

“RUIN, REDEMPTION, AND RESTORATION”

Studies in the Book of Jeremiah

Jeremiah 21:1-14

“A MATTER OF LIFE OR DEATH”

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I. INTRODUCTION – God is the original “Old School Parent”. That is what the people of Judah are starting to realize. This is also what we should understand today. They are realizing that their lifestyle choices are a matter of life or death. In Jeremiah 21, God is telling the people of Judah: “Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death.” (Jeremiah 21:8) Judah chose the way of death. That same choice is still on the table today. What will you choose? It is a matter of life and death!

I would like to suggest that Jeremiah 21 is broken up into three sections: **1) A matter of life or death for the king (vss. 1-7), 2) A matter of life or death for the people, 3) A matter of life or death for all of the kings of David’s dynasty.**

II. A Matter of Life or Death for the King (Jeremiah 21:1-7)

- A) King Zedekiah** – He was the last of the Kings of Judah. He was the uncle of the prior king, Jehoichan. He was king for 11 years. His name was changed from Mattaniah to Zedekiah by the king of Babylon. Like many of the other kings, “He also did evil in the sight of the Lord.” He was cast out from the Lord’s presence. He refused to humble himself before Jeremiah who spoke from the mouth of the Lord. He chose death and rebelled against the king of Babylon. (2 Kings 24:17-20, 2 Chronicles 36:11-13, and Jeremiah 37-39)
- B) King Zedekiah’s** hoped for good news (vss.1-3) – He sends Passhur, the one in charge of temple security, and Zephaniah to Jeremiah in hopes of an encouraging word. God can humble your enemies.
- C) Disobeying God** brings judgment (vvs. 4-7) –Disobeying God is a matter of life and death!

III. A Matter of Life of Death for the People (vss 8-10)

- A) The way of life and the way of death** (vss. 8-9) – This is not the first time that the people were given this choice. They were also given this choice when God told them about the blessings of obeying the covenant and the curses of disobeying the covenant found in Deuteronomy 30:19-20 :

B) How could they choose life or death? The people could choose life by leaving Jerusalem allowing themselves to be taken to Babylon. By surrendering to Babylon, they were surrendering to the will of God. They chose death, starvation and disease by staying in Jerusalem and refusing to submit to God's will. (vs. 9) What is your Jerusalem that you refuse to leave?

C) It was God's will for Jerusalem to be given to the king of Babylon. (Jeremiah 50:9 and 51:20) Jerusalem will be burned with fire. (vs.10) Many of us refuse to let go of things in our lives that God wants to remove!

IV. **A Matter of Life or Death for all of the Kings of David's Dynasty (vss. 11-14)**

A) The House of the King of Judah or David's Dynasty (vss. 11–12) The house of the king of Judah or David's dynasty refers to all of the kings of Israel who sat on the throne because of God's covenant with David (2 Samuel 7:11-16) The word house in verse 11 can also mean "Royal Dynasty".

B) Message to the kings. Choose life by executing judgment and delivering the oppressed (vs.12) The kings needed to repent. The prophet Micah puts it best when he talked about sacrifices and what is pleasing to the Lord in Micah 6:8.

C) If the kings chose to disobey (which they did), God's fury was going out like a fire that cannot be quenched. (vs. 12)

D) God was against them. (vss. 13-14) – We often quote Romans 8:31 "If God is for us, who can be against us?" This is true, but Judah also found out if God is against you, who can be for you? They were arrogant and overconfident that they were untouchable. Judah learned first-hand that "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Hebrews 10:31) Let us learn from Judah!

E) The same "A Matter of Life or Death" question is still before us today! I pray that all that is under the sound of my voice choose life and "confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead" (Romans 10:9) so that you may experience eternal life and not death!

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26)

Praises Be to God (PBTG)

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