

THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JEREMIAH

VII. Jeremiah's Victory Of Heeding God Over Shockingly Evil Hearers

(Jeremiah 18:12-23)

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 18:12-23 on Jeremiah's victory of heeding God over shockingly evil hearers for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

II. Jeremiah's Victory Of Heeding God Over Shockingly Evil Hearers, Jeremiah 18:12-23.

- A. In our last study in Jeremiah 15:10-16:9, we observed that Jeremiah vacillated between obeying the Lord in proclaiming God's truth to his hearers and adopting the faithless view of his hearers in blaming God for his trials. Jeremiah overcame his unbelief, sided with the Lord, and continued in his prophetic ministry.
- B. Jeremiah 18:12 NIV records a similar situation that arose later for Jeremiah: though warning his hearers in Judah and Jerusalem to repent lest God punish them by sending an invading Gentile nation, the Lord forewarned Jeremiah that his hearers would reply, "It's no use. We will continue with our own plans; we will all follow the stubbornness of our evil hearts."
- C. Consequently, the Lord told Jeremiah that He would punish Judah and Jerusalem because they were **shockingly** rebellious against Him in contrast to even Judah's pagan Gentile neighbors, Jeremiah 18:13-17:
 1. God directed Jeremiah to inquire among the Gentile nations to see if anyone had ever heard of the shocking thing that Judah and Jerusalem were doing, Jeremiah 18:13.
 2. To illustrate, God referred to the snow of Lebanon that never vanished from its rocky slopes, and its cool waters that never ceased flowing from its melting slopes, Jeremiah 18:14.
 3. However, God's people in Judah and Jerusalem had done the unthinkable of forgetting their God, what no other Gentile nation did, and they had gone after pagan gods to burn incense to worthless idols, making them stumble in their ways, even in the well-known ancient paths of Judah's former practices, and to walk on strange ways with strange practices not directed by the Mosaic Law of their heritage, Jeremiah 18:15.
 4. Thus, their land would be destroyed in an invasion by Babylon's army, Gentiles who passed by their land would be appalled at its destruction, and God would scatter His people before their enemies since He would cease showing them His blessing in the day of their destruction, Jeremiah 18:16-17.
- D. The people of Judah and Jerusalem were spiritually so hard that they reacted to this message by planning to harm Jeremiah. They claimed that the current order of the teaching of the law by the priest, the counsel of the wise, and the word of the (false) prophets would not be destroyed, that Jeremiah's prediction of the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem was to be ignored and that he was to be attacked with their tongues, Jeremiah 18:18.
- E. Instead of vacillating in faith like he did back in Jeremiah 15:18, Jeremiah did what God had told him to do in Jeremiah 15:19c – he refused to adopt the viewpoint of the wicked people, opting instead to direct them to turn to his viewpoint! **This** time, aided by noting how **shockingly** rebellious were his people against their original, true God in replacing Him for other gods, what no pagans even did, Jeremiah stood against his sinful people:
 1. Jeremiah urged the Lord to listen to him, to hear what his accusers were saying, Jeremiah 18:19.
 2. He asked God if his good done for his hearers should be repaid by their evil, though they had dug a pit for Jeremiah, possibly a reference of a plot to kill him, Jeremiah 18:20a with 18:23a!
 3. Jeremiah asked God to remember how he had stood before Him and spoken in their behalf to turn away His wrath from them, but they had not heeded his edifying warning, Jeremiah 18:20b.
 4. Thus, Jeremiah asked the Lord to fulfill His prediction to punish the people with the famine and sword, that the people might cry when invaders suddenly came upon them, for the people of Judah and Jerusalem had dug a pit to capture him, they had hidden snares for his feet, and God knew about it, Jer. 18:21-23a.
 5. Jeremiah asked the Lord for vengeance, to deal with his foes in the time of His anger, Jeremiah 18:23b.

Lesson: Equipped with God's added, revealing exposure of the shocking level of rebellion of Jeremiah's hearers in doing what even Judah's pagan neighbors would not do in exchanging their God for other gods, Jeremiah sided with God's view of His people's great wickedness, and thus he stood up against them.

Application: To avoid being deceived in times of apostasy, may we heed God's revelation of what is shockingly evil in sinners around us as evidence of their error, that we respond to that shock by remaining loyal to God's truths.