

## OCTOBER 11

### Jeremiah 16:16-18:23

#### Jeremiah 16:16-21

Vs. 16-18 There are a few places in the Bible where God expresses His pursuit of those who reject Him, and this is one of them. It reminds you of the words in Hebrews 10:31, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* It is also interesting that God says He is always watching. We all know it, but because God is invisible we become desensitized and don't really care. That's one of the reasons why He's invisible.

Vs. 19-20 This is Jeremiah's confidence in the Lord and his desire to see God acknowledged.

V. 21 God will bring a time when people will know Him. Here, I think, Israel will know by the fulfilling of judgment that the events are from God. There will be recognition. This will be the same thing that happens during the Tribulation. Humanity will rage against God for the events that come upon the earth, acknowledging by their anger that God does exist. Some will repent and come to Him. One way or another, all people will know Him and bow the knee, but unbroken sin will always, irrationally, want to spit in His face.

#### Jeremiah 17

Vs. 1-4 God explains how deeply engraved idolatry and ignorance were in the culture. When God brought Israel into Canaan, the culture was so corrupt that His only solution was to remove it. This generation in Israel is in the same state. God will need to punish these people and then totally remove the survivors to another place to save Israel. It makes you wonder about cultures today.

Vs. 5-6 The curse of those who ignore God.

Vs. 7-8 This blessing sounds like Psalm 1.

Vs. 9-10 It is interesting that these verses follow vs. 7-8. Blessing is available, but the heart is incurably sick without God's cure. Verse 9 is famous. The heart is deceitful and incurably sick. While the penalty and judgment against sin can be removed, the sickness of sin in us remains strong. Sin is only broken by coming to Christ for forgiveness and receiving the Holy Spirit and the new spiritual creation within us. But then, sin is only broken. It is still active in this body/soul/spirit unity. "Defeating" sin means we need to be in the Word daily, following the Spirit daily, and responding to Christ in love for what He has done for us. Thank God for His grace and His cure in our Lord. Being released from this body to be with Christ will be the death of sin in us. This is why His return and the resurrection with Him are our hope. (Rom. 8:23-24)

Vs. 11-13 This appears to be a judgment against injustice that was going on among the people. True riches are found in God, including the *living waters*. John 7:37 *On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink."*

Vs. 14-18 In spite of Jeremiah's desire to help his people, the people were getting tired of Jeremiah and persecution against him was growing. What is interesting is that Jeremiah's pleas to God are beginning to sound like God's pronouncements of justice on the people. Jeremiah is beginning to see how wicked the people are, and in an ironic way, Jeremiah is becoming more like God.

Vs. 19-27 It looks like God is giving the people a very simple test of their obedience. Keeping the Sabbath was a simple but profound test of faith. Why take a day to enjoy the Lord? Why not work or buy or make hay while the sun was shining? The people wouldn't pass this test.

#### Jeremiah 18

Vs. 1-11 So what do you think the point of this illustration is? It seems to me that God is saying that He can shape and change the events and times at will, so they really ought to obey Him. He had tried to form Israel in His hands, but they were willfully going crooked. It was time to smash down the clay and reform a new vessel. Yet, it would be formed out of the same promise to Abraham and would fulfill the destiny of Israel.

Vs. 12-17 This is the people's response to God and God's pronouncement against them.

Vs. 18-23 This is the people's response to Jeremiah and Jeremiah's response to God. Notice v. 23. Jeremiah is now feeling what God is feeling regarding the sin of the people. In all the years of preaching to and ministering to the people, Jeremiah has begun to understand God and has become more like God.

As we work in the harvest God matures our hearts too. Because of the Lord's mercy to us, we learn to show mercy and to be patient in teaching, reaching out and making disciples. Yet we also learn not to give dogs what is holy, nor to throw pearls before swine. We learn to love our neighbors and love our enemies. In all of this, we know that some will be saved and some will not. Those who are saved will be saved by God's mighty hand and His grace. Those who will be punished will have chosen their destiny and will deserve it.

### **1 Thessalonians 4-5:3**

#### 1 Thessalonians 4

Vs. 1-8 It is interesting that both Corinth and Thessalonica were known for loose living. Paul had to urge believers in both cities to concentrate on living holy to God and resisting immorality. The church today still needs to hear this. The sexual saturation of our culture - TV, movies, and especially the web - has made this even more necessary now than back then. Paul and the Spirit say that to disregard any of these commands is to disregard God and grieve the Holy Spirit within us.

It is interesting that all of these commands can be guided by the first line of the Lord's Prayer. If we remember we are to honor God's name in everything, we would be alert to our hearts and thoughts, and careful to how we respond to the situations that come into our day.

Vs. 9-12 This is an interesting mixture of thoughts. How do *love one another* and *live quietly* work toward being a witness to the unbelieving? I think that both of these have to do with giving testimony to our Lord. Loving one another has to do with our common salvation and mission in Christ. It shows the bond of being forgiven, and it shows the unity of living for a common Savior and mission. Living quietly is for working under the radar, contacting people for our Lord in the harvest. (1 Tim. 2:1-6)

Vs. 13-18 There appears to have been some misunderstanding of Paul's teaching, or there was some other teaching that contradicted what Paul had taught. It seems to me that someone was teaching that those who had died as believers in Christ would not be a part of the church uniting with Christ at the rapture. In fact the dead in Christ are raised first, and then the living church will be changed immediately afterward. (1 Cor. 15:51-52) Paul was speaking to encourage and restore the hope of being united in the resurrection at Christ's coming.

Just as a point of trivia, but when Jesus comes after the Tribulation, at His second advent, He will likewise raise all the Old Testament believers and the martyrs of the Tribulation first. And then all the believers scattered all over the world will be gathered to Jerusalem, but they will not be spiritually transformed like the church. They will enter the Millennial Kingdom as normal people who live and die and have families.

#### 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3

This *day of the Lord* is the seven-year Tribulation. The beginning of this time is hidden, but once it begins, you can mark off the days until the return of Jesus. The beginning of this time will be marked by the gathering of the church to Christ and a revival of faith among Jews. There may be other events suggested in the Book of Revelation, but many people believe the rapture of the church and the renewal of faith in Israel will be the first visible events.

### **Psalm 81**

Vs. 1-3 It is interesting that this psalm begins with celebration because the rest of it is pretty rough. I'm guessing this was written after the return of the exiles from Babylon. It says in Nehemiah 8:17, that this celebration of the Feast of Booths was the first time the nation celebrated the Feast of Booths since the time of Joshua, where people actually lived in handmade tents for the feast week. That should be sad, heart-wrenching, and unbelievable. What had the people missed by not celebrating this feast in this way? Everything. This feast was to remind Israel how God sustained them 40 years in the wilderness, and could do it again and again for them every day.

Vs. 4-10 This is a summary of God's working and salvation in bringing Israel out of Egypt.

Vs. 11-16 This is a summary of Israel's history and their exile. If they had only listened. They stopped listening when their cares and comforts became too important to them. They didn't keep the Sabbath. They didn't waste their time keeping a feast like the Feast of the Tabernacles. Yet in becoming consumed in their lives, they forgot God and couldn't hear His voice.

What stands out to me here is God's pleading for the people to listen to Him. God said this of Israel, and I'm sure He says it of this generation of people on the earth today. I wonder if He says this about the church. In our reading today, thinking about the effects of sin on us, on culture, on our response to God, it all points to the need to keep before the Lord and plead with God for ourselves and others in the harvest. Our hearts need to be kept aflame in His love, and we have a harvest to work in before the Lord returns.

### **Proverbs 25:6-7a**

This sure sounds like something Jesus said about not seeking status. Apparently the Pharisees didn't read the proverbs.