

## Class 2: Jeremiah 2-6

### When God's Chosen People Fall

April 12, 2017

**God's accusations against Judah:** God is just; therefore, His enmity with Judah needs to be explained. God makes the case that Judah has behaved as an adulterous wife with the following accusations. He is now going to finish the divorce He began in Isaiah 50:1 (Jer. 2:1-6). God will point out that Israel was less adulterous than Judah. Much of Jeremiah is a divorce certificate. These are the adulteries that Judah has committed:

1. They forgot who Jehovah was – when Josiah began the restoration of the Temple, it became clear that the High Priest did not know who God was (2 Chron. 34:14). God makes the point in 2:10 that even the pagans don't forget their gods.

2. They seek to turn to Egypt for their aid – a common theme in Jeremiah will be the Israelite hope in Egypt. It is ironic that King Josiah rejected this to the degree that he sought to battle Pharaoh and lost. But Judah thought that Egypt was their hope to avoid Babylonian conquest. God had told them from the beginning NOT to turn to Egypt (Deut. 17:16).

3. Faithless to the poor – the treatment of the poor is a common problem brought up in Jeremiah (2:34, 5:28). It reflects how the hearts of the people are hardened.

4. The popularity of false prophets – Jeremiah makes a defense of Judah by pointing out that they are held in the sway of false prophets (Jer. 4:10 with 5:12). But God made it clear that the people love the false prophets (5:31). As Paul says in 2 Thes. 2:8-12, false teachers are permitted because people have no love of the truth. They love to have their ears tickled (2 Tim. 4:3), with messages of false hope.

Jeremiah himself concludes in Jeremiah 3:24-25 that Judah deserves what was coming. It does not ease Jeremiah's grief (hence the weeping prophet) that he must witness this (and suffer it himself).

**God's Restorative Promise:** There are several times when God makes it clear that, even in these last moments, if Judah would repent, He would hold off the destruction (Jer. 18:8, 26:3, 36:3-7). However, the ultimate judgment cannot be avoided. *"If Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet I would not relent"* (Jer. 15:1). Similarly, God told Ezekiel that if *"Noah, Daniel and Job were in its midst"*, they could only save themselves. Hezekiah and Josiah managed to postpone Judah's destruction only to the end of Josiah's life. God might again hold off, but the destruction that was already due was going to come. God says "how can I pardon you" (Jer. 5:7), making it clear that it was now impossible to avoid this destruction.

But God also was making some promises about what came afterwards. In Jeremiah 3:15-19 He makes some promises about an ultimate return. In Jeremiah 3:16 God points out that they will no longer lament the loss of the Ark. One day Jerusalem will be the throne of God; this points to the kingdom of Christ. As well, there is the constant message that a remnant would be restored (Jer. 5:18-19). This points to return after the captivity.

**The Lion of the North:** The enemy of Judah is God, and God's chosen instrument (His sword) is a king named Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel saw Nebuchadnezzar as a lion as well (Dan. 7:4).

**Making Applications:**

1. It is easy to forget who God is. We forget when we change His worship to our standards; when we change His word to our meaning, etc. Another way we forget is when we allow other things to become the dominate part of our lives. We might consider the other things in our lives that we hold to a standard of not forgetting (TV, sports, recreation) and yet forget activities such as prayer, bible study, etc.
2. While God kept saying that it was not too late, eventually it became too late. We need to consider that while it is called “today” we have hope (Heb. 4:7), but a time will come when it is too late (Heb. 12:17).
3. Judah’s condition reminds us much of our own world. We live in a nation where the majority claim to be Christian and believers in God, but only a small number seek God where He can be found. We have many false prophets and false teachers who give messages of false hope. We are led by men who believe that God is with them. Our nation has come to tolerate the *Baals* of our time (abortion, homosexuality, divorce, etc). And we have great confidence in our own power to deliver us from the consequences of evil.
4. Being mindful of the poor is something that we are commanded to be repeatedly in Scripture. We are to do good to all men (Gal. 6:10) and to see that it is a great evil when the poor are oppressed (James 2:1-6, 5:1-6). It is not a work of the church to engage in civil justice, but we all need to be mindful of those with less, and reject a mindset that reduces poverty to moral inconsequence.