

Jeremiah 10-11

Bible Study

Chapter 10 finishes Jeremiah's temple sermons—during Jehoiakim's reign

Chapter 11 is a new message, it emphasizes to be faithful to the covenant

Review

Chapter 8—Continuation of a sermon at the temple

- Future slaughter in Jerusalem for worshipping the pagan gods
 - False teaching and deception of the religious leaders
- Warning of coming judgment of which there would be no escape
 - Jeremiah mourns/laments for the people

Chapter 9—Grief for the nation...sin and punishment

- Although Jeremiah mourns, God says the people are treacherous and speak falsely
 - Judgment is coming and desolation will be left
- The reasons for the punishment: their disobedience and following the Baals

Chapter 10

The temple sermons end

- God's rejection of pagan practices/idols

1 Hear the word which the Lord speaks to you, O house of Israel.

2 Thus says the Lord: "Do not learn the way of the Gentiles; Do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, For the Gentiles are dismayed at them.

3 For the customs of the peoples are futile; For one cuts a tree from the forest, The work of the hands of the workman, with the ax.

v. 1 "house of Israel"—the whole nation

- However the northern tribes were in captivity, they did not hear this message

v. 2 "way of the Gentiles"—the pagan religions

"signs of heaven"—astrological signs...the sun, moon and stars being worshipped

- At the time of the winter solstice they would light fires and make sacrifices to get the sun up higher

v. 3 'cutting a tree"—1st step in making an idol

Evergreen trees were also used for worship at the time of the winter solstice, because they represented life during the winter months

The folly of using human-made objects in worship

4 They decorate it with silver and gold; They fasten it with nails and hammers So that it will not topple.

5 They are upright, like a palm tree, And they cannot speak; They must be carried, Because they cannot go by themselves. Do not be afraid of them, For they cannot do evil, Nor can they do any good.”

v. 4 They fastened both the idol and tree upright and decorated it

- Fastening and decorating a tree has continued down to our day

v. 5 The idols involved in this worship cannot speak and must be carried

- Trees also in the ancient world were set up as idols and worshipped

(Bible Knowledge Commentary) “The spreading (green) tree was significant for the Canaanite worship of fertility deities”

Deuteronomy 16: 21 (God’s warning)

You shall not plant for yourself any tree, as a wooden image, near the altar which you build for yourself to the Lord your God.

Comparing God's greatness with futile idols

6 Inasmuch as there is none like You, O Lord (You are great, and Your name is great in might),
7 Who would not fear You, O King of the nations? For this is Your rightful due. For among all the wise men of the nations, And in all their kingdoms, There is none like You.

8 But they are altogether dull-hearted and foolish; A wooden idol is a worthless doctrine.

v. 6-7 God is powerful and to be feared by all the nations... “there is none like You”

- He should be worshipped rather than adhering to the religions of the other nations

v. 8 Idols are objects made with human hands

- Worthless—not able to help anyone (physically or spiritually)

Isaiah 44:10

Who would form a god or mold an image that profits him nothing?

9 Silver is beaten into plates; It is brought from Tarshish, And gold from Uphaz, The work of the craftsman And of the hands of the metalsmith; Blue and purple are their clothing; They are all the work of skillful men.

10 But the Lord is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth will tremble, And the nations will not be able to endure His indignation.

v.9 Tarshish and Uphaz were places well known for their gold and silver used in making idols

- The idols were also adorned with blue and purple (expensive fabrics)

v. 10 Even though idols were made with valuable materials they are not living

God however is the living God and everlasting King...the earth shakes at His wrath and the nations at His anger

- Idolatry will be destroyed when Christ returns

11 Thus you shall say to them: “The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens.”

12 He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, And has stretched out the heavens at His discretion.

13 When He utters His voice, There is a multitude of waters in the heavens: “And He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth. He makes lightning for the rain, He brings the wind out of His treasures.”

v. 11 Written in Aramaic, the **language of Babylon**...as if directed to their leadership

➤ A message to them: In the end, all idols and false gods will be destroyed

v. 12 God is the creator of all things, even the heavens which people have worshipped through the ages

v. 13 [Last part] is quoted in Psalm 135: 7

Psalm 135: 7

He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; He makes lightning for the rain; He brings the wind out of His treasures.

Verses 12-16 are repeated in chapter 51: 15-19 (Babylon falls)

Addressing the idol makers

14 Everyone is dull-hearted, without knowledge; Every metalsmith is put to shame by an image; For his molded image is falsehood, And there is no breath in them.

15 They are futile, a work of errors; In the time of their punishment they shall perish.

16 The Portion of Jacob is not like them, For He is the Maker of all things, And Israel is the tribe of His inheritance; The Lord of hosts is His name.

v. 14-15 The futility of idol worship which must be made by a metalsmith

- When judgment comes they will perish

v. 16 The true God is the creator of everything and he has aligned Himself with His people

“portion” (Heb. *kheliq*)= to divide up
Someone’s portion becomes their possession

- God has a special portion or inheritance in Israel

Deuteronomy 32:9

For the Lord’s portion is His people; Jacob is the place of His inheritance

The coming captivity of Judah—into exile

17 Gather up your wares from the land, O inhabitant of the fortress!

18 For thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will throw out at this time The inhabitants of the land, And will distress them,
That they may find it so.”

v. 17 Judah is pictured under its future siege—possibly 597 BC or most likely 586

- Exiled prisoners often carried household goods on their heads as they are led away
 - This is dual also addressing a siege in the future

v. 18 God says that He will throw the people out of the land

v. 19-22 A woe oracle by Jeremiah, representing the people of the land

19 Woe is me for my hurt! My wound is severe. But I say, “Truly this is an infirmity, And I must bear it.”

20 My tent is plundered, And all my cords are broken; My children have gone from me, And they are no more. There is no one to pitch my tent anymore, Or set up my curtains.

v. 19 Jeremiah cries as he identifies with the people's hurt...but it comes upon the people because of their sin

v. 20 plundered tent, cords broken= habitations destroyed in the land

- Children gone—into exile as a result of the judgment

Judgment upon the people of the land

21 For the shepherds have become dull-hearted, And have not sought the Lord; Therefore they shall not prosper,
And all their flocks shall be scattered.

22 Behold, the noise of the report has come, And a great commotion out of the north country, To make the cities of
Judah desolate, a den of jackals.

v. 21 The shepherds/leaders do not seek God...do not prosper spiritually, and the people shall scatter into exile

v. 22 The report of war coming from the north (the Babylonians) who destroy the cities of Judah,
leaving them a place fit only for the jackals (wild animals)

Jeremiah's prayer to God

23 O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.

24 O Lord, correct me, but with justice; Not in Your anger, lest You bring me to nothing.

25 Pour out Your fury on the Gentiles, who do not know You, And on the families who do not call on Your name; For they have eaten up Jacob, Devoured him and consumed him, And made his dwelling place desolate.

v.23 Jeremiah admits that man cannot find the right path, he needs God to direct his steps

Proverbs 16:9

A man's heart plans his way, But the Lord directs his steps.

v. 24 Representing the people, He asks that God's judgment be done according to His justice

v. 25 He asks God to pour out His judgment on the nations who have devoured the house of Jacob

Chapter 11

“The broken covenant” (4th message)

The historical setting begins during the reign of Josiah and moves to the reign of Jehoiakim

1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying,

2 “Hear the words of this covenant, and speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem;

3 and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: “Cursed is the man who does not obey the words of this covenant

v. 2 “Hear the words of this covenant”

(Word Com.) “The Mosaic covenant as recorded in Deuteronomy **was reaffirmed** in the time of Josiah”

➤ The last good king in Judah when Jeremiah began his ministry (II Kings 23)--reforms

v. 3 God instructs Jeremiah to tell the people of Judah and Jerusalem that they will reap the curses for having broken the covenant

God continues instructing Jeremiah what to tell the people

4 which I commanded your fathers in the day I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, 'Obey My voice, and do according to all that I command you; so shall you be My people, and I will be your God,'
5 that I may establish the oath which I have sworn to your fathers, to give them 'a land flowing with milk and honey,' as it is this day." ' ' " And I answered and said, "So be it, Lord."

v. 4 Reminding them of the covenant made at Sinai

(Deuteronomy 27: 15-26)—curses for disobedience

v. 5 Jeremiah confirmed the absolute validity of the covenant by saying "So be it, Lord" (Amen)

6 Then the Lord said to me, “Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying:
‘Hear the words of this covenant and do them.

7 For I earnestly exhorted your fathers in the day I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, until this day, rising
early and exhorting, saying, “Obey My voice.”

8 Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but everyone followed the dictates of his evil heart; therefore I will bring
upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do, but which they have not done.’ ”

v. 6-7 Jeremiah was to proclaim to all the people in all of the cities of Judah
➤ To adhere to the terms of the covenant and obey God

v. 8 “followed the dictates of his evil heart”—their disobedience

v. 8 [Mid part] “I will bring upon them all the words of the covenant”—the cursing for disobedience

9 And the Lord said to me, “A conspiracy has been found among the men of Judah and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

10 They have turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers who refused to hear My words, and they have gone after other gods to serve them; the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken My covenant which I made with their fathers.”

v. 9 (Expositors) “The Hebrew word *qeser* may better be translated ‘revolt’”

- The conspiracy was a deliberate and planned revolt by the people to Josiah’s reform, and not to follow God
 - After Josiah died, the people returned to their idolatry and rebellion against God
 - (During the reign of Jehoiakim they went full tilt into idolatry)

The conspiracy (revolt) is defined in the 1st part of verse 10

v. 10 [Last part] Both the house of Israel, which was already in captivity, and the house of Judah broke the covenant in disobedience

11 Therefore thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will surely bring calamity on them which they will not be able to escape; and though they cry out to Me, I will not listen to them.

12 Then the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will go and cry out to the gods to whom they offer incense, but they will not save them at all in the time of their trouble.

v. 11 The judgment/calamity upon the people—there will be no escape...though they cry to God at the last minute, He will not hear

v. 12 The people will turn to their false gods to save them, but they who do not exist, cannot help

Pagan altars in all of their streets

13 For according to the number of your cities were your gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem you have set up altars to that shameful thing, altars to burn incense to Baal.

14 “So do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them; for I will not hear them in the time that they cry out to Me because of their trouble.

v. 13 The revolt against God was so widespread that false gods were set up in every city of Judah, and on every street

- Altars set up to worship Baal

v. 14 The people are so far gone in their pagan worship that even praying for them will not effect the judgment to come upon them

- They are beyond the point where prayer can help

15 What has My beloved to do in My house, Having done lewd deeds with many? And the holy flesh has passed from you. When you do evil, then you rejoice.

16 The Lord called your name, Green Olive Tree, Lovely and of Good Fruit. With the noise of a great tumult He has kindled fire on it, And its branches are broken.

17 For the Lord of hosts, who planted you, has pronounced doom against you for the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke Me to anger in offering incense to Baal.”

v. 15 Hypocrisy of the people—they are in the temple but doing/plotting evil

- They sacrifice: ‘holy flesh’ (consecrated meat)...but their joy comes from evil deeds

v. 16 At one time Israel was productive like a thriving olive tree

- The great tumult of God’s judgment comes upon Israel for its idolatry

v. 17 Both Israel and Judah have brought the doom upon themselves...Baal worship is singled out

The life of Jeremiah is threatened [v. 18—12:6] (God's word had been rejected, as well as its messenger)

18 Now the Lord gave me knowledge of it, and I know it; for You showed me their doings.

19 But I was like a docile lamb brought to the slaughter; and I did not know that they had devised schemes against me, saying, "Let us destroy the tree with its fruit, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be remembered no more."

v. 18 "knowledge of it"—God made Jeremiah aware of the plot against his life

- He was very unpopular because of his message of judgment against the nation because of their sins
- God made it clear that His judgment for those who wanted to take his life were from his home town of Anathoth (v.21-23)

v. 19 "like a docile lamb"—imagery of Christ's sacrifice

[Mid. Part] "I did not know that they had devised schemes against me"—Jeremiah was surprised because many were people of his own family and priests

Jeremiah's prayer to God for intervention

20 But, O Lord of hosts, You who judge righteously, Testing the mind and the heart, Let me see Your vengeance on them, For to You I have revealed my cause.

Jeremiah calls on God to avenge him, as He is the righteous judge

- He also pleads for vengeance upon his enemies

“testing the mind and heart”

Psalm 7: 9

“Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, But establish the just; For the righteous God tests the hearts and minds”

God's response to Jeremiah

21 Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the men of Anathoth who seek your life, saying, 'Do not prophesy in the name of the Lord, lest you die by our hand'—
22 therefore thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Behold, I will punish them. The young men shall die by the sword, their sons and their daughters shall die by famine;
23 and there shall be no remnant of them, for I will bring catastrophe on the men of Anathoth, even the year of their punishment.' ”

v. 21-22 God calls for judgment upon the men of Anathoth (His home town) who plotted to kill Jeremiah

- They would be killed by the sword and not even a remnant would be left

v. 23 [Last part] “the year of their punishment—Fulfilled when the Babylonians conquered the nation

Lessons

Jer. 10: 8 'A wooden idol is a worthless doctrine'.

Isaiah 44:10

'Who would form a god or mold an image that profits him nothing'?

- We have to be careful not to put our trust in money, fame or man as our idols

Jer. 10:23

'O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps'.

- We need God to direct our steps

God is the righteous judge, He tests the hearts and minds

- We need to have our hearts and minds aligned with His will and way of life