

OCTOBER 10

Jeremiah 14:11-16:15

Jeremiah 14:11-22

Vs. 11-12 Since the people wouldn't repent, God told Jeremiah, yet again, not to intercede for the people. This is now the third time God has commanded Jeremiah not to pray for them.

Vs. 13-16 Jeremiah reminds God that the people were being fed lies by the false prophets. Yet the people were as guilty as the prophets who told the people what they wanted to hear.

Vs. 17-22 God told Jeremiah to say this, but what is said is also Jeremiah's own crying and lamenting for the people anyway, pleading with God, as Moses and Samuel did for the people. Notice that in vs. 20-22, Jeremiah isn't pleading for the people as much as he is for the name and honor of God. All of God's great followers have prayed for His name and renown.

Jeremiah 15

Vs. 1-4 This is God's answer to Jeremiah's lament and continues what God said in 14:11. God says that the punishment has already been determined and He cites the sins of Manasseh as the reason. (2 Kings 21:16, 24:4)

V. 1 Even if *Moses and Samuel* pleaded, God would not hear them.

V. 4 This gives us some understanding as to what was behind the ruination of the people. Manasseh drove the people to such wickedness and idolatry for 50 years that the people were incurable. Not only that, God vowed that He would punish Jerusalem for all the innocent blood that was shed in the city.

Vs. 5-9 God says He will make the women of Jerusalem like widows. Notice the last sentence of v. 6. We have watched God relent and show mercy all year long. Verse 7 sounds like the warnings of judgment found in the messages of both John the Baptist and Jesus. *His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.* (Luke 3:17)

Vs. 10-21 Jeremiah laments and God answers.

V. 10 Jeremiah laments his life and calling.

V. 11 God assures Jeremiah of vindication and protection...

Vs. 13-14 ...by punishing his enemies and making them serve their enemies.

Vs. 15-18 Jeremiah, it appears, tried to quit; but there was no place where he could turn in the prophet's badge. He had been made the occasion of jokes and the focus of anger and ridicule. There were threats and ill treatment. But since he knew the Lord and the truth and had been set free from spiritual blindness (v. 11), he couldn't keep quiet. Now Jeremiah was wondering if even God would disappoint him, promising him refreshing and then failing him in the end. Having been in ministry, I know these feelings too well.

Vs. 19-21 God reaffirms His calling to Jeremiah if he will get out of his self pity and serve Him. There are great promises here. I suspect that Jeremiah didn't see some of this blessing until Babylon had invaded Egypt and Jeremiah returned to retire in Israel.

Notice that Jeremiah wasn't allowed to compromise the message, or take a step toward the people in seeing things from their perspective. The repentant would come to him. God's truth doesn't need to negotiate.

Jeremiah 16:1-15

Vs. 1-4 Just as God did to other prophets, He made some demands on Jeremiah to help him, but also to be a sign to the people. (For Ezekiel's protection and as a sign to the people, God made him unable to speak unless God was talking through him.) In this case, God forbade Jeremiah to take a wife during this time of judgment.

Vs. 5-7 Jeremiah couldn't mourn with the mourning.

Vs. 8-9 Jeremiah couldn't rejoice with the rejoicing.

Vs. 10-13 When Jeremiah declared these restrictions to the people, God knew the people would act surprised that God was so mad at them. God does not take idolatry (rejecting God) lightly, but the people didn't take it to heart.

Vs. 14-15 This is a very, very strong thing that God was going to do; and as we'll see in Daniel, it involved a lot of love and grace and power from God to free His people from their upcoming captivity.

It is safe to say that this time in the harvest is a time of grace. We are relatively free to work in the harvest. But that day will end. No one knows when the Tribulation will begin, but we know it will. For many people on this planet the distress of those days will completely blind them to their need to know Christ. Now is the time to do our work of making disciples, who make disciples in the harvest.

1 Thessalonians 2:10-3:13

1 Thessalonians 2:10-20

Vs. 10-12 Poor Paul, always having to defend himself. It was hard for those false teachers to match Paul's heartfelt compassion, gained from being saved from what he was saved from. Verse 12 is the focus of all Paul & Co's actions and teaching.

V. 13 There is a certain miracle in receiving the Word of God. What cheered this disciple maker even more was that the people were able to see past Paul to the Author of the Word. It takes a very humble teacher not to get in the way of the Word and make himself the focus. For the purpose of dealing with the criticism, Paul is showing them that the power came from the Word of God, not him or his coworkers.

Vs. 14-16 The first two sentences begin with "for." This shows the proof of v. 13. The Word had worked. The reality of their faith and growth in Christ was the persecution they endured. In the seed that had no depth and fell away, the focus of the persecution and tribulation wasn't Jesus. It was the Word. (Mark 4:17)

Vs. 17-20 Here again is Paul's natural compassion in Christ, in the harvest. How do you understand vs. 19 & 20? If you were a bricklayer, but never laid a brick, how would that make you feel? If you were a painter, an artist, but never painted, how would that be? Paul couldn't be satisfied as a disciple maker, a laborer in the harvest, without fruit. If you get what is being said here, my question is how we can be satisfied, regardless of where we work in the harvest - in the field, in the barn, in the machine shed fixing the equipment, cooking for the field workers - without seeing fruit coming from the harvest. Paul was totally invested for the Lord and fell in love with the fruit.

This is the first year I have noticed that this chapter ends with a mention of the Lord's return. I wonder if all the chapters end with some reference to the Lord's return?

1 Thessalonians 3

Vs. 1-5 Two things stand out to me. First, Paul had someone like Timothy who would go back into a tough situation, who knew how to teach and to strengthen. Second, Paul gave this young church and these new believers a vision of following Christ that included suffering and affliction.

Vs. 6-10 What is interesting to me in this section is the weight of care Paul had for them in Christ. I wonder if Jesus' weight of care for us is any less. *Lacking* is not referring to there being something wrong with their salvation, but rather that Paul wanted to strengthen them further in the faith.

Vs. 11-13 These are familiar themes: *love for one another* out of the love of Christ, and honoring God. But did you notice how this ended? Jesus is the finish line. Our goal is meeting this person, our Savior. Our goal is not doing good and being religious. That's a huge difference.

And this is the ending of another chapter, and it talks about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As disciples our Lord's coming is to become our desire and hope. At the same time, our Lord's coming looks like great clouds building in the west and coming over the fields we are working in. What an interesting mixture of joy and urgency.

Psalm 80

This had to have been written during the years of Isaiah or after the exile. Isn't it interesting reading this psalm now while we're in Jeremiah?

Vs. 1-2 This is the cry for the Lord to regard the remnant as His flock.

V. 3 This is the great refrain of this song.

Vs. 4-6 The nation that was to have been the glory of God and to have drawn all nations had become a sign to the nations of what happens when a people rejects God. Israel had suffered, by serving as a lesson to the world.

V. 7 I'll bet this sounded great as a poetic and musical refrain.

Vs. 8-13 God had planted Israel as His own nation and rescued them from Egypt. Then God had allowed the wild animals to trample His vineyard. The question of v. 12 seems answered in Isaiah and Jeremiah.

Vs. 14-16 In asking God to regard how the nations had crushed Israel, notice the reference to God turning to look in v. 14 and the rebuke of His face in v. 16.

Vs. 17-18 Doesn't this look like a cry for the Messiah and the fulfillment of God's promises in the Millennial Kingdom?

V. 19 I love this refrain. I can identify with this psalm. I want the Lord's face to shine on my life and work for Him in the harvest.

Proverbs 25:1-5

This is my favorite chapter in Proverbs. Someday, Lord willing, I'm going to memorize it.

Vs. 2-3 Substitute for *kings*, "lovers of Jesus."

Vs. 4-5 Those in the presence of the king are those people he confides in and seeks advice from. For us as disciples, as lovers of Jesus in the harvest to be established, we need other lovers of Jesus who are tender in the love and faith that are in Christ and passionate about the harvest. Too many lovers of Jesus fail for lack of kindred spirits and become influenced instead by the lukewarm and the resistant.