

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing

Part XLII: The Great Value Of God's Politically Incorrect Messages To His People (Jeremiah 21:1-10)

I. Introduction

- A. God at times directs His messengers to give very politically incorrect messages to His people, messages that rub them the wrong way and can cause very negative reactions toward His messengers.
- B. However, such messages are actually in the best interests of their hearers, a fact seen in Jeremiah 21:1-10:

II. The Great Value Of God's Politically Incorrect Messages To His People, Jeremiah 21:1-10.

- A. Sometime between 588 B. C. and 586 B. C. when Jerusalem fell to Babylon, King Zedekiah sent Pashhur son of Malkijah and Zephaniah son of Maaseiah the priest to the prophet Jeremiah to ask the Lord to perform wonders so as to cause the king of Babylon to withdraw from besieging Jerusalem, Jeremiah 21:1-2.
- B. This request was likely based on God's past deliverance of the city from the Assyrians under Judah's king Hezekiah when the Angel of the Lord slew 185,000 Assyrians overnight so that the Assyrian king withdrew from his siege of Jerusalem, Isaiah 37:36-38; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1155-1156.
- C. However, instead of receiving God's promise of deliverance as Isaiah had once given king Hezekiah in Isaiah 37:21-35, Jeremiah's message from the Lord was very politically incorrect to his hearers, Jeremiah 21:3-10:
 - 1. God had Jeremiah tell Zedekiah's messengers that He Himself would turn back the weapons of war they used against Babylon's army and bring that army into the midst of Jerusalem, Jer. 21:3-4; Ibid., p. 1156.
 - 2. The Lord added that He would use the Babylonians to fight against Jerusalem with power and great anger, striking the city's inhabitants, both man and beast, and causing others to die of disease, Jeremiah 21:5-6.
 - 3. Then, God promised to give Judah's king Zedekiah and his servants and the people who survive the sword and disease into the hand of the king of Babylon who would then unmercifully slay them, Jeremiah 21:7.
 - 4. The Lord then had a message for all the people of the city: if they wanted to live, staying alive as their prize of war, they had to go out to the Babylonian army and surrender to it, but if they did not surrender, they would surely be killed by the sword, by famine or disease, Jeremiah 21:8-9. God had determined to destroy the city of Jerusalem, giving it into the hands of the king of Babylon, and He had determined that He would use the Babylonians to burn Jerusalem down with fire, Jeremiah 21:10.
- D. Of significance, the actual destinies of Zedekiah, Pashhur son of Malkijah and Zephaniah, son of Maaseiah shows how valuable for them had been Jeremiah's politically incorrect message to surrender to Babylon:
 - 1. Pashhur as one of the king's officials later asked king Zedekiah to execute Jeremiah for treason because he thought Jeremiah was aiding the Babylonians in calling for people to surrender to them, Jer. 38:1-4; Ibid., p. 1155. This request led to Zedekiah's allowing Pashhur and other officials to cast Jeremiah into a rain water cistern where he could have died had not the Ethiopian servant Ebed-melech obtained permission from Zedekiah to rescue Jeremiah, Jer. 38:5-13. Pashhur was a court official opposed to surrender, so he was likely one of the officials the Babylonian king later slew when he captured Jerusalem, Jer. 52:24-27.
 - 2. Zephaniah, the son of Maaseiah the priest was one of those leaders in the nation who was named as one whom Nebuchadnezzar later executed in Jeremiah 52:24-27; Ibid.
 - 3. When the Babylonians breached the city wall, king Zedekiah violated Jeremiah's later personal call for him to surrender to Babylon (Jer. 38:17-18) by trying to escape through a gate by the king's garden, fleeing into the Arabah, the Jordan River lowland (Jer. 52:6-7). However, the Babylonians captured him there, his army scattered from him, and Nebuchadnezzar killed Zedekiah's sons in front of him before putting out his eyes and taking him to Babylon where he lived as a blind man in prison for the rest of his life, Jer. 52:8-11.
 - 4. Thus, Jeremiah's politically incorrect message of surrendering to the Babylonians was actually the very best message these men could have heeded considering their future welfare. However, they went in other directions, what led to tragic ends for each of them!

Lesson: *Though king Zedekiah, Pashhur son of Malkijah and Zephaniah son of Maaseiah expected Jeremiah to give them a message of God's deliverance of Jerusalem from Babylonian invasion in line with the precedent of Isaiah's message of deliverance to king Hezekiah from Assyrian invasion, the true message of deliverance for them in their era was the politically incorrect one of surrender. As unsavory as it seemed, it was the best route for them!*

Application: *May we accept the message God gives us as being in our best interest even if it is difficult to receive!*