

OCTOBER 24

Jeremiah 44:24-47:7

Jeremiah 44:24-30

Vs. 24-28 You might need to go back to yesterday and read 44:15-19 to remember the context that brought about these verses.

V. 25 The people declared their own sin. They just didn't think it was sin. Too bad God isn't for religious tolerance. Maybe He needs sensitivity training. Oh wait, **He is the Creator and the ONLY GOD.** This is why people today don't come to Christ. It is a relationship with very personal requirements, like listening to Him and knowing Him. If we create our own God, we control the requirements.

I read this earlier in John 3:18-21, *Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.* ¹⁹*And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.* ²⁰*For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.* ²¹*But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God."*

This is what was functioning in Jeremiah's day too. Creation is an anchor for our hearts knowing that there is one Creator who is always the same and always present. He is present even when we don't understand. We saw this in Job.

V. 28 God is saying here that He will allow some people to return to Judea. I'm sure Jeremiah was one of them, and, as we'll see in the next chapter, Baruch made it too. I doubt that any of those men (and their wives) who let their wives make offerings for the queen of heaven returned from Egypt.

Vs. 29-30 The people had a new hope: Pharaoh Hophra. God decided to use this king as a sign to His rebelling people. This actually happened to Pharaoh Hophra, but it wasn't the result of the Babylonians. He was killed by political infighting before the Babylonians got there. God again was showing the people that He meant business and that Jeremiah was His man.

Jeremiah 45

V. 1 Notice that this goes back to when Baruch began to work for Jeremiah. We just read about this in Jeremiah 36. It was God's encouragement to Baruch. God told Baruch back then how things would fall out.

Vs. 2-4 Notice that God declares four times in this chapter He is the Lord. God was telling Baruch that He could protect him. He had used Baruch over these 17 years and He would and could keep him safe.

V. 5 The reason this chapter is given here is that although Jeremiah and Baruch were in a very bad place in Egypt and a war was coming, and the Babylonians would find them again, God would save them. I think that both Jeremiah and Baruch died of old age back in Israel.

Jeremiah 46

V. 1 This introduces a section of God's pronouncements against the surrounding nations.

Vs. 2-12 This part of the prophecy was given at the time of Egypt's first defeat at the hands of the Babylonians. This Pharaoh Neco was the guy who killed King Josiah and put that donkey of a king, Jehoiakim, on the throne. Apparently when Neco met Nebuchadnezzar, most of the Egyptian army was killed. From this point on Egypt would have to hire mercenaries to join their army and fight their battles.

V. 12 Apparently the retreat of the frontline Egyptians was hindered by the Egyptians who were still coming forward. It created such confusion that the Babylonians had easy pickings.

Vs. 13-26 This was now again present day with Jeremiah in Egypt and Egypt about to be defeated by Nebuchadnezzar. Notice that v. 21 talks about Egypt's hired soldiers being ready for slaughter.

V. 17 This is funny. Apparently this Pharaoh was all talk and no action.

This judgment against Egypt was not only because of Pharaoh Neco killing Josiah, but Egypt encouraged everyone to break their treaties with Babylon and to support Egypt in its fight against Babylon. King Jehoiakim and King Zedekiah did this and it gave the people false hope. It also made the messages of the false prophets more believable. God was punishing Egypt for being a false hope to His people.

Vs. 27-28 This is much like a father confirming his love toward a child before handing out the punishment.

Jeremiah 47

Vs. 1-7 This is the judgment against the Philistines. It is interesting to see that God used the Egyptians to punish these enemies of His people. Eventually Nebuchadnezzar would take care of Tyre and Sidon. They would never be the centers of wealth and trade they had once been.

Poor Jeremiah. His life had been used by God to bring messages to people, most of whom chose judgment. We will still hear lots of crying out by Jeremiah in the book of Lamentations. Yet even in this misery, Jeremiah learned what every disciple learns, to praise God in the storm. This might be a good time to listen to "Praise You in This Storm," by Casting Crowns.

2 Timothy 2:22-3:17

Remember the urgency in Paul's writing and that Timothy had apparently been shaken. Paul is trying to refocus Timothy and give him courage under fire.

2 Timothy 2: 22-26

Vs. 22-23 With everything that Paul has already said about discussions about words and foolish talk, Paul will say it again. It took me a while to catch on to what Timothy's *youthful passion* was, but it is clear in this context. Timothy was predisposed to arguing and jumping into controversies. Verse 23 has the hint of correction in it.

V. 24 Paul's words to Timothy were very pointed. Timothy was the *Lord's servant* and apparently was falling into quarrelling.

Vs. 25-26 Notice that this context has to do with discussions within the church. People within the church get captured by Satan. Only a cool head could patiently teach and nurture them to safety, if that were even possible.

What Paul is saying here is very important. I haven't been in a church where there were not these kinds of people in the church creating difficulties. It takes a lot of wisdom and maturity to deal with them and keep the church focused on the harvest.

2 Timothy 3

Vs. 1-5 Now this definitely seems like a list of those bad people outside the church who smoke and drink and swear. But just for your consideration, remember back in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, Paul mentioned that before the *day of the Lord* there would be a rebellion. That word means, "a falling away," or apostasy. In 2 Timothy 4, Paul will talk about itchy-eared Christians accumulating teachers for themselves who say what they like to hear. I think this list is also talking about the church and those who profess belonging to Christ. Verse 5 seems to indicate that this was in the church.

Vs. 6-9 This is an example of the list Paul just gave, and the problem was within the church.

Vs. 10-13 This is not what you would want to use for an advertisement for discipleship, but this is a great description of following Christ in the harvest. Only a disciple would be strengthened by these words. Verse 12 is a promise for every disciple. O Weh!

Paul had been a model for Timothy in all of these things, but what kind of model is it when your mentor is about to die in prison? But wait, our Lord died on a cross and told us up front that if we wanted to follow Him, we needed to deny ourselves, take up our death (cross) daily and follow Him. Paul was a great model and Timothy needed to take up the cross.

Vs. 14-15 Timothy's heritage in the gospel.

Vs. 16-17 Timothy's strength in the work of the gospel was the Word. What do people think of these verses when they themselves are so infrequent in the Word? If the Word were a tool, how skilled would we be with that tool? If it were a video game, would we have it mastered? And the reality of it all is that we can't grow in our relationship to God without being in it.

One interesting thought here is that if it had not been for this church catastrophe in Ephesus and Timothy's need for encouragement, Paul would not have said these very famous verses. God still works His purpose in the storm.

For me this is very pointed. Paul is bringing everything down to one focus: to the Word of God and a life lived by that Word. The foundation of our life in following the Lord as disciples is knowing and living in His Word. We get all wrapped up in famous preachers and media, but it is this book that is alive and gives us the breath of the Spirit.

Psalm 94

Again, it is no coincidence that we have a psalm like this as we're reading about the destruction of Jerusalem. We understand God better than ever, both in His judgment of His people and His

mercy to His people. To think, God has endured all of this to see us (and mankind) come to Christ and know what *steadfast love* really means.

Vs. 1-7 God was being called upon to judge everyone who had harmed God's heritage, both those within and outside the nation.

Vs. 8-11 Although Israel just seemed like a forgotten nation, they have been an example to mankind in God's redemptive plan. They have never been forgotten and God will use Israel and all the lessons to be learned through them to discipline the nations.

Vs. 12-15 God will discipline His people, but He will still fulfill His plan for His heritage.

Vs. 16-23 The question of *who* in v. 16 is answered in vs. 17, 18, 19, 22 and 23. It is the Lord. And in God helping and saving His people, He teaches them His *steadfast love*.

Proverbs 26:6-8

I think God is saying we should really try not to be fools. The core of being a fool is not to "do" God's Word. Even for churches in the harvest, we sometimes violate these verses, trying to be so inclusive that we honor the half-hearted, the arrogant and the lazy. People are changed by the Word of God, not by putting their names on a plaque or in the bulletin. Alas, we need wisdom.

V. 7 is funny, but not very politically correct, but who has the guts to tell God that?