

FPFWC Christian Development



Called to God's Work of Justice
May 2020

Spring Quarter

May 23, 2020

Lesson #4 – Repent of Injustice

SCRIPTURE TEXT – Jeremiah 22:1-10

*Key Verse - Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place.—
Jeremiah 22:3*

LESSON AIM

1. Why do people repeat the same old sins over and over again?
2. What is one step you can take this week to learn from or copy something good that your parents did right?

LESSON BACKGROUND

The historical context of this lesson is the same as that of lesson 12, so that information need not be repeated here. Even so, we can say a bit more about the man Jeremiah himself.

God called Jeremiah as a young man to be His prophet to Judah; Jeremiah's own evaluation was that he was too young and not qualified to speak (Jeremiah 1:6). The forthcoming confrontations would seem, at times, to be just two against everyone else. But since one of those two was God (1:17-19), there could be no question regarding the outcome.

At times in Jeremiah's lengthy ministry, the stress was so great that it seemed as if he was at the psychological breaking point. Nothing Jeremiah did seemed to persuade people. One example of his extreme frustration is his series of complaints in Jeremiah 12:1-4 (also 20:7-18). God's response? If we could be permitted a very loose translation of Jeremiah 12:5, it would be something like, "Cowboy up and get with the program!" But Jeremiah's early years of prophetic ministry under King Josiah were easy compared to what was to come.

LESSON COMMENTARY –

22:1-5. God instructed Jeremiah to go down from the temple to the **house of the king of Judah**. His message was to the **king... who sits on David's throne**, his **servants**, and all the **people who enter these gates**. The message was simple: **Do justice and righteousness, and deliver the oppressed** (cf. 21:12; Mc 6:8). The Lord demanded that the ruler on the Davidic throne make justice his primary goal.

If the king would **indeed perform** this justice, the Davidic dynasty would be uninterrupted in Jerusalem (cf. Jr 17:25-27). **But if** he did **not obey**, his **house** (i.e., his

dynasty, not just his place of residence) would become a **desolation**. To emphasize the truth and solemnity of this command, the Lord swore by Himself, and there could be no stronger ratification of a decree (49:13; 51:14; Gn 22:16; Isa 45:23; Am 6:8; Heb 6:13-18).

22:6-10. Here, with the phrase **house of the king of Judah**, Jeremiah was referring to the royal palace, not the dynasty. Both **Gilead** and **Lebanon** were famous for their cedar forests (Jdg 9:15; 1Kg 4:33; 2Ch 2:8). The royal palace in Jerusalem was known as the "House of the Lebanon" (1Kg 7:2-5; Isa 22:8) because it was constructed of this luxurious wood. But after God's judgment the palace would be as desolate as a **wilderness**. The Babylonian **destroyers** would **cut down** the palace's **choicest cedar** beams and **throw them on the fire** (cf. Jr 52:13).

Jerusalem was such a **great city**, and so beautiful, that people from **many nations** would see her destruction and ask, **Why has the LORD done thus?** The answer was simple: **Because they forsook the covenant of the LORD** and practiced idolatry. The covenant they violated was the Mosaic covenant (confirmed in Dt 27-30), referred to throughout the book of Jeremiah, which was conditional.

In contrast to the Mosaic covenant, the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants were unconditional. The sign of God's unconditional covenant with Abraham was circumcision. It had no conditions but was solely based on God's work and faithfulness (Gn 12:1-3; 15:18-21). Failure to circumcise their sons did not abrogate God's guarantee of the Abrahamic covenant. The Davidic covenant likewise was based on God's faithfulness (2Sm 7:8-17; 1Ch 17:7-15). The obedience of David and his descendants affected the level to which they enjoyed the blessing of God's covenant; however, the Lord guaranteed the fulfillment of the "house, kingdom, and throne" promise, which would ultimately find its fulfillment in the King Messiah Jesus and His yet future reign on the earth.

The extensive devastation of Jerusalem would be a lesson to the nations of the power and holiness of the God of Israel. The people were told not to **weep for the dead**, those killed in battle or siege, for they would be free from pain. Instead **weep continually for the one who goes away** into captivity. The 70-year captivity would mean the exiles deserved pity, for they would **never return** or see their **native land**, again.

LESSON NUGGET – Doing what is right is more than simply believing all the right doctrines about God. It means living in obedience to God. Good deeds do not save us, but they display our faith.

Sources: Moody Bible Commentary; Wiersbe Bible Commentary; The Word For Today Bible; and Standard Sunday School lesson.