

Jeremiah 3:6-4:31 – 9 May 2024

“Backsliding Is In The Heart”

Introduction

*Jeremiah consistently warned Judah to submit to Babylon for judgment, therefore he was treated as a traitor

*He wouldn't have a comfortable life of ignoring sin

*In Chap 1 we saw Jeremiah's call into the ministry

*In Chap 2 we saw Israel's fall, in that they not only were messing around w/ other gods, but forsook God

*Now Chap 3 & 4 is the challenge to move forward w/ God or they will be thrown backward by their lusts

*There are 2 words to watch for in Chap 3 & 4 – “backsliding” & the “heart”

*Backsliding or falling away is rooted on the inside

*When we hear God's good guidance thru the Word, we have to choose how we'll respond to it

Today we'll see 3 positions of the heart in relation to God's good guidance from His Word

#1 – Neutral: Revelation Brings Accountability (Chap 3:6-11)

Read Chap 3:6-8

1. Here Israel is the Northern Kingdom & Judah is the Southern Kingdom in the years of division
2. Judah is called backsliding – *to turn* back
 - a. They started on a course only to quit
3. So Judah not only didn't learn from hearing the Word, but also didn't learn from other's example

Read Vs 9-10

1. Northern Israel w/i the last generation has just suffered the consequences & Judah hasn't repented
2. Judah's playing games – 1 foot in each world

Read Vs 11

1. Why is Israel (north) more justified than Judah?
 - a. Judah had better kings to learn from
 - b. Judah had the Temple
 - c. Judah had Israel's example to learn from
2. Much revelation brings much accountability

#2 – Forward: Repentance Brings Adoption (Chap 3:12-25)

Read Chap 3:12-13

1. So how do we return to the Lord
 - a. Simple *acknowledgement* – agreement with God (Read Prov 28:13 & I John 1:9)
 - b. God WANTS to withhold His anger; His nature is to be merciful

Read Vs 14-15

1. The Lord is begging His people to *admit* the truth and simply return home
2. “1 of a city, 2 of a family” – *even if there’s just a few*, He’ll take them
 - a. Even if it’s just YOU, He’ll take you
3. Once we return, the Lord won’t leave us broken, but gives shepherd to nourish us
 - a. Peter - told to feed Jesus’ sheep (John 21)
 - b. Then he preached that pastors ought to feed the flock which is among them (I Pet 5)

Read Vs 16-17

1. In returning to the Lord, they're returning to God Himself – His presence
 - a. Ark is where Shekinah glory of God was
 - b. But then they'll have God Himself in midst

Read Vs 18

1. “In those days” specifically refers to the previous verses – meaning the time of the end
2. Israel & Judah have been divided >300 years
3. So, prophesy that Israel & Judah would reunite
 - a. Certainly this happened after Babylon
 - b. Again prophesied in Eze 37:15-19

Read Vs 19-20

1. Not just a legal arrangement of a marriage but of an adoption as children
 - a. No where in the Law does it speak of God bringing sons & daughters into His very family
 - b. Adoption is greatest form of relationship

Read Vs 21-22

1. Not just reconciled but restored
2. Speak of not just coming in, but coming back to a condition that allows for joy again
 - a. Of course our healing was “by His stripes”
 - b. But for joy set b4 Him, He endured cross

Read Vs 23-25

1. “There’s no other name under heaven given, whereby we must be saved”
2. We must turn away from hopeless pursuits and confess our sins before the Lord, King Jesus

#3 – Reverse: Rebellion Brings Annihilation (Chap 4:1-31) (Not ‘becoming nothing’, but ‘total destruction’)

Read Chap 4:1-2

1. The call is to return to the Lord
 - a. Returning is like marriage – it’s accepting one and denying all the rest (no more idols)

2. Method is simply to acknowledge He's right
 - a. Notice this confession spreads to nations

Read Vs 3-4

1. They're in rebellion this is a heart condition
2. The call is for an *inward change of heart*
 - a. Don't 'sow among thorns' is to give up sinful lusts that seem fun & leave you spoiled & empty
 - b. Physical circumcision given to Abraham was always intended to picture leaving the flesh behind in pursuit of God and godliness
3. 'Break up' & 'circumcise' = long-lasting words!
4. God doesn't want to come in fire, but that will happen for those not accepting His love and mercy

Read Vs 5-8

1. Here's a prophetic picture that Babylon is coming to invade and conquer
2. The spiritual judgement of vs 4 that might happen, buy this physical judgement will happen
3. Babylon is seen as a lion coming to destroy

Read Vs 9

1. No mere man can save you in the day of battle
 - a. Not from any profession or of any influence
 - b. *Only turning to the Lord can save*

Read Vs 10

1. Not that God said, ‘you shall have peace’ but that God allowed the false prophets to say it
 - a. Read Jer 23:16-17 – Jesus said in Matt 10 that His truth brings sword of division not peace
 - b. When we’re in sin, we start believing all the voices that want us to stay there in sin
 - c. Our problem isn’t that we’ve simply been deceived but that we willfully turn away

Read Vs 11-13

1. Now Babylon described as a dry, full wind that will destroy not just to cleanse
2. Fire that brings light & warmth to your house, at 10 times the ferocity will burn down your house

Read Vs 14-18

1. Ie vs 10 – they’re not deceived but rebellious

2. How long, like vs 14, they've allowed wicked thoughts to dwell with them
 - a. As bad renters to a landlord, they need handled
 - b. II Cor tells us to take captive every evil thought
3. The rebellious allows these things b/c in their heart they want them – must deal with the heart

Read Vs 19-21

1. To the true prophet, the pending judgment of Babylon is as good as done...and it pains him

Read Vs 22

1. Israel knows all about evil and they haven't learned of the good ways of God – that's stupid!
2. Rom 16:19 – tells us to do the exact opposite

Read Vs 23-26

1. Jeremiah is using the picture from creation to say what it will look like as Babylon invades
 - a. This isn't creation, notice “the birds fled”
 - b. So devastating it's compared to early creation

2. Similar pictures are used to describe the Day of the Lord in II Pet 3 and Rev 21

Read Vs 27-29

1. So there is complete destruction
2. Notice, it's total destruction of land not people
 - a. Back in vs 27 'yet will I not make a full end'
3. Though physical destruction is assured, spiritual destruction of their soul doesn't have to be
4. And this isn't even a full end of the land, God's promised this land to this people forever

Read Vs 30-31

1. Even at her best effort, Judah has come to desolation
2. She gets 'pretty' trying to allure, to no avail
 - a. She tries making herself of value to her idols, but it no longer works
3. Where is our value?
 - a. Our value isn't in how fancy we can make ourselves, then hopefully someone will want us
 - b. Our value is we're made in God's image & He's chosen to place His love on us

Conclusion

So what gear are you in with the transmission of your heart?

1. Are you in Neutral? Revelation Brings Accountability

- a. We've all been given a great amount of knowledge and light
- b. We have the Word of God all around us

2. Are you going Forward? Repentance Brings Adoption

- a. Those that choose to incorporate what they've heard from the Lord, are brought closer to our Father in heaven

3. Are you in Reverse? Rebellion Brings Annihilation

- a. Those that choose to ignore what they've heard from the Lord, are brought closer to destruction

Whichever direction you go, it's a matter of the heart