

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing

Part LXVIII: Taking Advantage Of God's Second Opportunities To Heed Him (Jeremiah 40:1-12)

I. Introduction

- A. Though God's discipline at times falls severely on His people, for reasons known to the Lord, He graciously gives room for a few wayward people to reconsider their ways and repent and find blessing in Him.
- B. That was the case in Jeremiah 40:1-12, and we view the passage for our insight and edification (as follows):

II. Taking Advantage Of God's Second Opportunities To Heed Him, Jeremiah 40:1-12.

- A. After the fall of Jerusalem, God provided relief and sustenance for godly prophet Jeremiah, Jeremiah 40:1-6:
 - 1. When Jerusalem initially fell into Babylonian control, the steps to Jeremiah's gaining release involved his first being taken captive along with all the other living survivors of the siege to Ramah, located about five miles north of Jerusalem "where deportees were screened before being sent to Babylon," Jeremiah 40:1; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Jeremiah 40:1.
 - 2. At Ramah, Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, isolated Jeremiah from the other Hebrew deportees and told him that the Lord His God had pronounced the calamity that had come on Jerusalem since the people of Judah had sinned against Him, Jeremiah 40:2-3. This official thus acknowledged his awareness of Jeremiah's prophetic message, what Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon's king, also knew well (cf. Jer. 39:11-12).
 - 3. Nebuzaradan then officially released Jeremiah from imprisonment in accord with Nebuchadnezzar's edict, informing Jeremiah that he could choose either to come with Nebuzaradan to Babylon where he would care for him or to stay in Jeremiah's native land of Judah, Jeremiah 40:4.
 - 4. Were Jeremiah to stay in Judah, Nebuzaradan urged him to return to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan whom the king of Babylon had appointed as Babylon's puppet governor of Judah and to dwell with him in safety among the people still in the land, Jeremiah 40:5a.
 - 5. Jeremiah chose to stay in Judah, so Nebuzaradan gave him an allowance of food and a gift and released him, and Jeremiah went to Gedaliah to live among the people who were still in the land, Jer. 40:5b-6 ESV.
- B. In addition, after Jerusalem's fall, God also graciously let scattered refugees from the Babylonian invasion have a second opportunity to heed His will to submit to Babylonian rule, Jeremiah 40:7-12:
 - 1. Before the Babylonians had taken Jerusalem, Jeremiah had repeatedly urged his countrymen and king to submit to Babylonian rule to enjoy God's blessing, that this was God's will for them, cf. Jer. 38:1-3, 17-18.
 - 2. After Jerusalem fell, scattered units of people and soldiers were left hiding out in the open countryside, "guerilla units that had not been captured" by the Babylonians, *Ibid.*, ftn. to Jeremiah 40:7.
 - 3. These remnants of Judah's people heard of Babylon's new puppet governor Gedaliah and of his assigned oversight of the vulnerable and poor still remaining in the land, so they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah where he ruled following Jerusalem's destruction looking for stability and protection, Jeremiah 40:7-8.
 - 4. Gedaliah took an oath in God's name for these people not to fear serving the Babylonians, but to dwell in peace in the land that all might go well with them, Jeremiah 40:9. Gedaliah claimed he had been assigned as governor by the Babylonians to serve in their interests at Mizpah, but he called the guerilla remnants to help harvest the land's late summer and fall crops and live in the surviving cities in peace, Jeremiah 40:10.
 - 5. Along with these scattered remnants of Judah's people, Hebrews who had fled to Moab, Ammon and Edom heard of the new arrangement of Gedaliah's administration under Babylon, and they returned from these Gentile nations to Judah and helped reap a great late summer and fall harvest, Jeremiah 40:11-12.
 - 6. Thus, God's initial call through Jeremiah for Judah to submit to Babylon before Jerusalem fell was being **repeated** in Gedaliah's call to the remnants of people left after the fall: God was giving them a second opportunity to submit to Babylon in line with His initial will, a gracious call, one accompanied by an encouraging, bountiful late summer and fall harvest. It was a nurturing, new opportunity to obey the Lord!

Lesson: *Though God's severe judgment fell upon Judah in the fall of Jerusalem, He rewarded His obedient prophet and graciously gave scattered units of people and Jews who had fled to other surrounding Gentile nations opportunity anew to heed His will and live peaceably in Judah in blessing in submission to Babylonian rule.*

Application: *(1) If we obey the Lord and are blessed like Jeremiah, may we CONTINUE to heed Him. (2) If God graciously provides us a new opportunity to obey Him following His severe discipline, we MUST heed it.*