

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing

Part XXXIX: God's Irrevocable Judgment On Those Who Reject God And His Messenger (Jeremiah 18:18-23)

I. Introduction

- A. When God first called Jeremiah to his prophetic ministry, the Lord had predicted that he would be opposed by all the people of the land, that they would not accept his ministry, Jeremiah 1:17-19.
- B. When he first faced rejection, Jeremiah had "asked God to turn His wrath away" in mercy (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1153), but this time was different -- the people "had rejected both God and His messenger," Ibid.
- C. God's judgment would irrevocably fall on such people (Jeremiah 18:18-23), providing a warning for us today:

II. God's Irrevocable Judgment On Those Who Reject God And His Messenger, Jeremiah 18:18-23.

- A. After again delivering a message of God's catastrophic judgment on the nation in Jeremiah 18:1-17, Jeremiah learned that his hearers had responded negatively with negative plans against him, Jeremiah 18:18:
 1. His hearers had spoken with one another about making plans against Jeremiah, for they asserted that the current order in Judah would not be broken as Jeremiah had often predicted would occur, Jer. 18:18a, b, c:
 - a. They believed that the priests would still teach the law, Jeremiah 18:18 a.
 - b. They believed that the advice of the wise would not be lost, Jeremiah 18:18b.
 - c. They believed that the word of the prophets, those who predicted peace as opposed to Jeremiah's repeat warnings of dire catastrophe, would not be lost either, Jeremiah 18:18c with 5:12-13.
 2. Accordingly, weary of all Jeremiah's "negative" preaching, the people met and decided to attack him with their tongues while not paying attention to anything he prophesied, Jeremiah 18:18d.
- B. With no one in his audience willing to listen to him anymore, Jeremiah turned to God in prayer, Jer. 18:19a.
- C. In his prayer, Jeremiah asked God to recall how he had stood before the Lord to intercede for these people, and all they had done in return was repay him evil for good, digging a pit to entrap him, Jeremiah 18:19b-20.
- D. Thus, Jeremiah asked the Lord to render His fierce, destructive judgment upon his hearers, Jeremiah 18:21-23:
 1. He asked God to give their children over to famine and the sword, Jeremiah 18:21a.
 2. He asked God to let their wives be made childless and widows, to experience traumatic grief, Jer. 18:21b.
 3. He asked God to let their men be put to death, their young men slain by the invaders, Jeremiah 18:21c,d.
 4. Jeremiah asked that a cry of terror be heard from their houses when God suddenly brought the invaders into their homes to commit these devastating acts, for they deserved such judgment since they had dug a pit to capture God's prophet and hidden snares for his feet in an effort to destroy him, Jeremiah 18:22.
- E. God's prophet affirmed the Lord knew all about the plots of the people to kill him, so he asked God not to forgive their crimes of evil plots nor to blot out their sins from His sight, but to let them be overthrown before the Lord, that God might deal with them in the time that His anger was expressed, Jeremiah 18:23.
- F. Jeremiah's request for God's vengeance was Biblical, too: in Deuteronomy 32:25, God directed, "To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence" and Romans 12:19 tells Christians: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

Lesson: *When the people of Judah refused to believe God's messenger, assuming the current social order with the priests teaching the law, the wise giving counsel and the other prophets giving positive messages would continue regardless of Jeremiah's dire warnings of impending judgment, and they thus planned to ignore his messages while also verbally assaulting him, Jeremiah prayed for God's vengeance in accord with His planned judgment.*

Application: *(1) If we hear a messenger of Scripture give a negative message to us, we should at LEAST check its content with Scripture to see if it is true, and, IF so, hurriedly repent and confess our sins! (2) If God directs us to give a negative message from His Word and we face rejection for doing so, (a) may we not try to appease our hearers by compromising God's message lest we face His severe discipline, (b) but withdraw from the harmful reach of our foes and simply pray to the Lord about the matter. (c) May we like Jeremiah TEND to be WILLING to FORGIVE those who reject us like he tried to do in his initial rejections. (d) However, IF the rejection persists and intensifies, may we seek the Lord's intervention to fulfill His will regarding our hearers and our ministries to them. (3) May we also recall that just like God knew all about what Jeremiah would face from Judah's people before he began his ministry, God has known all about what we face from eternity past (cf. 2 Timothy 1:9), so we need to REST in God's SOVEREIGNTY over it all and simply focus on currently obeying the Lord!*