

The Prophets

Lesson #27

Jeremiah 8:1-15:21

Outline

I. ***Prophecies From The Reign Of Josiah (1:1-20:18)***

- A. Jeremiah's temple address (7:1-10:25).
 - 1. Remonstrance with Israel (8:1-22).
 - a) Desecration of the graves (8:1-3).
 - b) The steadfastness of Israel in idolatry (8:4-7).
 - c) Penalty for Judah's infidelity (8:8-13).
 - d) The invading army (8:14-17).
 - e) The sorrow of Jeremiah (8:18-22).
 - 2. Sin and punishment (9:1-26).
 - a) The prophet's lament (9:1-2a).
 - b) The glaring sins of the day (9:2b-9).
 - c) The judgment threatened (9:10-16).
 - d) The universal lamentation (9:17-22).
 - e) The ultimate good (9:23-24).
 - f) Punishment for the uncircumcised in heart (9:25-26).
 - 3. Denunciation of idolatry (10:1-25).
 - a) The folly of idolatry (10:1-5).
 - b) The majesty of God (10:6-16).
 - c) Exile for sinning Israel (10:17-22).
 - d) Prayer for the nation (10:23-25).
- B. Signs to awaken repentance (11:1-20:18).
 - 1. The broken covenant (11:1-23).
 - a) The violation of the covenant (11:1-13).
 - b) Inadequacy of sacrifices (11:14-17).
 - c) Plot against Jeremiah's life (11:18-23).
 - 2. Punishment and promise (12:1-17).
 - a) The prosperity of the wicked (12:1-6).
 - b) Punishment on the ungodly (12:7-13).
 - c) Promise for the repentant nations (12:14-17).
 - 3. Corruption of the nation's life (13:1-27).
 - a) The marred linen belt (13:1-11).
 - b) The wine of God's wrath (13:12-14).
 - c) Warning against pride (13:15-17).
 - d) Tragedy in the royal house (13:18-19).
 - e) Captivity and shame of Judah (13:20-27).
 - 4. Drought and impending exile (14:1-22).
 - a) The critical drought (14:1-6).

- b) The confession of the nation (14:7-9).
- c) The Lord's answer in judgment (14:10-12).
- d) The doom of the false prophets (14:13-16).
- e) The grief of Jeremiah (14:17-18).
- f) Prayer of confession and plea for help (14:19-22).
- 5. Impending judgment and Jeremiah's complaints (15:1-21).
 - a) Prayer unavailing for Judah (15:1).
 - b) The punishment determined (15:2-9).
 - c) Jeremiah's complaint (15:10-11).
 - d) The inevitable judgment (15:12-14).
 - e) Jeremiah's charge against the Lord (15:15-18).
 - f) God's rebuke and encouragement (15:19-21).

Notes

Jeremiah 1:1-20:18

- Remonstrance with Israel (8:1-22).
 - Desecration of the graves (8:1-3).
 - God hints that their prayers to the "host of heaven" (cf. 19:13; 2 Kings 17:16; 21:3, 5; 23:4-5) are going to be answered -- when their bones are left in full view of those "hosts."
 - Their bodies will become the refuse in the place of refuse and survivors will prefer death when they should be rejoicing over their survival.
 - The steadfastness of Israel in idolatry (8:4-7).
 - A person cannot "twist" in one direction and then hold their body in that twisted position forever; eventually, they must "turn" back.
 - Unlike the gods they worship, gods who "have ears, but they hear not" (Psalm 115:6), the Lord hears, but there is nothing to be heard.
 - Penalty for Judah's infidelity (8:8-13).
 - The "wise" have actually shown their foolishness. Since it takes wisdom to run a household, the Lord declares them unfit to continue as heads of their own household.
 - The Lord has determined that He will remind them of the real source of their prosperity by taking it away from them.
 - The invading army (8:14-17).
 - We now see the Lord's response to the false message of the scribes, priests and prophets.
 - The people speak from a position of despair. Jeremiah's words are being proved true; the words of his opponents are being proved false.

- The sorrow of Jeremiah (8:18-22).
 - The impending destruction is interpreted by the people as evidence that God does not keep His promises. However, He has not been unfaithful to them; they have been unfaithful to Him.
 - Vss. 20-22 are some of the most sorrowful in the book. Jeremiah deeply grieves over the suffering of the people.
 - Gilead was a place of healing in a mountainous region of Palestine east of Jordan and north of Moab (cf. 46:11; Genesis 37:25).
 - The balm referred to is the resin or gum of the storax tree, which was used medicinally.
- Sin and punishment (9:1-26).
 - The prophet's lament (9:1-2a).
 - The news that Judah's illness is "terminal" sends Jeremiah into the deepest of anguish. His tears flow unabated.
 - He is so sad and ashamed that all he wants to do is get away in the desert, and separate himself from the one he loves.
 - The glaring sins of the day (9:2b-9).
 - In vs. 4, the Lord sarcastically says that the Israelites are truly living up to the names of the ancestors with their deceitful ways (i.e., "supplant" = Jacob; "slanders" = Rachel).
 - To "know the Lord" means more than being faithful to Him in worship and unstained from idols. It also calls for being just and righteous (cf. 22:16).
 - The judgment threatened (9:10-16).
 - God calls again for a time of refining; however, it will yield no positive results, nor produce any useful metal.
 - The Lord challenges any of the wise of the nation to state the cause of their calamities. The wise will see by God's enlightenment that departure from God must always lead to punishment.
 - The universal lamentation (9:17-22).
 - This section expands upon the theme of "lamentation" and "wailing," for these two terms are used a total of five times in four verses.
 - It should have been a time of great harvest, when grain and grapes were gathered. A harvest has been gathered, but it cannot nourish.
 - The ultimate good (9:23-24).
 - Just as the people have come to trust in the temple (7:14), so they have come to trust in the Law. It is as if they do not need the Lord anymore.
 - The Lord says one is truly wise, strong and wealthy when he understands and knows the Lord.

- Punishment for the uncircumcised in heart (9:25-26).
 - The people of Judah naturally think of their circumcision as a sign of how they are different from those around them.
 - The Lord is bringing the Babylonians to punish the “uncircumcised,” a punishment which will include the people of Judah.
- Denunciation of idolatry (10:1-25).
 - The folly of idolatry (10:1-5).
 - The people of Israel are obviously influenced by the much larger nations around them.
 - The “customs of the people are vain;” their gods are not to be feared, but ridiculed.
 - The majesty of God (10:6-16).
 - The Creator has been replaced by what the created has created, by that which will rot and decay.
 - The fact that God has made what is listed in vs. 13 and the idols did not implies that they have no power, wisdom or understanding.
 - Exile for sinning Israel (10:17-22).
 - The statement in vss. 17-18 strongly suggests a date late in the life of Jeremiah, most likely at the time of the final siege (588-586 B.C.).
 - There is no hope for repentance, no expectation of relief from the suffering. The patient looks for sympathy, but no remedy. A strong sense of hopelessness pervades these words.
 - Prayer for the nation (10:23-25).
 - We can never direct our lives so as to achieve blessing without God’s help. We cannot decide the course of our lives. God is in ultimate control (cf. Proverbs 16:9).
 - Jeremiah’s words indicate an internal struggle between acceptance of suffering and a desire for vindication.
 - Such suffering is usually met with resentment, but Jeremiah knows that suffering is a part of life, whether “deserved” or not. He sees the suffering as a part of his education (cf. James 1:2-8; 1 Peter 1:6-7).
- Signs to awaken repentance (11:1-20:18).
 - The broken covenant (11:1-23).
 - The violation of the covenant (11:1-13).
 - The Lord describes the covenant in terms of a curse. Jeremiah implies that an obedient attitude must permeate the people’s attitude toward their relationship with the Lord.
 - Since the establishment of the covenant, God had warned them again and again, but they had not carried out the most basic obli-

gation. This was indicative of a deeper problem; their hearts were not receptive.

- Inadequacy of sacrifices (11:14-17).
 - Jerusalem is God's beloved (cf. Isaiah 5:1-7), yet she turns to sacrifice in search of help.
 - The Lord had planted the olive tree and been pleased with its progress at one time. Now, God has decreed disaster for them.
- Plot against Jeremiah's life (11:18-23).
 - This section is full of personal laments, similar in form to many of the Psalms and the lament of Job in Job 3.
 - There is a marked contrast between the attitude of these enemies and the attitude of the Lord toward Jeremiah.
- Punishment and promise (12:1-17).
 - The prosperity of the wicked (12:1-6).
 - Jeremiah questions the fact that the wicked prosper while he himself is always faithful but oppressed, yet the Lord seems to do nothing to show His support for Jeremiah and His disapproval of Jeremiah's enemies.
 - The Lord states that there has been official opposition to Jeremiah's prophecies, but now it is going to be worse because it is going to be his own relatives who persecute him.
 - Punishment on the ungodly (12:7-13).
 - Two aspects of the description of destruction stand out. One is its completeness. The second is that the true destroyer is the Lord.
 - The Babylonians are to get none of the credit for their victory over Judah; it is completely the Lord's doing.
 - Promise for the repentant nations (12:14-17).
 - This section holds out hope for Judah and her evil neighbors (cf. Isaiah 2:1-4; 56:6-8; Micah 4:1-3).
 - Judah has been learning the way of the nations; now the nations can learn the ways of Judah.
- Corruption of the nation's life (13:1-27).
 - The marred linen belt (13:1-11).
 - The damaged garment's condition is used as an illustration of how Judah was protected and cherished by the Lord, yet it has been corrupted by its chosen disobedience and idolatry.
 - Had they been humble and faithful and listened to the Lord, they would have been a people of renown, praise and honor.
 - The wine of God's wrath (13:12-14).
 - The people are wineskins, and the Lord is filling them with the by-product of wine: drunkenness.
 - The recipients of this divine wrath are Jeremiah's primary enemies, who have been mentioned previously (cf. 1:18; 2:26; 8:1).

- The strong language in vs. 14 is the same language used by David when he condemns the man who stole the ewe lamb (2 Samuel 12:6).
- Warning against pride (13:15-17).
 - The people think that they do not need to hear anything more from the Lord. Jeremiah tries to open their eyes to reality.
 - Jeremiah does not gloat at this gloomy picture. His reaction is one of compassion and grief. This is the attitude of the true prophet.
- Tragedy in the royal house (13:18-19).
 - The message to the king (Jehoiachin) and his mother (Nehushta) is brief. They are going to lose all sense of pride.
 - Everyone is going into exile, even persons in the remotest regions. There will be no nation left to rule, nothing in which to take pride, no reason to wear a crown.
- Captivity and shame of Judah (13:20-27).
 - The Lord addresses Jerusalem using a mixture of images, alternating back and forth between accusation of sin and pronouncement of judgment.
 - The Lord will "expose" them (vss. 22, 26-27), allowing the Babylonians to conquer them and plunder their land.
- Drought and impending exile (14:1-22).
 - The critical drought (14:1-6).
 - This lament is expressed in terms of the sights and sounds of severe drought; even the cisterns have gone dry.
 - There is nowhere for anyone to go for water. The people long for the sound of raindrops, but all that one hears is a wail and cry.
 - The confession of the nation (14:7-9).
 - The people's words of repentance seem quite sincere, and they probably are, but the Lord's response shows that they are "too little, too late."
 - The Lord who is among them is a jealous God. He will respond negatively against the presence of any other gods among His people.
 - If the Lord finds any evil, He will act to remove those who have introduced it to the land, even if those include His people.
- The Lord's answer in judgment (14:10-12).
 - God has heard words of repentance before, yet that has never heralded the end of their infidelity. He has heard enough, so He does not accept their repentance now.
 - In using the terms "sword," "famine" and "pestilence," the Lord is stating that all hope for deliverance is now gone. In their future lies only siege and captivity.

- The doom of the false prophets (14:13-16).
 - The message in vs. 13 is a clear example of the fact that biblical prophets were completely conscious as they carried out their prophetic work.
 - The Lord's response is that He has not sent those other prophets. Their punishment will fit their crime.
- The grief of Jeremiah (14:17-18).
 - These verses reveal the Lord's own emotional reaction to the suffering which He Himself has brought on His own people.
 - The human suffering has been judged necessary by the Lord, but the sin that provoked it has not diminished the Lord's basic love for His people, even for the prophet and priest who have opposed Jeremiah.
- Prayer of confession and plea for help (14:19-22).
 - The nation now pleads its own case with the Lord. The questions are more intense. The people cannot believe that the Lord has irretrievably cast them off.
 - The people again express what appears to be sincere remorse for their sins. They profess Him as the true Creator, while the idols they had been worshiping are worthless.
- Impending judgment and Jeremiah's complaints (15:1-21).
 - Prayer unavailing for Judah (15:1).
 - The Lord refuses to turn aside judgment from His people; His decision to punish them is irreversible. Therefore the continued intercession of Jeremiah or of any others cannot succeed.
 - The people's habitual sin has placed them beyond the power of prayer. The Lord commands that the nation be sent from His presence. No longer can He tolerate them, nor does He want Jeremiah to keep reminding Him of them.
 - The punishment determined (15:2-9).
 - As the people go out, there are four "destinations" awaiting them; but, at least they have a choice.
 - The Lord further uses a series of rhetorical questions to reveal that He will show no pity to Jerusalem.
 - Because they refuse to change, the Lord refuses to change His plans for their destruction.
- Jeremiah's complaint (15:10-11).
 - Like Job, Jeremiah expresses the extreme thought that he would have preferred never to be born, considering his present predicament.
 - The Lord responds with great reassurance. Those cursing Jeremiah now will ask him later for help. Ultimately, they will recognize his value.

- The inevitable judgment (15:12-14).
 - The “northern steel” removes any doubt that Jeremiah is talking about the Babylonians (cf. 1:14-15; 4:6; 6:1).
 - God’s wrath against their sin would not be satisfied until all was plundered and taken to Babylon.
- Jeremiah’s charge against the Lord (15:15-18).
 - Jeremiah’s tone gradually shifts from appreciative to resentful, and the Lord’s tone shifts from accusatory to reassuring.
 - Jeremiah complains bitterly that the Lord has not followed through on His promise to comfort him in times of pain.
- God’s rebuke and encouragement (15:19-21).
 - Just because Jeremiah’s enemies have not yet been silenced, he cannot assume that the Lord has abandoned him.
 - His own repentance and consent to God will serve as an example to the people of how they are to react to His rebuke.