

Jeremiah Chapter 17

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Chapter 17

Theme: Jehovah demanded perfect hearts, judged mocking scorners, and tested the Jews by the Sabbath.

Outline:

- 1-4** Judah's Sins Would Surely Be Judged
- 5-8** Jehovah's Religion Demands the Heart
- 9-11** Jehovah Himself Will Judge the Heart
- 12-14** Salvation Is Always, Only by Jehovah
- 15-18** Jeremiah Asked Wrath on False Pastors
- 19-27** God Used the Sabbath to Prove Judah

Preparatory Reading: Psalm 1; Psalm 139; Isaiah 58.

Related Links:

- A. [Short Overview of Jeremiah \(slides; 2024\).](#)
- B. [Short Overview of O.T. Prophets \(slides; 2023\) ... The Prophets of the Old Testament, here.](#)
- C. [Long Overview of O.T. Prophets \(slides; 2019\), here.](#)
- D. [Introduction to Jeremiah \(sermons only; 2024\), here.](#)
- E. [Spirit and Truth: John 4:20-24 \(PPT slides; 2016\).](#)
- F. [Christian or Sabbatarian \(sermons/outline; 2009\).](#)

Introduction:

- A. There has been much emphasis on the heart thus far in Jeremiah, but here will be even more emphasis.
- B. The holy God of the Bible, Jehovah by name, carefully searches and measures the hearts of all men.
- C. He is no different than Jesus Christ when named the Word of God doing the same (Hebrews 4:12-14).
- D. Keep in mind in this chapter and others that Jeremiah may use past or present verb tenses for the future.
- E. Keep in mind in this chapter and others that prophets used similitudes, so expect them (Hosea 12:10).
- F. Keep in mind in this chapter and others that noun persons can also change from first to second to third.

Judah's Sins Would Surely Be Judged – Verses 1-4

1 The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars;

- A. Forget indelible ink, for here is far greater permanency – an iron pen with diamond tip.
 - 1. Whatever is exactly meant by this tool, if they used such, is not worth our trouble.
 - 2. Bezaleel surely had engraving tools to imprint designs or letters on hard surfaces.
- B. The inspired description is for Judah's obsession and stubbornness for pagan idolatry.
 - 1. He had described them as teaching themselves lies and wearying themselves to sin.
 - 2. He compared their rebellion to an Ethiopian and leopard; here is more (Jer 13:23).
- C. The first mention of heart in this heart chapter is that their hearts were committed to sin.
- D. Then the permanency is described as being on horns of their altars, indicating idolatry.
- E. The foolish and rebellious Jews were obsessed with idolatry rather than GOD Jehovah.
- F. Lesson: How fixed are you in your sins? Do you show humility and change to do right?
- G. Lesson: Samuel's example is good for all of us: *Speak, LORD, for thy servant heareth.*

2 Whilst their children remember their altars and their groves by the green trees upon the high hills.

- A. The customs and traditions of their families were idolatry with altars, groves, high hills.
- B. The most exciting and most enduring habits of these people were worship of their idols.
- C. This verse is horrible in the results of selfish and sinning parents corrupting children.
- D. Lesson: What family traditions have you engraved in your children's hearts and minds?
- E. Lesson: What personal faults or follies of yours have you corrupted your children to do.
- F. Lesson: We want our children to fear and love the true God and His Son above all else.
- G. Lesson: We want our children to know the big black book guides every single decision,

3 O my mountain in the field, I will give thy substance and all thy treasures to the spoil, and thy high places for sin, throughout all thy borders.

- A. Jehovah addressed Judah through Jeremiah that Mount Zion had been His favored place.
- B. Due to their idolatry, He would give all their assets of every kind as spoil to Chaldeans.
- C. All high places they had used for sinful idolatry, throughout Judah, would be destroyed.
- D. Lesson: Anything you value too highly here, God will take away now or later (Pr 11:7).

4 And thou, even thyself, shalt discontinue from thine heritage that I gave

thee; and I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in the land which thou ***knowest not: for ye have kindled a fire in mine anger, which shall burn for ever.***

- A. Here God shifted from the Jews' homes, stuff, and nation to their own lives and souls.
- B. They would no longer be in their own land, own homes, and making their own choices.
- C. They would serve enemies in a foreign, strange place, that is, a few survivors not killed.
- D. Why? Because they had greatly offended God to burn in His anger against them.
- E. How long? Enough to burn up homes, stuff, land, and nation (Jer 7:20; 17:27), and "for ever" and "everlasting" often intend as long as conditions are met or as long as needed (Gen 13:15; 17:13; Ex 21:6; Is 34:10; etc.), since it was for 70 years (Jer 25:11-12).
- F. Lesson: The God of the Bible is different from what most preach – He burns in anger.

Section Lessons

- A. Lesson: How fixed are you in your sins? Do you show humility and change to do right?
- B. Lesson: Samuel's example is good for all of us: *Speak, LORD, for thy servant heareth.*
- C. Lesson: What family traditions have you engraved in your children's hearts and minds?
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Jehovah's Religion Demands the Heart – Verses 5-8

5 Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

- A. Common in this book, God shifted the content and went after the Jews' hearts and trust.
 - 1. When you trust men, or depend on human means, your heart has forsaken Jehovah.
 - 2. Rather than restrict it, heart is your confidence, desires, hopes, effort, passion, etc.
- B. God cursed (reversed blessings) His people that turned from Him to trust anything else.
 - 1. **Curse** = To promise divine vengeance or a blast of terrible punishment; to damn.
 - 2. He had made this clear in writing by Moses (Deut 28:1-68; 30:15-16; Lev 26:1-46).
- C. The Jews did not listen to Jeremiah's warnings but trusted lying pastors, foreign powers, their military, their walled cities, the temple, the scriptures, their ceremonies, etc., etc.
- D. Lesson: A faith-based, God-pleasing life centers everything on Him with no exceptions.
- E. Lesson: If in need, first act is prayer; if successful, first is praise; if wrong, confession.

F. Lesson: The way of transgressors is hard, so choose the life of blessing (Pr 13:14-15).

6 For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited.

- A. Here is the curse mentioned in the previous verse – a lack of favor and reward of trouble.
- B. **Heath** = unknown, but in general a barren, worthless plant or shrub surviving in waste land or sand. The OED has its primary definition = Open uncultivated ground; an extensive tract of waste land; a wilderness; now chiefly applied to a bare, more or less flat, tract of land, naturally clothed with low herbage and dwarf shrubs, esp. with the shrubby plants known as heath, heather or ling.
- C. The warning is clear – trust in man will take you down into joyless, profitless oblivion.
- D. Lesson: The evil details of the curse here should cause you to fear turning from God.
- E. Lesson: If you want to see good in your life, you must despise trusting any but Jehovah.

7 Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.

- A. On the other hand in this section about the heart, trust and hope in GOD bring blessings.
- B. **Trust** = belief that God is good, knows your needs, loves you, keeps His promises, etc.
- C. **Hope** = knowing any difficult situation will change for good no matter how frightening.
- D. Notice how the Spirit tells us to trust God and then to hope in God Himself as our hope.
- E. There is no room in this person's heart for confidence in man or anything else on earth.
- F. Lesson: Trust and hope in God is the easiest means to total life success and so obvious.

8 For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

- A. Here is the opposite of heath in the desert – obtaining God's blessings by trust and hope.
- B. The picture is that of a continually prospering fruit tree with every advantage for good.
 - 1. This tree is planted by the waters, so that it has a perpetual supply of water to grow.
 - 2. The tree has a great root system that takes advantage of the continual flow of a river.
 - 3. The tree is not touched at all by heat coming that harms other trees away from water.
 - 4. The tree will not brown as other trees when the heat is greater than the water supply.
 - 5. There will be no worry in a year of drought but fruitfulness will continue unabated.
- C. This is the life of the godly that trust God, as David wrote (Psalm 1:3; 92:14; 128:1-2).
- D. Lesson: An incredibly good life with fabulous, perpetual blessings is by trusting God.

Section Lessons

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Jehovah Himself Will Judge the Heart – Verses 9–11

9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

- A. Following four verses about the heart, trusting God or not, He gave another warning.
 - 1. God's religion is one of the heart as the overall book and context above makes clear.
 - 2. The previous four verses promised rewards of good or bad based on heart loyalty.
 - 3. God's lesson here is not merely conceptual or doctrinal but rather very practical.
 - 4. He surely judges the heart; see context before and after; so they needed to guard it.
 - 5. What do you trust and hope in and how thoroughly, passionately, and devotedly?
- B. **Deceitful** = To take unawares by craft or guile; to overcome, or get the better of by trickery; to beguile or betray into mischief or sin; to mislead; to believe a lie as truth.
- C. **Desperately** = Hopelessly, irretrievably, incurably, recklessly, energetically, violently.
- D. Many know the verse, and it can be used for total depravity, but it is better for your life.
 - 1. Your heart, by Adam's sin in Eden, is the biggest cheater and liar you will ever meet.
 - 2. Your heart is also hopelessly and incurably reckless and violently so for wickedness.
 - 3. Jeremiah did not teach Calvinism here with a need to prove total depravity of sinners.
 - 4. No man fully knows his own heart, which makes this verse valuable to us (Ps 19:12).
- E. Lesson: If you memorized this verse, does it terrify you? Do you think about it daily?
- F. Lesson: Any thought or input distracting you from fully serving God should be cut off.
- G. Lesson: Keep your heart strictly; order it; pray against it; stop thinking; start thanking.
- H. Lesson: What affects you, motivates you, thrills you, troubles you? It must be God only.
- I. Lesson: The best safety from your heart is to love scripture, preaching, zeal, godly men.

10 I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man

according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

- A. You do not know your heart, as above, but God searches it and your kidneys to reward.
- B. He examines and measures how you think and how committed you are to Jehovah alone.
- C. The outcome of desert heath or fruitful tree by a river is by what God sees in your heart.
- D. He has not changed. Jesus Christ is a discerner of your thoughts and intents (Heb 4:12).
- E. Lesson: If God examines hearts and rewards accordingly, guard it diligently and strictly.
- F. Lesson: We know your heart by your spirit, your words, your actions, and the opposite.

11 As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.

- A. Exactly how partridges and their conduct are to be understood here is hard to determine.
 - 1. They are small birds in the pheasant family, make ground nests, have short life spans.
 - 2. They are hunted by many predators and have large clutch sizes of 20 eggs in a nest.
 - 3. The futility of the partridge may be its own life taken early or eggs eaten by others.
 - 4. The warning is clear – riches gained sinfully will be lost and then leave a man a fool.
- B. Solomon gave similar warnings about greed not working (Prov 13:11; 21:6; 28:8,22).
- C. The Jews in Jeremiah's time were guilty of wicked ambition (Jer 5:27-28; 22:13-17).
- D. This issue by context is in the heart, so we must hate wrong thinking in any part of life.
- E. Lesson: Compromise may seem to work for awhile, but that is the prosperity of fools.

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- 1. Lesson: If you memorized this verse, does it terrify you? Do you think about it daily?
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- 8. Lesson: Compromise may seem to work for awhile, but that is the prosperity of fools.

Salvation Is Always, Only by Jehovah – Verses 12-14

12 A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary.

- A. These verses relate to the heart warnings above, with Jeremiah declaring trust and hope.
- B. The following exchange between Jeremiah and Jehovah is precious but moves quickly.

- C. Judah and Jerusalem were God's place of worship, where He ruled from Mount Zion.
- D. The Jews showed profane ingratitude for Jehovah's great presence and power on earth.
- E. How could they, how dare they, forsake the living and true God for ridiculous idols.
- F. Lesson: Realize a New Testament church is considerably greater (Heb 12:22-24,28-29).

13 O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters.

- A. Jeremiah continued a reverent, fervent blast against wicked Jews rejecting God and him.
- B. Jehovah was the hope of Israel, for God had chosen them, and forsaking Him was folly.
- C. Jeremiah was a true pastor of Jehovah, thus he mocked any that rejected his preaching.
 - 1. Only shame would come from turning from Jehovah to any false idea of deliverance.
 - 2. Any that rejected his preaching would have no greater legacy than earth's dirt offers.
 - 3. The desires, hopes, and plans of rebel sinners that love earth shall end in ignominy.
 - 4. The LORD, taken from the last verse of the previous chapter? is the only true God.
 - 5. He was the fountain of living waters, which Jeremiah contrasted earlier (Jer 2:9-13).
- D. Lesson: True evidence of being written in heaven requires a passionate life of godliness.
- E. Lesson: Trust in anything else of any kind is folly that will bring shame and final ruin.

14 Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise.

- A. We take these to be the words of Jeremiah asking for God to keep him from the Jews.
- B. While this verse could be part of the next section, we put it here for relation to praise.
- C. Lesson: If you want God to heal and save you with certainty, then embrace great praise.

Section Lessons

- A. Lesson: Realize a New Testament church is considerably greater (Heb 12:22-24,28-29).
- B. Lesson: True evidence of being written in heaven requires a passionate life of godliness.
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Jeremiah Asked Wrath on False Pastors – Verses 15-18

15 Behold, they say unto me, Where is the word of the LORD? let it come now.

- A. Here are the people and/or pastors mocking his warnings by asking to see the judgment.

1. He had warned for sixteen chapters and likely a number of years, so they mocked it.
 2. This is a very foolish and stupid reaction. Can they not see Israel already scattered?
- B. Scoffers before Jeremiah mocked Isaiah's ministry the same way (Is 5:19; Amos 5:18).
 - C. Scoffers in the N.T. mocked the apostles teaching return of Jesus Christ (II Pet 3:3-4).
 - D. Lesson: We do not need visual evidence of God's promises or warnings, only the words.

16 As for me, I have not hastened from being a pastor to follow thee: neither have I desired the woeful day; thou knowest: that which came out of my lips was right before thee.

- A. Using the rebels' desire for the judgment to come, Jeremiah had not desired it to happen.
- B. What a precious testimony! He had not run away from faithfully preaching God's word.
 1. Great opposition from united pastors and by the rebel people had not destroyed him.
 2. Others had run away, like Jonah, but not Jeremiah, though on occasion cast down.
 3. Neither did Jeremiah, with such rabid opposition, enjoy coming ruin of his enemies.
 4. He had preached Jehovah's content with a righteous spirit, as we have seen thus far.
 5. Pastors care about one hearer – God Himself – Jeremiah was confident before Him.
- C. Lesson: Pastors must preach the inspired content and the inspired spirit for that content.

17 Be not a terror unto me: thou art my hope in the day of evil.

- A. Preaching the burning anger of Jehovah made the man of God ask for personal mercy.
- B. Pastors and people resented him for negative content, so he asked God for protection.
- C. Jeremiah trusted God and hoped in Him that when the war came he would be spared.
- D. Lesson: Make God your confidence at all times; He will be your comfort in bad times.

18 Let them be confounded that persecute me, but let not me be confounded: let them be dismayed, but let not me be dismayed: bring upon them the day of evil, and destroy them with double destruction.

- A. For such imprecatory prayers, see similar verses (Jer 11:20; 12:3; 15:15; 18:18-23; etc.).
- B. Jeremiah, like other holy men, prayed against God's enemies that were also his enemies.
- C. They mocked God's word (Jer 17:15) and persecuted a faithful preacher (Jer 17:16-18).
- D. He asked God to make a great difference between them and him in the coming trouble.
- E. The Chaldean success would confound and dismay his enemies but not God's prophet.
- F. He called for the day of evil to thoroughly destroy these God haters, who deserved it.
- G. Lesson: Praying against God's enemies that might also be yours is acceptable conduct.
- H. Lesson: Praying against personal enemies is not acceptable conduct (Matthew 5:43-48).

Section Lessons

- A. Lesson: We do not need visual evidence of God's promises or warnings, only the words.
- B. Lesson: Pastors must preach the inspired content and the inspired spirit for that content.
- C. Lesson: Make God your confidence at all times; He will be your comfort in bad times.
- D. Lesson: Praying against God's enemies that might also be yours in acceptable conduct.
- E. Lesson: Praying against personal enemies is not acceptable conduct (Matthew 5:43-48).

God Used the Sabbath to Prove Judah – Verses 19-27

19 Thus said the LORD unto me; Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem;

- A. Jehovah chose one command here for Jeremiah to publicly preach to both high and low.
 - 1. He was not to fear the highest rulers of the nation, for God Jehovah is above them.
 - 2. He was not to neglect the lowest people of Judah, for they were also bound to obey.
 - 3. This and following verses is as public as can be for preaching, true street preaching.
 - 4. This does not justify street preaching in our America, for the nation is not the church.
 - 5. This does not justify street preaching in America, for you are not a last-days prophet.
- B. This proof and test of the nation's rulers and common people is further divine creativity.
 - 1. The Sabbath is identified four times in these verses and nowhere else in Jeremiah.
 - 2. Do not presume obedience to this command and disregard of all others would work.
 - 3. One of the most precious aspects of Jeremiah is God's creative efforts to save them.
 - 4. When you cringe at terrible judgment details preached, recall the creative warnings.
 - 5. It is a profitable exercise to review even some of His many creative appeals made.
- C. The Sabbath was an incredible gift of rest from God to Israel after bondage in Egypt.
 - 1. This was an incredibly creative test for the Jews – a required vacation once a week.
 - 2. What were the terms to “hallow” it? Do nothing at all. Rest and get refreshed. Truly.
 - 3. Surely Judah would obey a vacation command, but they did not obey it in their greed.
 - 4. There is no basis for it before God gave it to Israel between Egypt and Mount Sinai.
 - 5. It was basically a required vacation day out of every seven to refresh all creatures.
 - 6. This gift was for man's benefit, not God's (Ex 23:12; Deut 5:12-15; Mark 2:27; etc.).
 - 7. For much greater detail about the Jewish Sabbath, see other works ... **Why do you worship on Sun Day?, What About the Seventh Day?, Christian or Sabbatarian? (2 Sermons).**
- D. Lesson: We are not Christian Sabbatharians like Puritans, for the Sabbath is an O.T. relic.
- E. Lesson: We recognize the reformation of John, Jesus, and apostles changing worship.
- F. Lesson: We worship on the first day of the week like apostles after Jesus' resurrection.

G. Lesson: We care more about true Bible duties than any Sabbatarian, so do not be moved.

20 And say unto them, Hear ye the word of the LORD, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates:

- A. The message Jeremiah had for the people was the word of the LORD Jehovah to them.
- B. The source of this public content is assigned three times to Jehovah here (Jer 17:19-21).
- C. Lesson: Remember that preaching to both high and low is crucial for a nation's success.

21 Thus saith the LORD; Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem;

- A. Jeremiah addressed all persons present, for the choice to work or not was their choice.
- B. God's Sabbath command allowed no work, so bearing burdens was strictly forbidden.
- C. He preached at the gates of Judah's center of commerce, where burdens came and went.
- D. Lesson: The person most needing to hear preaching and change is always and only you.

22 Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers.

- A. They were not to even carry a burden out of their houses, whether into Jerusalem or not.
- B. They were not to do any work of any kind but were to keep the day holy as commanded.
- C. The Jewish Sabbath had little worship; its holiness was the choice to rest like God had.
- D. Lesson: Any duty or hint of duty to hallow our worship should be esteemed (Heb 12:28).

23 But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction.

- A. The Sabbath had been a problem for the Jewish fathers, and they had disobeyed the rule.
- B. They would not listen to preaching about the Sabbath but rebelled and resisted God.
- C. A horrible crime against preaching is the proud choice to not hear and not be instructed.
- D. Lesson: The worst blindness and ignorance is refusal to hear correction and instruction.

24 And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the LORD, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein;

- A. Here is God's offer of a perpetual dynasty for these Jews if they would keep the Sabbath.

- B. Jeremiah repeated the very simple rules to hallow the Sabbath by not working at all.
- C. Now remember – it is a commanded vacation for them only with the six days blessed.
- D. Lesson: To diligently hearken to preaching is desire, prayer, preparation, focus, review.

25 Then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and this city shall remain for ever.

- A. Here is God's offer of a perpetual dynasty for these Jews if they would keep the Sabbath.
- B. We cannot know if this great offer came during Jeremiah's 18 years under Josiah or not.
- C. Read the great prosperity and longevity of Jerusalem offered here in spite of no remedy.
- D. God already knew the people would not consider the offer to obligate Him to honor it.
- E. The proof and test of these Jews clearly justifies horrible deaths and desolation coming.
- F. Recall that king Saul could have had Israel's dynasty but disobeyed (I Sam 13:13-14).

26 And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south, bringing burnt offerings, and sacrifices, and meat offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise, unto the house of the LORD.

- A. The worship of God, going far beyond just resting on the Sabbath, would again flourish.
- B. The revival God here pictured would bring scattered Jews into a glorious united nation.
- C. Nothing like this happened at all, and these profane rebels proved their unworthiness.
- D. Lesson: What has God offered you personally He will never have to pay (Eph 6:2-3)?

27 But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.

- A. Here is the opposite of the offer – the promised judgment for not hallowing the Sabbath.
- B. The gates where Jeremiah preached would be burned down and the city palaces as well.
- C. This is exactly what happened by the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 52:12-14).
- D. Lesson: A holy God has the right to offer gain for obedience and pain for disobedience.

Section Lessons

- A. Lesson: We are not Christian Sabbatarians like Puritans, for the Sabbath is an O.T. relic.

- B. Lesson: We recognize the reformation of John, Jesus, and apostles changing worship.
- C. Lesson: We worship on the first day of the week like apostles after Jesus' resurrection.
- D. Lesson: We care more about true Bible duties than any Sabbatarian, so do not be moved.
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