

JEREMIAH THE WEeping PROPHEt

TEXT: JEREMIAH 9:1-26

INTRODUCTION:

1. Jeremiah's first message to the people of Jerusalem is from 2:1 -- 3:5; and his second message is from 3:6-- 6:30.
2. Jeremiah's third message begins at 7:1 and continues through to the end of chapter 10.
3. This third message was preached at the gate of the temple in Jerusalem (cf. 7:1, 2). Jeremiah's task was to show the people their true condition in God's eyes (7:3, 4).
4. But the people were very stubborn, and refused to change.
5. And because the people were so stiffnecked and hard-hearted, Jeremiah is often referred to as "the weeping prophet" (9:1, 18).
6. Jeremiah preached God's message with a broken heart as he witnessed Judah slide into idolatry and apostasy and toward their 70-year captivity in Babylon.
7. The people were so wicked and backslidden, that Jeremiah desired to get away from them. He says in verse 2, "Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them!"

I. JEREMIAH WEPT OVER THEIR SINS

1. Jeremiah 7:9 says, "Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not."
2. Jeremiah says in 9:2, "For they be all adulterers." In Jeremiah 23:10 he says, "For the land is full of adulterers."
3. Jeremiah 5:7 and 8 says, "When I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses. They were as fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbour's wife."
4. Jeremiah 29:23 says, "Because they have committed villany in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives."
5. Their wicked immorality had dragged them down to the level of Sodom and Gomorrah. Jeremiah 23:14 says, "I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah."

6. America's immorality is dragging us down to the level of Sodom and Gomorrah. Just the other day, Christine Quinn, the corrupt Speaker of the NYC Council, "married" her lesbian girlfriend.
7. Jeremiah says in 9:2, "For they be all adulterers." In Jeremiah 23:10 he says, "For the land is full of adulterers."
8. That sounds like America! John Edwards was a US Senator from NC, and he ran for president four years ago. Until he got caught in adultery.
9. Edwards figured if Bill Clinton got away with his notorious womanizing, why couldn't he? The main difference was Mrs. Clinton apparently accepts her husband's infidelity, but Mrs. Edwards didn't. Plus Mrs. Edwards was dying of cancer while her husband was cheating on her behind her back.
10. Just the other day, Mrs. Robert Kennedy hung herself. Her friends say her husband's numerous adulteries drove her to despair.
11. Jeremiah called his countrymen "an assembly of treacherous men" (9:2b; cf. 3:20; 5:11; 12:1, 6).
12. Jeremiah wept over their lying (9:3, 5). We need to weep today because our country is run by liars.
13. Thomas Sowell says, "The fact that so many successful politicians are such shameless liars is not only a reflection on them, it is also a reflection on us. When the people want the impossible, only liars can satisfy them, and only in the short run. The current outbreaks of riots in Europe show what happens when the truth catches up with both the politicians and the people in the long run."
14. A few years ago (1998), chief counsel David Schippers said this about President Clinton before the House Judiciary Committee: "The president then has lied under oath in a civil deposition, lied under oath in a criminal grand jury. He lied to the people, he lied to his Cabinet, he lied to his top aides, and now he's lied under oath to the Congress of the United States. There's no one left to lie to. In addition, the half-truths, legalistic parsings, evasive and misleading answers were obviously calculated to obstruct the efforts of this committee."
15. Mr. Schippers said, President Clinton's "evasive and misleading answers were obviously calculated to obstruct."
16. In other words, he is a deceiver. Jeremiah 9:5 and 6 says, "And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity. Thine habitation is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the LORD" (cf. vss. 8, 9). One lie leads to another.
17. Sir Walter Scott said, "O what a tangled web we weave, When first we practice to deceive!"

18. They were guilty of the sin of unbelief. Though they were proud of their temple worship and religious ritualism, the LORD said, "They know not me" (9:3b).
19. Many people know *about* the Lord, but they do not know Him.
20. Many people are religious, but they do not know the Lord.
21. The people in Jeremiah's day were untrustworthy, and were slanderers (9:4).
22. We can summarize their behaviour by saying they were lawless (cf. 9:13, 14). They proceeded "from evil to evil" (9:3).

II. JEREMIAH WEPT BECAUSE OF THE COMING JUDGMENT

1. Jeremiah 9:9 says, "Shall I not visit them for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"
2. God is holy and just, and therefore He has to judge sin (9:10-15).
3. The LORD told them He would have to "melt them" (9:7).
4. Their land would be "burned up like a wilderness" (9:10-12).
5. Jeremiah asked, "Who is the wise man, that may understand this?" (9:12). Merrill Unger says Jeremiah lamented "over Judah's spiritual stupidity" (*Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*).
6. This sounds like America today -- spiritual stupidity! Most Americans are Biblically illiterate. Most Americans are like Vice-president Joe Biden who boasted that he knew the Bible very well, and then said Job was his favorite book in the New Testament!
7. This coming judgment caused the prophet Jeremiah to start weeping and wailing (9:10).
8. The LORD said in Jeremiah 9:11, "And I will make Jerusalem heaps, and a den of dragons; and I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant."
9. God would judge them for their idolatry (9:14; cf. 19:5).
10. The LORD would feed them with wormwood (a bitter herb), and give them (poisonous) water of gall to drink (9:15).
11. God would scatter them (9:16; cf. 13:24). The LORD warned Israel in Leviticus 26 and in Deuteronomy 28, that if they would not hearken unto Him, and would not obey His commandments, He would scatter them among the heathen, and their land would become desolate, and their cities waste (cf. Lev. 26:33; Deut. 28:64).
12. The LORD said they should call for "the mourning women," their professional mourners, who could come and wail for them (9:17-20).
13. Death is personified -- it is "come up into our windows," like invading soldiers climbing into their homes (9:21). They would be unable to protect their families from the slaughter (9:21, 22).

III. JEREMIAH WEPT BECAUSE THE PEOPLE IGNORED GOD, THEIR RIGHTEOUS JUDGE

1. They thought they were wise, but they were foolish (9:23, 24), because the Bible teaches that the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, but they did not have the fear of the LORD (Psalm 111:10; Pro. 9:10).
2. Merrill Unger states four warnings which the people ignored:
 - (1) The LORD warned of Judah's utter humiliation -- the corpses of men would lie strewn like dung upon the open field (9:22; cf. 8:2; 16:4).
 - (2) The LORD warned that neither political sagacity, military might, nor wealth would avert the impending disaster (9:23).
 - (3) The LORD warned that boasting in the LORD, and in the LORD only would help them in their distress (9:24). First Corinthians 1:31 says, "That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." Second Corinthians 10:17 says, "But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."
 - (4) The LORD warned that He would "punish all them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised" (9:25), that is, both Jews and Gentiles. The Jews were physically circumcised, but not spiritually circumcised. "All the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart" (9:26; cf. 4:4).

CONCLUSION:

J. Vernon McGee wrote, "As a nation, what are the things we glory in? Obviously, we trust in human wisdom, in riches, and in power. We need to be reminded that our strength is not in the brain trust in Washington. Our strength is not in Wall Street, the stock market, and the economy. Our strength does not lie in the cleverness of politicians. Our strength is not found in the fact that we have nuclear weapons. Any strength that we have must lie in our spiritual values, our moral values, our character, and our purpose. And these things are not even taught in our schools and colleges today. We have brought forth a generation that is rude, a generation that has no sense of moral purpose. In fact, we have lost our way --- as Jeremiah said to his people --- on the dark mountains. In our day America is just coasting along; and, when you start coasting, you are going downhill.

I know it is not popular to say these things. I am afraid I am not making friends and influencing people -- but neither did Jeremiah. I am going to stand with him, because I believe there is still hope for revival in our land.

'Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me.' What we desperately need is a group of leaders who know something other than the present godless philosophy. We need people who know God, who know His Word and are obeying it. The great need in this country today is a return to God. We need to set aside our hypocrisy and our sophistication and our illusion that we are such a smart people. We brag about our achievements when our great need is to walk in a way that will glorify God" (*Thru the Bible*).