

# Jeremiah 8-9

Bible Study

## Review

Chapter 6—Finishes Jeremiah's 2<sup>nd</sup> sermon (Judgment against Judah for wickedness)

- Picture of Jerusalem under siege by the Babylonians (12-15 years before it happened)

The false prophets are called out for deceiving the people

- God's law was being twisted by them
- Judgment is coming upon all of them

Chapter 7 "The temple sermon"—The hypocrisy of the people

- People were coming to worship at the temple, but not to worship the Lord  
God tells them to change their ways and if they do, they will live in the land
- The false prophets gave lying words to the people— 'nothing will happen to the temple'

Specific evils by the people:

Worship of the queen of heaven...setting up idols in the temple...passing their sons and daughters in the fire

- Judgment is coming and there will be **terrible slaughter**



33 The corpses of this people will be food for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth. And no one will frighten them away. (Dead lying in the open, unburied)

34 Then I will cause to cease from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. For the land shall be desolate.

## Chapter 8

Continuation of the temple sermon (Ch. 7-10)

v.1-3 Continues the time of future slaughter in Jerusalem

<sup>1</sup> At that time," says the Lord, "they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of its princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves.

v. 1 "At that time" —points to the future, a time of judgment...but for Judah, it means the not too distant future in Jeremiah's day

It was a known practice in the ancient world, for an invading enemy to dig up the bones of the defeated people and to spread them on the earth...signifying their power and scorn over their defeated foe

The entire population is cited as being dug up from their graves

The leadership is mentioned first, (kings, princes, priests, prophets, then the common people)

- The leaders, especially the prophets and priests had led the people down the path of paganism
  - The specific paganism is mentioned in the next verse

2 They shall spread them before the sun and the moon and all the host of heaven, which they have loved and which they have served and after which they have walked, which they have sought and which they have worshiped. They shall not be gathered nor buried; they shall be like refuse on the face of the earth.

3 Then death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue of those who remain of this evil family, who remain in all the places where I have driven them,” says the Lord of hosts.

v. 2 The enemy will spread the bones of the dead out in the open before the gods which they had worshipped

➤ The worship of the sun, moon, stars and all the host of heaven (The people thought these gods could save them)

v. 2 [Mid. Part] “They shall not be gathered or buried”

Instead of a proper burial they will be spread out as fertilizer upon the earth

➤ Symbolizing their judgment for their pagan worship

v. 3 For those who survive the enemy onslaught (residue who remain)...death would be preferred to life for all the abuses that would take place

False teaching and the stubbornness of the people (v. 4-7)

God tells Jeremiah what to say to the people, in the form of a series of questions

4 “Moreover you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Will they fall and not rise? Will one turn away and not return?”

5 Why has this people slidden back, Jerusalem, in a perpetual backsliding? They hold fast to deceit, They refuse to return.

v. 4 If a person falls, they naturally try to get up...if one turns away from the right path, would they not try to return back? (They were constantly turning away from God)

v. 5 They have gone back away from God, even a continual backsliding

“backsliding” (Heb. *meshuba*)= apostasy, turning away

- They listen to and believe deceit, coming from the false prophets...and they refuse to return back to God

6 I listened and heard, But they do not speak aright. No man repented of his wickedness, Saying, 'What have I done?' Everyone turned to his own course, As the horse rushes into the battle.

7 "Even the stork in the heavens Knows her appointed times; And the turtledove, the swift, and the swallow Observe the time of their coming. But My people do not know the judgment of the Lord.

v. 6 God was attentive to see if there would be change, but no one repented of their wickedness

- They all continued down the course/path of sin like a horse charging into battle

v. 7 The birds know their proper time to migrate...

But the people of Judah and Jerusalem do not recognize nor realize that it is time to repent before judgment comes

v. 8-12 The deception of the religious leaders

8 “How can you say, ‘We are wise, And the law of the Lord is with us’? Look, the false pen of the scribe certainly works falsehood.

9 The wise men are ashamed, They are dismayed and taken. Behold, they have rejected the word of the Lord; So what wisdom do they have?

v. 8 “wise”—were those who were supposed to teach and preserve the law  
The “false pen” ... “works falsehood”—their interpretations are false

“scribe”—1<sup>st</sup> mention in the O.T... “experts in the law”

- They were twisting and falsifying its message

v. 9 The ‘wise men’ of the day rejected God’s word...so they are not so wise

Romans 1: 22

“Professing to be wise, they became fools”

v. 10-12 Warning of judgment: Repeated from Ch. 6: 12-15 for emphasis

10 Therefore I will give their wives to others, And their fields to those who will inherit them; Because from the least even to the greatest Everyone is given to covetousness; From the prophet even to the priest Everyone deals falsely.

11 For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, Saying, 'Peace, peace!' When there is no peace.

12 Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed, Nor did they know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; In the time of their punishment They shall be cast down," says the Lord.

v. 10 Their wives will go into exile (Babylonian exile)...the fields/crops to the conqueror

- The reason: everyone is focused on greed and themselves
- The prophet and priest, the leaders are the most guilty

v. 11 The prophets and priests damaged the people in what they say...declaring peace when war was coming

- v. 12 They should have been ashamed for their deception, but were not
- "Therefore they shall fall...shall be cast down"—punishment for their deception

v. 13-17 No escape from the judgment

13 “I will surely consume them,” says the Lord. “No grapes shall be on the vine, Nor figs on the fig tree, And the leaf shall fade; And the things I have given them shall pass away from them.”

14 “Why do we sit still? Assemble yourselves, And let us enter the fortified cities, And let us be silent there. For the Lord our God has put us to silence And given us water of gall to drink, Because we have sinned against the Lord.

v. 13 At the time of judgment there will be no harvest

The blessing of the harvest will ‘pass away from them’

v. 14-16 Jeremiah pictures the panic of the time

v. 14 Jeremiah quotes what the people will say: Let’s flee to the “fortified cities”—in the countryside and take refuge

Their reasoning: to stay in the walled city (Jerusalem) would leave them with water of gall to drink (stagnant water)

v. 14 [Last part] “Because we have sinned against the Lord”

- Jeremiah states what they should say

15 “We looked for peace, but no good came; And for a time of health, and there was trouble!

16 The snorting of His horses was heard from Dan. The whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of His strong ones; For they have come and devoured the land and all that is in it, The city and those who dwell in it.

17 For behold, I will send serpents among you, Vipers which cannot be charmed, And they shall bite you,” says the Lord.

v. 15-16 Jeremiah continues picturing the panic of invasion  
Any hopes for peace are gone...the judgment was coming

v. 16 The enemies horses could be heard coming from Dan (to the extreme north)...coming from the north

v. 17 Serpents and vipers—metaphors for the destructive enemy (Babylon)

Jeremiah mourns/laments for the people (v. 18—9: 26)

This section contains **dialog** between Jeremiah, God and the people

18 I would comfort myself in sorrow; My heart is faint in me.

19 Listen! The voice, The cry of the daughter of My people— From a far country: “Is not the Lord in Zion? Is not her King in her?” “Why have they provoked Me to anger With their carved images— With foreign idols?”

v. 18 Jeremiah laments because invasion is coming (1<sup>st</sup> lament)

- He mourns/laments for the fate and suffering of the people

v. 19 [1<sup>st</sup> part] Jeremiah hears future words of **the people** in their exiled state...because of their situation they say:  
Is not God’s presence is in Jerusalem? and the anointed king reigning?

v. 19 [Last part] God’s answer: He is no longer there where idols have been set up

- The problem is not God’s absence from Zion/Jerusalem... but the people’s sin

20 “The harvest is past, The summer is ended, And we are not saved!”

21 For the hurt of the daughter of my people I am hurt. I am mourning; Astonishment has taken hold of me.

22 Is there no balm in Gilead, Is there no physician there? Why then is there no recovery For the health of the daughter of my people?

v. 20 Another response from the people—time has gone by (summer ending) and they have not been rescued from their exile...

- They are blind to their sin/rebellion and seem to blame God

v. 21-22 Jeremiah responds—he feels the pain, and astonishment at their ignorance of their sin

v. 22 The people are in need of a physician (because of their spiritual blindness)

“no balm in Gilead” (to heal the people)—resin from a tree (styrax tree) that was used to treat wounds...they had deep spiritual wounds

1 Oh, that my head were waters, And my eyes a fountain of tears, That I might weep day and night For the slain of the daughter of my people!

2 Oh, that I had in the wilderness— A lodging place for travelers; That I might leave my people, And go from them!

For they are all adulterers, An assembly of treacherous men.

v. 1 Jeremiah feels devastated because of the fate of the people, he continues mourning for them

- Many commentators believe verse one should be part of chapter 8 (it is in the Hebrew text)

➤ His grief for the people's suffering caused him to wish that his eyes would be a fountain of tears so that he could continually weep for those who have been slain

v. 2 [1<sup>st</sup> part] He felt like living in an isolated place in the desert was better than living with unfaithful people

v. 2 [Last part] God interjects

He points out the glaring sins of the people (spiritual adulterers)

v.3-6 The people do not speak the truth

3 And like their bow they have bent their tongues for lies. They are not valiant for the truth on the earth. For they proceed from evil to evil, And they do not know Me,” says the Lord.

4 “Everyone take heed to his neighbor, And do not trust any brother; For every brother will utterly supplant, And every neighbor will walk with slanderers.

v. 3 God speaks: They were known for lying...do not seek nor speak the truth...constant evil doers

“they do not know Me” —They do not know who the true God is...the God of truth

v. 4 Friends and neighbors betray one another, they slander one another

5 Everyone will deceive his neighbor, And will not speak the truth; They have taught their tongue to speak lies; They weary themselves to commit iniquity.

6 Your dwelling place is in the midst of deceit; Through deceit they refuse to know Me,” says the Lord.

v. 5 The whole society was being torn apart as no one was speaking the truth

Lies come out when they open their mouths and iniquity abounds

v. 6 Jeremiah's dwelling place (his nation) was full of deceit, and the people refuse to acknowledge God

v. 7-9 God will test/try the people because of sin (a new oracle)

7 Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts: “Behold, I will refine them and try them; For how shall I deal with the daughter of My people?”

8 Their tongue is an arrow shot out; It speaks deceit; One speaks peaceably to his neighbor with his mouth, But in his heart he lies in wait. Shall I not punish them for these things?” says the Lord.

9 “Shall I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this?”

- v. 7 God says He will refine/test the people to see how He will deal with the people
  - Test them as one who tests metals to see if they are pure

v. 8 The results are: they are deceitful, and their tongues are weapons

- They speak pleasant words to their neighbor, but the intent of the heart is to hurt  
[Last part] God will judge them because of their deceit

v. 9 “Shall I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this”= there is no alternative but judgment

v. 10-16 The judgment comes: a desolation is left (2<sup>nd</sup> lament)

10 I will take up a weeping and wailing for the mountains, And for the dwelling places of the wilderness a lamentation, Because they are burned up, So that no one can pass through; Nor can men hear the voice of the cattle. Both the birds of the heavens and the beasts have fled; They are gone.

11 "I will make Jerusalem a heap of ruins, a den of jackals. I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant."

v. 10 Jeremiah laments for the desolation caused by the armies (Babylonian) passing through, the land is desolated and abandoned

v. 10 God states that Jerusalem will be destroyed (He allows it), along with the other cities of Judah

## The reasons for the punishment

12 Who is the wise man who may understand this? And who is he to whom the mouth of the Lord has spoken, that he may declare it? Why does the land perish and burn up like a wilderness, so that no one can pass through?

13 And the Lord said, “Because they have forsaken My law which I set before them, and have not obeyed My voice, nor walked according to it,

14 but they have walked according to the dictates of their own hearts and after the Baals, which their fathers taught them,”

15 therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Behold, I will feed them, this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink.

16 I will scatter them also among the Gentiles, whom neither they nor their fathers have known. And I will send a sword after them until I have consumed them.”

v. 12 [Last part] “Why is the land burned up to leave a wilderness?”  
v. 13 The reason: The people have forsaken God and do not obey Him

v. 14 Specifics of disobedience: Following their own hearts—resisting God  
And following the Baals—the pagan god of each town

v. 15 The judgment for disobedience: bitter food (wormwood) and poisoned water

v. 16 They will be scattered widely among other nations...and many will die by the sword

v. 17-22 Because of judgment the people mourn (3<sup>rd</sup> lament)

17 Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Consider and call for the mourning women, That they may come; And send for skillful wailing women, That they may come.

18 Let them make haste And take up a wailing for us, That our eyes may run with tears, And our eyelids gush with water.

19 For a voice of wailing is heard from Zion: 'How we are plundered! We are greatly ashamed, Because we have forsaken the land, Because we have been cast out of our dwellings.' "

v. 17-18 God calls for mourning women and even 'skillful' (professional) mourning women to come, and to mourn for the people, to the point that tears overflow their eyes

v. 19 Mourning and wailing is heard from Jerusalem, because of the judgment  
They leave the land because of the destruction

20 Yet hear the word of the Lord, O women, And let your ear receive the word of His mouth; Teach your daughters wailing, And everyone her neighbor a lamentation.

21 For death has come through our windows, Has entered our palaces, To kill off the children—no longer to be outside! And the young men—no longer on the streets!

22 Speak, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Even the carcasses of men shall fall as refuse on the open field, Like cuttings after the harvester, And no one shall gather them.’ ”

v. 20 -21 The mourning women are to teach their daughters to wail...because the death will reach to the next generation

v. 22 The dead bodies will not even receive a burial but will lie out in the open field

## Two universal truths (v. 23-24)

23 Thus says the Lord: “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches

24 But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,” says the Lord.

v. 23 To those who trust in the material rather than God

- God warns through Jeremiah to those who have wisdom (worldly), have might, and have riches...not to put their trust in these things

v. 24 Better to know God and execute lovingkindness, judgment and righteousness

25 “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “that I will punish all who are circumcised with the uncircumcised—Egypt, Judah, Edom, the people of Ammon, Moab, and all who are in the farthest corners, who dwell in the wilderness.

26 For all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart.”

v. 25 The nations listed here all practiced physical circumcision (They all fall to Babylon)

- The people of Judah and Jerusalem cannot rely on their circumcision to protect them from judgment

v. 26 These nations are spiritually uncircumcised...and what God demands of Israel is circumcision of the heart

## Lessons

Thus says the Lord: “Will they fall and not rise? Will one turn away and not return?”

Proverbs 24:16 “For a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again, but the wicked will fall by calamity”

- When we make mistakes, and fall, we get up and return to God in repentance

God warns through Jeremiah to those who have wisdom (worldly), have might, and have riches...not to put their trust in these things

- Better to know God and execute lovingkindness, judgment and righteousness (Put God first)