- A. The many references to God's judgment in Scripture often create a problem for unbelievers and even for some believers who wonder how a God of great love and compassion could so severely punish people!
- B. The explanation is given in Jeremiah 12:7-17, and we view this passage for our insight and edification:

II. Understanding God's Heart Of Love Amid His Judgment Of The Nations, Jeremiah 12:7-17.

- A. In a poetic format, God announced He had forsaken His temple, that He had abandoned His heritage of Judah and given the beloved of His soul, the people of Judah, into the hands of their enemies, Jeremiah 12:7.
- B. How a God of such great love for His temple, His heritage and His beloved people could do such a harsh thing is explained in Jeremiah 12:8: His heritage, the people of the land of Judah, had become to God like a lion in the forest is to a man: she had lifted up her voice against Him, roaring like a lion roars against a man, so the Lord had come to "hate" her! This is not to say that God actually hated His people, for then He would have annihilated them, but this word describes His intolerance of the sin of rebellion in His people, so He was disposed to treat them like a man would treat a lion in the wild that roars in rebellion against him!
- C. Accordingly, God expressed His coming, equally fierce judgment against His people of Judah, Jer. 12:9-13:
 - 1. God likened Judah to a speckled bird of prey, a bird marked differently from other birds so that they view it as an outsider, and they surround it to kill it, Jeremiah 12:9a; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1145.
 - 2. The Lord thus called for the wild beasts to gather around Judah that they might devour it like animals do a besieged, wounded animal, a picture of the invasion of Judah by the Babylonian army, Jeremiah 12:9b.
 - 3. In that invasion, the Babylonians would be like shepherds with their sheep entering a delicate vineyard and trampling down its plants, destroying the vineyard and turning it into a wasteland, Jeremiah 12:10-11a.
 - 4. No one would care for the vineyard since God would no longer protect it, leading to its devastation, v. 11b.
 - 5. Indeed, God predicted that invading destroyers would swarm over all the heights of the desert, the sword of the Lord in the form of the Babylonian soldiers devouring from one end of the land to the other, with no one being safe, that there would be no escape from the devastation of the sword, Jeremiah 12:12.
 - 6. The farmers that would be left would sow wheat but reap only thorns, they would wear themselves out but gain nothing as God's judgment on the land was administered in His fierce anger, Jeremiah 12:13.
- D. Jeremiah 12:14-17 then shifts into prose instead of the poetry of Jeremiah 12:7-13, presenting God's future dealings of grace with the Gentiles and with Israel that follow His initial expressions of wrath against them:
 - 1. In light of God's coming expression of wrath on Judah for her sin, He will also address the Gentiles in wrath who in sin had touched His heritage, Judah, the land He gave His people to inherit, Jer. 12:14a.
 - 2. For daring to try to gain possession of that land, God in judgment would uproot the Gentiles from their own respective homelands, Jeremiah 12:14b.
 - 3. However, in grace He would also pluck up Judah from captivity among the Gentiles and would restore her to the land He had originally promised her, Jeremiah 12:14c; Ibid.
 - 4. When God will have plucked up His people along with the Gentiles He had uprooted from their own lands for trying to acquire Judah as their possession, He will then have compassion on everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, bringing them all back into their respective homelands, Jeremiah 12:15. This promise will be fulfilled in the coming Messianic Kingdom of Jesus Christ, Ibid.
 - 5. This restoration will come with God's granting the nations a second chance to learn the godly ways of His people and to swear by His name opposite how they had once taught Judah to swear by the name of Baal. If they would thus cleave to the Lord, God would build them up in the midst of His people, Jer. 12:16.
 - 6. However, if any resettled Gentile nation then rebelled against the Lord, God would pluck it up a second time, but this time to destroy it utterly, not again letting it exist in its own land, Jeremiah 12:17.

Lesson: *Though God's wrath in judgment is severe even on His own people, He is very gracious to Jew and Gentile alike, longing to show His mercy upon all men, what He will again do for the world's nations in the Kingdom. However, repeat rebellion after a nation has once faced God's judgment will be met with His complete destruction!*

Application: *God greatly loves us, but He hates our sin and judges us accordingly, so we must depart from sin!*