

THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JEREMIAH

VI. Jeremiah's Battle Of Heeding God Over His Sinful Hearers (Jeremiah 15:10-16:9)

I. Introduction

- A. God called Jeremiah to minister in Judah during its spiritual decline until God's judgment fell on the nation.
- B. Jeremiah's spiritual ministry is then similar to what God's servants face in our era of spiritual decline.
- C. We thus view Jeremiah 15:10-16:9 on Jeremiah's battle of heeding God over his sinful hearers for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

II. Jeremiah's Battle Of Heeding God Over His Sinful Hearers, Jeremiah 15:10-16:9.

- A. The Lord's prophet Jeremiah faced much persecution for his ministry of God's Word, and he expressed a lamentation to the Lord over what he was suffering, Jeremiah 15:10.
- B. God responded to Jeremiah's lament, promising He would deliver him for a good purpose, and surely make his enemies plead with him in times of their disaster and distress of God's judgment, Jeremiah 15:11.
- C. To support this promise, the Lord gave Jeremiah a message about His future punishment of Jeremiah's foes, saying that they would not be able to withstand the invading Babylonians, Jer. 15:12; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Jer. 15:12. God would give the wealth and treasures of Jeremiah's persecutors as plunder without charge to the Babylonians because of all their sins, He would enslave them in a foreign land with His anger kindling a fire that would burn against them, Jeremiah 15:13-14.
- D. Jeremiah replied to the Lord's words, acknowledging that the Lord understood his circumstances, and he asked that God might remember him and care for him in view of what he faced from persecutors, Jer. 15:15.
- E. God's prophet Jeremiah then began to think about all of his persecutions, and doing so left him feeling sorry for himself, and thinking that his suffering was too much for him to bear, Jeremiah 15:16-18a:
 1. Jeremiah reported that when God's words came to him, he fully accepted them, figuratively likened to Jeremiah's eating them, taking them to heart, Jeremiah 15:16a. They were his joy and his heart's delight, for Jeremiah bore the name of the Lord God Almighty in being His messenger to Judah, Jeremiah 15:16b.
 2. God's prophet had never sat in the company of revelers, never making merry with them, but he had sat alone since the hand of the Lord was upon him filling him with indignation over Judah's sins, Jer. 15:17.
 3. Thinking about these experiences left Jeremiah feeling hopeless and depressed, Jeremiah 15:18a.
- F. Having worked himself into a state of self-pity, Jeremiah then critiqued the Lord, claiming that God had been to him like a deceptive seasonal brook that dried up in the summer, like a spring that fails in the sense of being a disappointment in letting him suffer so much (Jeremiah 15:18b; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1149)!
- G. The Lord then warned Jeremiah to repent from his unjust critique of the Lord so that God might restore him as His prophet who could continue to serve Him, Jeremiah 15:19a. Jeremiah needed to utter worthy words, not worthless ones that wrongly critiqued the Lord, and that if he wanted to be God's spokesman, Jer. 15:19b.
- H. God told Jeremiah that he needed to have the people of Judah turn in his direction of righteousness, that he was not to yield to their faithlessness in God so as to turn in their direction and distrust the Lord, Jer. 15:19c!
- I. If Jeremiah obeyed the Lord in this matter, God would renew His promise to deliver Jeremiah from his enemies in Judah as He had initially promised him back in Jeremiah 1:18-19 (Jeremiah 15:20-21).
- J. Then the Lord directed Jeremiah to live a life of separation from the wicked people of Judah, Jeremiah 16:1-9:
 1. Jeremiah was not to marry and sire children in Judah, for the men and women who married together with their children were so wicked that they would all die with the Babylonian invasion, Jeremiah 16:1-4.
 2. Jeremiah was not to enter a house where a funeral meal was being served, or to mourn or show sympathy, for the people of the land would die and not be buried due to their sins, Jeremiah 16:5-7 NIV.
 3. Jeremiah was not even to enter a house where there was feasting and participate in its festivities, for God would cause the sounds of joy and gladness to cease in Judah for all of its sins, Jeremiah 16:8-9 NIV.

Lesson: *When Jeremiah focused on his persecutions at the hands of Judah's evil people, he was influenced to become faithless like his hearers, risking his becoming sidelined by the Lord from his prophetic ministry. God corrected Jeremiah by directing that he focus on the Lord's will and calling, that the people turn to his upright viewpoint instead of his turning to their wrong viewpoint, that God might support and protect Jeremiah.*

Application: *In our apostate era, may we watch that we stay focused on God's viewpoint to remain useful to God versus falling for the faithless viewpoint of sinful people around us that leads to our becoming useless to the Lord.*