

David's Righteous Branch and God's Warning to False Prophets and Priests

Jeremiah 23

Outline

- 1-4 | God's warning to inattentive and abusive shepherds and His promise to restore
- 5-6 | David's Righteous Branch
- 7-8 | A future of their own for God's people, not dependent on their fathers
- 9-12 | God mourns the false prophets and priests
- 13-15 | God's witness against the false prophets
- 16-22 | God's message to the people: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you..."
- 23-24 | Man cannot hide from God who is close by and not far off
- 25-31 | God declares his opposition to the false prophets
- 33-40 | God's word will be usurped by men's words

Reflections

The last chapter ended with God's disappointment with Coniah, the last king to sit on the throne in Jerusalem from David's line. This chapter begins with God's anger with the leaders who have done a disservice to God's people and His promise to raise up a righteous Branch from David who will resume leading His people. The rest of the chapter is God's message to the false prophets and priests who have corrupted the people.

David's Righteous Branch: this is a name for the coming messiah and it is only used here and in Jeremiah 33:15. It is also used by Isaiah and Zechariah.

Isaiah 4:2 NASB In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth will be the pride and the adornment of the survivors of Israel.

Isaiah 11:1-5 NASB Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. **2** The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. **3** And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear; **4** But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. **5** Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist.

Jeremiah 23:5 NASB "Behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land.

Jeremiah 33:15 NASB 'In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth.

Zechariah 3:8 NASB 'Now listen, Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who are sitting in front of you—indeed they are men who are a symbol, for behold, I am going to bring in My servant the Branch.

Zechariah 6:12 NASB "Then say to him, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Behold, a man whose name is Branch, for He will branch out from where He is; and He will build the temple of the LORD.

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If you would like to see a more complete list of names ascribed to Jesus, God's Son, in the Old Testament, Hebrew4Christians.com has an excellent list with cross references to places where they are ascribed to Jesus in the New Testament.

Another important passage for us to consider is found in Jeremiah 23:23-24.

Jeremiah 23:23-24 NASB "Am I a God who is near," declares the LORD, "And not a God far off? 24 "Can a man hide himself in hiding places So I do not see him?" declares the LORD. "Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?" declares the LORD.

The psalmist, in Psalms 139, writes about how there is nowhere he can hide from God and that He is present everywhere. Jonah tried to hide from God, Jonah 1:3-4, but God knew exactly where he was. While these refer to how close God is to those who seek to hide from or who don't believe that God will bring judgment on their actions.

There can also be great comfort from God being near. Consider the following.

Psalms 34:18 NASB The LORD is near to the brokenhearted And saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Isaiah 55:6-7 NASB Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near. 7 Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.

James 4:8 NASB Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Here is a summary of some other references to God's nearness and omnipresence.¹

- I Kings 8:27; Job 26:5-6; Psalms 139; Proverbs 15:3; Jeremiah 23:23-24; Acts 17:27 (cf. Genesis 28:16; Deuteronomy 4:36; Isaiah 57:15; Jonah 1:3-4; Matthew 28:20; Acts 2:25; 17:24, 27-28; Ephesians 1:23; Hebrews 13:5; James 4:8)
- II Chronicles 6:16-18; Isaiah 6:3; 66:1; Amos 9:2; Matthew 18:20
- Deuteronomy 4:39; Amos 9:2; II Chronicles 2:6; Isaiah 66:1

God has not hidden Himself away in some dark corner where we have to search for Him. He is right in front of us and knows our every action and thought. If we refuse to acknowledge Him, He does allow us to pursue our sinful passions but is available to all who are willing to turn to Him in repentance. But if we become like the false prophets and priests that God is describing through Jeremiah, we are in a dangerous position and in peril of God's punishment.

Lord God, You are everywhere present and there is nowhere that we can go that You aren't there and there is nothing that is hidden from Your sight. Help us Lord to not grow weary of You and Your word and help us to seek out Your presence in our lives, knowing that if we draw near to You that You will draw near to us. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Key Words: Old Testament, Prophecy, Jeremiah, Omnipresence, Righteous Branch, Messiah, False

1 *NASB Topical Reference Bible*. La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 2010. Print.
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