

Jeremiah Chapter 16

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Chapter 16

Theme: Object lessons of coming ruin and its causes did not convict Judah, nor Gentiles mocking idols.

Outline:

- 1-4** God Forbid Jeremiah a Family
- 5-7** God Forbid Jeremiah to Mourn
- 8-9** God Forbid Jeremiah to Feast
- 10-13** Jeremiah Was to Explain Why
- 14-18** God Would Severely Judge Them
- 19-21** Jeremiah Saw Gentiles Convert

Preparatory Reading: Isaiah 44; Jeremiah 35; Isaiah 11.

Related Links:

1. [Short Overview of Jeremiah \(slides; 2024\).](#)
2. [Short Overview of O.T. Prophets \(slides; 2023\) ... *The Prophets of the Old Testament*, \[here\]\(#\).](#)
3. [Long Overview of O.T. Prophets \(slides; 2019\), \[here\]\(#\).](#)
4. [Introduction to Jeremiah \(sermons only; 2024\), \[here\]\(#\).](#)
5. [Boasting about God – Job 38-41 \(slides; 2019\).](#)
6. [Boasting about God – Isaiah 40-48 \(slides; 2019\).](#)
7. [Breaking Family Sin Cycles \(sermon/outline; 2009\).](#)
8. [Family Planning & Birth Control \(slides; 2013\).](#)

Introduction:

1. If you love Jehovah and His word, flush all distracting thoughts to focus on inspired truth and wisdom.
2. Our glorious God and loving Father will show even further creativity to humble the Jews if possible.
3. We have two goals – (1) identify what Jeremiah intended for his hearers and (2) extract lessons for us.
4. This chapter has in it a short but powerful prophecy of the future conversion of Gentiles from idolatry.
5. This chapter has in it a couple of places where rightly dividing the intended sense takes careful study.

God Forbid Jeremiah a Family – Verses 1-4

1 The word of the LORD came also unto me, saying,

- A. Jehovah did not leave our courageous prophet without content to preach to Jerusalem.
- B. Though many words and warnings had been given to Jeremiah, God gave him yet more.
- C. God then gave Jeremiah practical prohibitions that also served as dramatic warnings.
- D. One of the chief lessons of this book is our God's creative efforts to get their attention.
- E. Lesson: We should never tire of Bible reading or stay in the same place. We need it all.

2 Thou shalt not take thee a wife, neither shalt thou have sons or daughters in this place.

- A. Marriage is usually a very good thing and great blessing from God (Gen 2:18; Eccl 9:9).
 - 1. With a coming war to destroy Judah and kill all but a few, marriage was not wise.
 - 2. Further, this order from God preached publicly would have been a creative warning.
 - 3. What an object lesson for those loving marriage, even polygamy, and many children.
- B. Note God's careful detail to Jeremiah him about "this place," "this land," and "this people" of Judah and Jerusalem that limits the prohibition here (Jeremiah 16:2-3,5-6,9).
- C. For much more detail about marital and family planning in good or bad times ... [Family Planning & Birth Control](#).
- D. Lesson: Changes in society alter ordinary blessings of marriage or children (I Cor 7:26).
- E. Lesson: Only a virtuous and gracious wife is a blessing, so be wise (Pr 30:23; Ec 7:26).
- F. Lesson: We totally reject celibacy of the RCC as a doctrine of devils (I Timothy 4:1-3).
- G. Lesson: We further understand faithful ministers will blast the RCC (I Timothy 4:1-6).
- H. Lesson: Pastors may take stricter-than-others positions for wisdom/zeal or for example.

3 For thus saith the LORD concerning the sons and concerning the daughters that are born in this place, and concerning their mothers that bare them, and concerning their fathers that begat them in this land;

- A. Here is the reason why a prohibition against a family for Jeremiah – much death coming.
- B. Jehovah is about to describe terrible things for the nuclear family – parents and children.
- C. Lesson: Every command or liberty God has ever given us has incredible wisdom in it.
- D. Lesson: We will not get direct revelation like this, but His word can save in time of evil.

4 They shall die of grievous deaths; they shall not be lamented; neither

shall they be buried; but they shall be as dung upon the face of the earth: ***and they shall be consumed by the sword, and by famine; and their carcases shall be meat for the fowls of heaven, and for the beasts of the earth.***

- A. Read the grief, pain, and terror spelled out in graphic, horrible terms of God's judgment.
 - 1. His rule would save Jeremiah grief, but He also creatively warned Judah to repent.
 - 2. No father could think this for wife, children, and himself, so he should have repented.
- B. Linger on these words. Consider them well. This is the God that all men must deal with.
 - 1. God did not leave children out or worship them as today's evolutionary pagans do.
 - 2. Sin is much worse than any imagine, but the Flood and other examples should help.
- C. Lesson: Unless your view of God matches this verse, you have believed lies about Him.
- D. Lesson: Paul knew the terror of the LORD and preached it (II Cor 5:11; Heb 10:30-31).
- E. Lesson: What will get your attention to hate all sin? God's judgment or Mother's Day?

Section Lessons

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God Forbid Jeremiah to Mourn – Verses 5-7

5 For thus saith the LORD, Enter not into the house of mourning, neither go to lament nor bemoan them: for I have taken away my peace from this people, saith the LORD, even lovingkindness and mercies.

- A. Here is powerful new content for preaching another way to get the rebel Jews to repent.
- B. Jeremiah could not mourn what was coming on fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters.
 - 1. Note the judgment had not happened yet, for it is still future tense in the next verse.
 - 2. God also forbid mourning sinners dying at other times (Lev 10:6; Num 16:41-50).

3. God had a similar message as here for Jeremiah's contemporary (Ezekiel 24:15-27).
- C. God's peace for any people is a huge blessing based on His lovingkindness and mercy.
 - D. Sinners do not deserve peace, especially His people, and His mercy can end (Jer 13:14).
 - E. Lesson: A deceived heart may call us heartless for sinners dying, but it can be righteous.
 - F. Lesson: God can remove peace to leave any heart and mind in great confusion and pain.
 - G. Lesson: Perfect peace with God is keeping your mind stayed on Him alone (Is 26:3-4).
 - H. Lesson: To the degree your peace is based on anyone or anything else, you will lose.

6 Both the great and the small shall die in this land: they shall not be buried, neither shall men lament for them, nor cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them:

- A. God's judgment of death for Judah was coming – all ages, all ranks, all relations, etc.
- B. Dead bodies would be left unburied due to the number of them (Jer 16:4; 7:32-33; 9:22).
- C. Ordinary funerals and grief rituals would be suspended for number and speed of deaths.
- D. Cutting themselves or shaving hair for the dead was sin (Lev 19:27-28; 21:5; Deut 14:1).
- E. Lesson: Tattoos may be stupid but are your liberty if not religious or with sinful content.

7 Neither shall men tear themselves for them in mourning, to comfort them for the dead; neither shall men give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or for their mother.

- A. Cutting themselves or shaving hair for the dead was sin (Lev 19:27-28; 21:5; Deut 14:1).
- B. Ordinary funerals and grief rituals would be suspended for number and speed of deaths.
- C. Even parents would not be lamented, mourned, or consolation given for all the deaths.
- D. This is God's desolating judgment from one angle, another is mothers eating children.
- E. Lesson: God can bring judgment to totally alter normal conduct for even dear relations.

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God Forbid Jeremiah to Feast – Verses 8-9

8 Thou shalt not also go into the house of feasting, to sit with them to eat and to drink.

- A. Here is powerful new content for preaching another way to get the rebel Jews to repent.
- B. God told Jeremiah he could not engage in any of the levity of casual eating and drinking.
- C. With the following explanation, the Jews should have got the message – repent today!
- D. Were there Jews partying with war looming? Yes, their preachers promised them peace.
- E. Lesson: A symptom of the perilous times is loving pleasure more than God (II Tim 3:4).
- F. Lesson: When times are good and prosperous, most men are Epicureans (Deut 32:15).
- G. Lesson: America and most Christians are partying today with no regard for judgment.

9 For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will cause to cease out of this place in your eyes, and in your days, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride.

- A. Why no feasting or eating and drinking with happy people? The Judge was at the door!
- B. Those living would see and hear the end of partying as they knew and had embraced it.
- C. Happy days would end, because God would bring devastating war by the Chaldean army.
- D. This is truly raining on a parade, and the holy God of the Bible has every right to do so.
- E. Lesson: America should consider this possibility for obsession of pleasure against God.
- F. Lesson: God justifiably and jealously wants our total delight in Him, so be forewarned.
- G. Lesson: There is a time to flush joy and laughing to take up afflicted mourning (Jas 4:9).

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Jeremiah Was to Explain Why – Verses 10-13

10 And it shall come to pass, when thou shalt shew this people all these

words, and they shall say unto thee, Wherefore hath the LORD ***pronounced all this great evil against us? or what is our iniquity? or what is our sin that we have committed against the LORD our God?***

- A. Please note to fully appreciate this book – Jeremiah publicly preached all God told him.
 - 1. Do not think the previous nine verses were private rules, for they were not (Jer 30:2).
 - 2. God now gave Jeremiah the answer for when the foolish rebels would ask him why.
- B. For fifteen chapters to this point, God has enumerated and listed their sins many times.
- C. Foolish and unlearned questions are usually ignored, but the LORD was very merciful.
- D. Lesson: It is rebellious ignorance that ever says, *I don't know why this is happening*.
- E. Lesson: With just a little self-examination and sermon review, you can know your sins.

11 Then shalt thou say unto them, Because your fathers have forsaken me, saith the LORD, and have walked after other gods, and have served them, and have worshipped them, and have forsaken me, and have not kept my law;

- A. God started with their fathers being idolatrous deserters and rebels against His religion.
 - 1. Nothing here supports the sour grape proverb, which God hated for its self-righteous avoidance of guilt by sinners; children here were worse than fathers (Ezek 18:1-4).
 - 2. God justly judges successive generations for parental sins (Ex 20:5; 34:7; Lev 20:5; Num 14:18,33; I Sam 15:2-3; II Sam 21:1; II Kings 23:26; Ps 109:14; Matt 23:35).
- B. See how the Spirit inspired repetition of forsaking Jehovah, which emphasizes it for us.
- C. For much more detail about family and generational sins and their cure ... [Breaking Family Sin Cycles, Family Planning \(3 sermons\)](#), [Generational Christians](#).
- D. Lesson: Every person should identify parental faults and purpose to serve God better.
- E. Lesson: God rightfully expects loyalty for He is a Jealous God and has given you much.

12 And ye have done worse than your fathers; for, behold, ye walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto me:

- A. Though the list of the fathers' sins was long, Jeremiah blasted his generation as worse.
- B. This comparison ruled out any use of the sour grape proverb God hated (Ezek 18:1-4).
- C. God identified the sin offending Him most was following a foolish heart running wild.
 - 1. Though not until the next chapter, God measures your wicked heart (Jer 17:9-11).
 - 2. Do not miss the contrast – following your heart or submitting to God's will for you.
 - 3. Your heart is so desperately wicked that it will do anything to avoid duties to God.
- D. It is important to see that Jeremiah's generation was worse to get the double judgment.

- E. Lesson: Any thought or input distracting you from fully serving God should be cut off.
- F. Lesson: Keep your heart strictly; order it; pray against it; stop thinking; start thanking.
- G. Lesson: The best safety from your heart is to love scripture, preaching, zeal, godly men.

13 Therefore will I cast you out of this land into a land that ye know not, neither ye nor your fathers; and there shall ye serve other gods day and night; where I will not shew you favour.

- A. The consequence of that generation following their heart was destruction or captivity.
 - 1. The beginning of this chapter described graphic death by sword or famine (Jer 16:4).
 - 2. The captivity, as Moses warned earlier, would be desertion by God and His favor.
 - 3. God has terrible consequences for forsaking Him and His ways, as Jeremiah warned.
- B. These are the words of the living and true God, and all men should submit to them.
- C. It is important to see that Jeremiah's generation was worse to get the double judgment.
- D. Lesson: God does not owe you His presence or His favor, so fear and obey Him today.
- E. Lesson: Turned over to a reprobate mind to serve other gods without favor is horrible.
- F. Lesson: Be sure your sin will find you out is a warning Moses gave 1000 years earlier.

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God Would Severely Judge Them – Verses 14-18

14 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be said, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;

- A. To the end of this chapter requires careful interpretation by the context and grammar.
- B. Rather than read comfort and consolation as the main theme here, note the “therefore.”

1. The previous verse warned of scattering and captivity with Jehovah deserting them.
 2. The verse before that compared this generation as worse than the Egypt generation.
 3. Thus, we understand comparison of Egypt and Babylon about respective suffering; the divine recovery would replace Egypt for being salvation from a worse judgment.
 4. Looking forward at context, verse 16 is inconclusive, but 17-18 are clearly judgment.
 5. The context in both ways is judgment, and “therefore” and “for” connect the context.
 6. Add “double” of verse 18 in light of worse judgment for that generation in verse 12.
 7. Judah was not scattered in Egypt, and in fact the whole nation moved to Egypt to survive a famine and chose to live in Goshen and thrived there until a hard Pharaoh.
 8. Review how this chapter opened and how the next chapter continues – judgment.
 9. The only reason recovery is hinted about is due to comparing two forms of an oath, the second of which was yet future and would imply a worse conditions than Egypt.
- C. While a future recovery is mentioned to validate the comparison of Egypt and Babylon, the overriding message here is a more severe and miserable judgment and scattering.
- D. Lesson: The care and effort to rightly divide the word of truth can hardly be overstated.

15 But, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers.

- A. In a future time, the Jews would honor God by salvation from the Babylonian captivity.
- B. The Chaldeans were mainly from the north, but they led a combination of many nations.
 1. This recovery Moses spoke of and Solomon prayed for when dedicating his temple.
 2. Jehovah’s plan was a specific time of captivity and then restoration (Jer 29:10-14).
- C. But the comparison of Egypt and Babylon is not for any comfort but rather for severity.
- D. The fathers are mentioned for the comparison includes them and this worse generation.
- E. Jews in Egypt had not been scattered, but war would scatter survivors of this generation.
- F. Lesson: Rather than presume by sinners recovered, assume your judgment to be worse.

16 Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the LORD, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks.

- A. Love the metaphorical language of the prophet by the Spirit about fishers and hunters.
- B. A hard decision must be made for sense – how will the context be used to interpret here?
 1. Are fishers and hunters Cyrus recovering Jews to Judah or Chaldeans killing Jews?
 2. A beautiful gospel message can be preached that both are apostles gathering souls.

3. The coordinating conjunction “for” that follows makes the gathering for judgment.
 4. Fishers and hunters are Chaldeans as elsewhere (Hab 1:14-17; Ezek 12:13; Am 4:2).
 5. The scriptural, historical, and language basis does not fit Cyrus releasing the Jews.
 6. And because Gentiles are mentioned three verses away does not justify apostles here.
- C. Rather than think search and rescue as a positive sense here, see verse 14 notes above.
 - D. Think about the devastating war prophesied; terrified Jews would hide everywhere, but we have already seen that the Chaldeans would not allow any to escape (Jer 13:19).
 - E. Lesson: When the Bible describes the vengeance of God, be terrified (Heb 10:30-31).

17 For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes.

- A. This verse is important along with verses 12-13 and 18 following to interpret judgment.
- B. The coordinating conjunction “for” here connects context to make the section judgment.
- C. Jehovah was fully aware of the worse sins of this generation and judged proportionately.
- D. He had mercifully shown longsuffering for 1000 years but now there was no remedy.
- E. Lesson: It is impossible to hide from God, for He will find rebels wherever they hide.

18 And first I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double; because they have defiled my land, they have filled mine inheritance with the carcases of their detestable and abominable things.

- A. Like we have seen through this section, the main theme is judgment, not restoration.
- B. The use of “first” here is explained by their recovery in the earlier context (Jer 16:15).
- C. But before recovery, they would be severely judged fully for polluting His gift of land.
- D. Fathers in Egypt had not polluted His inheritance like previous generations and this one.
- E. The use of “double” expresses completeness in context (Jer 17:18; Is 40:2; Rev 18:6).
- F. We never think God unjust in the slightest amount or degree beyond what is righteous.
- G. Lesson: What gifts has God given you – truth, church, conviction – that you squander?

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Jeremiah Saw Gentiles Convert – Verses 19-21

19 O LORD, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit.

- A. Jeremiah realizing God's resoluteness to punish first before any mercy appealed to Him.
- B. He called Him his personal strength, fortress, and refuge for the coming great affliction.
- C. The inspired prophet saw after the affliction even Gentiles being converted. Hallelujah!
 - 1. The precious description has distant Gentiles converted to mock their former idols.
 - 2. What the Jews should have done, and would yet do, would be joined by Gentiles.
 - 3. Here is rather clearly the gradual increase of Gentile conversions from Cyrus to Paul.
- D. Jesus told the woman of Samaria that her nation had no clue about truth (John 4:20-22).
- E. Lesson: It is marvelous grace of our loving God to save us from the lies of our fathers.
- F. Lesson: If it were not for this great change in God's dealings, where would we be today?

20 Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they are no gods?

- A. We understand this verse and sentence to be a continuation of Gentile rejection of idols.
- B. It is as easily Jeremiah's indignant conclusion about the insanity of idolatry for Jews.
- C. They called their former religion of idolatry to be lies, vanity, and things without profit.
- D. This rhetorical question is what we think intuitively, but only by the great grace of God.
- E. Laugh at the nonsense of idolatry, for no matter how you view it, it is only vain insanity.
 - 1. How can a creature make a Creator of himself and all things, though never creating?
 - 2. How can a very finite being make an infinite Being, when all he knows is very finite?
 - 3. How can a second or lesser cause make the First? How can he cause a First Cause?
 - 4. How can the same matter and substance as before be adored with virtues of a god?
- F. Lesson: Man's mind by a depraved heart can and will conceive and believe lying folly.

21 Therefore, behold, I will this once cause them to know, I will cause them to know mine hand and my might; and they shall know that my name is The LORD.

- A. The "therefore" here justifies the extreme judgment for replacing Jehovah with idols.
- B. These are God's words by many first person pronouns, though preached by Jeremiah.
- C. Though conversion of Gentiles from idolatry was coming, God had to destroy Judah.
- D. He planned the greatest of destruction of His people to teach them He only was God.

- E. Their Jehovah was no ordinary god conceived by men but rather, I AM THAT I AM.
- F. Did it work? The Jews were cured of idolatry; Jesus and Paul saw no such temptation; in fact, the early churches had liberty issues with meat due to Jews hating idols so much.
- G. Lesson: Never require God to punish you with unprecedented trouble to obey His will.
- H. Lesson: Always remember we have the only true religion with the living and true God.

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