

God Promises Soon and Swift Punishment, But Also Restoration

Jeremiah 16

Outline

- 1-4 | Jeremiah told not to marry and start a family in Jerusalem
- 5-9 | God promises to bring about these things in Jeremiah's lifetime
- 10-13 | The people will ask why and Jeremiah is to tell them it is because of idolatry in the past and in the present and that each one of them walking in "the stubbornness of his own evil heart"
- 14-15 | Just as God promises soon calamity, He also promises restoration
- 16-18 | Nothing is hidden from God's view and He will judge and punish
- 19-20 | "Can man make gods for himself?"
- 21 | God's promise to reveal Himself, His power and might, and His name

Reflections

If you ever wonder why people or a nation is brought under God's judgment, it is because of the very same things that are told to Jeremiah in verse 11: idolatry and forsaking God's law. The real motive for why people continue to do this is given by God as well in verse 12 (underlining added).

Jeremiah 16:12 NASB "You too have done evil, even more than your forefathers; for behold, you are each one walking according to the stubbornness of his own evil heart, without listening to Me.

Dictionary.com¹ give this definition of stubborn: "unreasonably obstinate; obstinately unmoving" and adds the following synonyms: contrary, intractable, refractory, unyielding, headstrong, obdurate. The 1828 Webster Dictionary of American English expands the definition: "Unreasonably obstinate; inflexibly fixed in opinion; not to be moved or persuaded by reasons; inflexible; as a stubborn son; a stubborn mind or soul."

The Hebrew word that is translated as stubbornness is שְׁרִירוּת - [(H8307²) sherim yrûthsher-ee-rooth]. According to the Complete Word Study Dictionary³ this particular word is only used 10 times in the Old Testament and it is always used in connection with another word meaning heart and the combination is always used in a context of describing disobedient Israel.

Deuteronomy 29:19; Psalms 81:12; Jeremiah 3:17; 7:24; 9:14; 11:8; 13:10; 16:12; 18:12; 23:17

God predicted that this would happen through Moses in Deuteronomy and again in Psalm 81, the psalmist laments that the Lord will have to do this yet wanting desperately to bless rather than punish. Listen to the voice of the Lord as you read from Psalm 81.

Psalms 81:11-16

11 "But My people did not listen to My voice,
And Israel did not obey Me.

12 "So I gave them over to the stubbornness of their heart,
To walk in their own devices.

1 "stubbornness." Dictionary.com Unabridged. Random House, Inc. 24 Jul. 2015. <Dictionary.com <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/stubbornness>>.

2 Strong, James. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible: With Dictionaries of the Hebrew and Greek Words of the Original with References to the English Words.* e-Sword, 1890.

3 Zodiates, Spiro, Warren Baker, and Gene Carpenter. *The Complete Word Study Bible and Dictionary.* e-Sword, 1993.

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13 "Oh that My people would listen to Me,
That Israel would walk in My ways!

14 "I would quickly subdue their enemies
And turn My hand against their adversaries.

15 "Those who hate the LORD would pretend obedience to Him,
And their time of punishment would be forever.

16 "But I would feed you with the finest of the wheat,
And with honey from the rock I would satisfy you."

God continues to call people to repentance and to give up this idolatry. But the time will come when He can wait no longer, His judgment will come, swift and furious.

Paul uses similar phrasing when referring to people with a judgmental or condemning attitude in Romans (underlining added).

Romans 2:1-8 NASB Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. 2 And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. 3 But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same *yourself*, that you will escape the judgment of God? 4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? 5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: 7 to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; 8 but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.

No one is immune to this attitude entirely. Pray that God will help you root out the cause of a stubborn and unrepentant heart and choose to serve the Lord today. Don't delay in seeking God and His forgiveness and salvation through faith in His Son Jesus.

Lord God, You alone are holy and there is none like You. Forgive us when we continue in our stubbornness, seeking gods of our own choosing and living in opposition to Your commandments. I pray that Your Spirit will revive a desire in all peoples everywhere to worship the one true God. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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