

Jeremiah 44:1-30 Not Of This World Falls Church AM 1/29/2023

The Book of Jeremiah is not arranged in order of what happened first, second, third. Instead, it is arranged by theme or topic.

So, chronologically, chapter 44 contains the last words of Jeremiah. Chapter 45 was written earlier. Chapters 46 and following are announcements of judgments on the nations that happened earlier.

This is a nice summary of Jeremiah's message. The point of chapter 44, the words of Jeremiah to the people down in Egypt, is that they must listen to the LORD God. They should not have come down to Egypt. They should not be trusting in Egypt. They should think and behave like the people of God, and so they should repent and go back home to the land that God gave them.

The core lesson is transferrable to believers in every generation. It is summarized in the sermon title "Not of this world" and explained in the main point of the sermon, which is: **The LORD reminds us that we are not of this world, and calls us to listen to Him.**"

### **1. Some people never listen. (v.1-19)**

Verse 1, a group of God's people were runaways to Egypt, and took Jeremiah with them, so God spoke to them one more time, through Jeremiah.

Verse 2, God started with a quick lesson of history. Remember how Jerusalem fell? Babylon attacked, but take note that the attacking Babylonians are not even mentioned. Why? Because God was making the point that the driving force was God Himself. These words in verse 2, "...*the disaster that I brought upon Jerusalem...*" Why? Well, if after studying 44 chapters of Jeremiah, we still need a review, then a review is provided by God in verse 3. "*Because of the evil that they committed...*" What evil? Idolatry! Verse 3, "...*they went to make offerings and serve other gods...*"

What did God do about it? God sent prophets! Persistently, according to verse 4. But what was the response? Verse 5, "*They did not listen!*" They stayed in their idolatry. Verse 6, God poured out His anger on the city.

Over a long period of time, God was gracious and patient and persistent.

Over a long period of time, the people were obstinate, stubborn, disobedient.

Why would this pattern be drawn out now by Jeremiah in his last speech? Because even now our merciful God was still urging the repentance of the people.

This comes out in verse 7, the history lesson from Jerusalem was presented, and now it is applied. "...*now thus says the LORD...why do YOU commit this great evil against yourselves...?*" Why won't you learn your lesson?

Verse 8, God asked them, Why do you provoke God to anger by worshipping the gods of Egypt where you moved?

Verse 9, God asked them, "Have you forgotten the evil of your fathers...?"

Verse 10, God reminded them, that their fathers did not humble themselves, did not fear God, did not walk in God's laws that God had set before them.

God is a covenant God, and God keeps His covenant.

Your fathers were covenant breakers, and so God destroyed them.

You are dealing with a covenant God, and this is the recent lesson.

Are you sure you don't want to listen to Him, fear Him, obey Him?

Verse 11, okay, fine, this is necessary and predictable, then, God told them, "*I will set my face against you for harm...*"

Verse 12, Even the remaining few, called the remnant, will be consumed by sword and famine, and not just the leaders, but every single person from the least person to the greatest person. Each one has sinned. Each one will die. They will be under God's anger and curse. Each one will become an oath, a horror, a curse, and a taunt.

Verse 13, God makes it so clear, "*I will punish those who dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, with the sword, famine, and pestilence.*"

Verse 14, how far will God go? God will keep going until none of the remnant has escaped or survived.

This speech reminds us of another time when the message of God was so convicting. In Acts chapter 2, when the apostle Peter preached to the people that they had crucified Christ, they were and humbled and turned to God in repentance.

But not here in Jeremiah 44. How did the people respond to this?

Verse 15, The idolaters gathered in order to give a united answer.

Verse 16, the men said to Jeremiah, "*As for the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, WE WILL NOT LISTEN TO YOU.*" Verse 17, instead, we will be faithful to our false gods. Because when we were back in Jerusalem, and we worshipped false gods, we had plenty of food, and we prospered, and we saw no disaster!

Verse 18, but since we stopped worshipping false gods, the queen of heaven, we have nothing, and we got the sword and starvation.

Verse 19, And the women said, basically, we stand with our husbands in worshipping the gods of Egypt, and the queen of heaven by continuing to make food and drinks for the parties.

This is the first point of our sermon. Some people never learn. It is a warning.

You and I come from the same line of people. From Adam and Eve.

Adam and Eve were warned by God what tree not to eat from, but Adam and Eve would not listen to God and would not learn. They ate of the tree and were punished.

Outside the Garden of Eden, God said to their children what not to do, but the sons and daughters of Adam would not listen to God and would not learn.

Fast-forward through world history, and this is the repeated story.

We never learn.

We are in a desperate condition in Adam.

We need a new Adam. We need a Savior. The new Adam must listen to God and obey to the point of death on the cross in order for us to be brought from death to life.

Romans 5:19, “...as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.”

The first man Adam was the bus driver of humanity. He was driving along a cliff and did not listen to the warning of God, and drove off the cliff, and we all died in the bus at the bottom of the ravine.

God sent a new bus driver, the second Adam, whose name is Jesus Christ. He finds us at the bottom of the ravine, and takes Adam’s disobedience onto Himself, and our disobedience onto himself, and dies on a cross at the bottom of the ravine. Third day, Jesus rose again. Jesus gives resurrection and new life to all of us chosen people of God who were dead in the bus of Adam at the bottom of the ravine. We are brought to life, we are rescued up the ravine, and we are placed into a new bus, and Jesus our new driver takes us all the way to heaven. We get into heaven despite Adam’s disobedient driving, and because of Jesus obedient dying, and obedient living, and obedient driving. Our desperate condition of being dead in sins, dead in Adam’s bus, becomes our glorious condition of being alive in righteousness, and alive in Christ’s bus. By faith in Christ we are given a safe seat with our ticket validated and we go all the way to heaven on the bus, rejoicing and living in obedience to our wonderful Savior Jesus.

This is the glorious good news of the Bible.

Let me show you. Listen carefully for the two drivers, the two buses, and our rescue. Ready?

Romans 5:17, since, “because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.”

Romans 5:21, “So that...as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

I know what you are thinking.

You are thinking, ‘That’s not fair.’ I was just a passenger in Adam’s bus and it was Adam who drove off the cliff and killed me. So my death is not my fault, and so the rescue of Jesus is the least that God can do, because I was just an innocent passenger.

An innocent passenger.

That is why you think it is not fair. Because you are innocent.

Let me show you yourself in Adam’s bus.

Adam says, "I want to drive the bus off the cliff, who's with me?"

And you hear your own voice say, "I am with you."

And every single passenger in the bus of humanity starts a chant, "Go, go, go, go" cheering Adam to drive the bus off the cliff.

You don't believe me? You are thinking, "Preacher, you just don't know me. I would never!"

Okay, it is worse that you even dare to believe.

Let's say you excuse Adam from the driver's seat and you take the driver's seat. You want to lead the bus of humanity.

You are driving us all. We are all counting on you.

You get to the warning sign and the cliff, and you do the same thing you did last Tuesday. What did you do last Tuesday? Last Tuesday God said to you, "Don't you do it! Don't you sin!" But you **CHOSE** to do it anyway!

If you are driving the bus of humanity, you would do the same thing Adam did the same thing any of us would do, you would choose the wrong.

You would not listen to God's warning.

Some people just won't listen, and that is you. That is me.

We are in a desperate condition. We are dead in our sins.

And God shows mercy, persistently, faithfully. Our second point.

## **2. Yet another call to listen. (v.20-24)**

Verse 20, Jeremiah, the spokesperson for God, gave the answer to these men and women who want to keep making party cakes and party drinks for the false god of the Queen of heaven.

Verse 21 is the answer. The LORD remembered your offerings back in Jerusalem.

Verse 22, But the offerings were not enough to cover the stink of your sins.

God was just and fair to condemn you to death in the bus of Adam.

Verse 23 "It is because you made offerings and sinned against the LORD and did not obey the voice of the LORD that this disaster has happened to you..."

Verse 24, wait for it. Wait for it. What does God say? "Jeremiah said... "Hear the word of the LORD, all you of Judah who are in the land of Egypt."

God came to the bottom of the ravine, where we had ignored the warning and driven off the cliff together chanting and crashed the bus and died. And what did God say?

We hear the echo of Jeremiah in another prophet named Ezekiel 37:3-6, "*Then [The LORD God] said to [Ezekiel], "Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. 5 Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. 6 And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord."*

You don't believe in the LORD God. You don't believe God is God.

### 3. Those who listen will know whose Word will stand! (v.25-30)

Verse 25 – God says, you want to make special cakes and special drinks to the god of Egypt. OK. Go ahead!

Verse 26 – “Therefore hear the word of the LORD...I have sworn by My great name, says the LORD, that My name shall no more be invoked by...” your mouths.

Verse 27- LORD said, “I am watching over you for disaster...”

Verse 28 – a few will escape.

What about those who escape?

A few that God calls the remnant, “...the remnant of Judah...shall know whose word will stand, mine or theirs.”

You are putting your word against God's Word.

God says. Fine. Challenge accepted. Let's see whose Word comes true.

Verse 29, I will punish you right where you are in Egypt.

Verse 30, I will give the king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies, just as I previously gave the king of Judah into the hand of his enemies.

Two groups of people.

1) Exiles over in Babylon. 2) the disobedient over in Egypt.

1) The exiles in Babylon listened to God's Word and accepted God's response to sin and the pathway out of sin and idolatry. The way of the cross is the way to life. The death to sin and the time in exile is the way to resurrection life. The life of the believer is the life of suffering. The Lord is enough for us in our suffering. They are on the pathway home, the pathway to the good land, the pathway to heaven.

2) The disobedient over in Egypt reject God's Word and would not listen to God's command to stay in the land. They turned to idolatry and broke the first commandment. They trusted in the strength and security of Egypt and this world's powers instead of trusting the LORD to be enough to protect them. They craved feelings of security against threats. Their security was false. They were “...*without hope and without God.*” (Ephesians 2:12) They were unbelievers on their way to the final judgment of God. They were on the pathway to perdition, judgment and hell.

It was not that their sin was geographical. It was not that Egypt was a forbidden area. Later, Jesus, and his mother Mary and Joseph went to Egypt. And later, Egypt became for Christianity a center of learning. Their sin was not geographical. Their sin was spiritual. Their sin was thinking that God was not enough to protect them. Their sin was thinking this world is our home, when we are not of this world. They did not listen to God.

You know why Jesus came? Because we would not listen. Matthew 23:37-38, "*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! 38 See, your house is left to you desolate.*"

### **Conclusion:**

1. Do not underestimate the severity of God's displeasure with sin. Chapter 44 shows us the severe and stern words of God. God is holy. God carries judgment. Jesus confirmed this. In Luke 23, while Jesus was being taken to the place of crucifixion, the crowds were crying for Jesus. Jesus said basically the same thing that Jeremiah 44 says. If God did this in Jerusalem, what would God do in cities of Egypt? Listen to the words of Jesus in Luke 23:31, "...*If they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?*" That means the cross has taught us God's extreme displeasure with our sin. The wood that is still green is Jesus. When Jesus the innocent one had our sins placed upon Himself, He receives the wrath of God at the crucifixion as the just punishment for our sins. The dry wood is sinners who will not turn to Jesus. What would happen to us the guilty ones if our sins remained on us? John 3:36, "*Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.*" The lesson is do not underestimate the strong and severe punishment of God that is due to us for our sins.

2. Disasters are intended to bring us back to God. Throughout this chapter, The LORD keeps pointing them back to the disaster of Jerusalem, and tells them to learn from it to run to God! Anytime you have a disaster or difficulty, it can be safely interpreted that you need to draw near to God. James 4:8, "...*draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.*" Disasters are intended to bring us back to God.

3. Accept that walking with Christ includes suffering for sure and does not guarantee health and wealth.

Jeremiah was called the weeping prophet partially because of his suffering. The question in Job 1:9, is this, "*Does Job fear God for no reason?*" Life was good for Job. But if God removed those good things, would Job still fear God? We are told that two of the disciples of Jesus wanted privilege – they wanted places of power and influence at the right hand of Jesus and the left hand of Jesus, in the kingdom of Jesus, as they misunderstood that kingdom. Were they only following Jesus for the benefit of privilege? But listen to how Jesus corrected them in John 16:33, "...*in the world you will have tribulation, but take heart; I have overcome the world.*" We need to accept that walking with Jesus includes suffering, and there are no guarantees of privilege and influence and health and wealth. Another disciple James later wrote it clearly in James 1:2, "*Count it all joy, my brothers,*

*when you meet trials of various kinds...*” And Peter wrote a lot about suffering. 1 Peter 4:12, “*Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.*” Accept that walking with Christ includes suffering for sure and does not guarantee health and wealth

4. The future of the church is with those who trust God and obey His Word. The future of the church is not with those who turn from God to the security provided by the Egypts of the world. 1 John 2:15-17, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. 17 And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.” We do not live like the runaways to Egypt, instead we live like those exiles in Babylon. We believe that the Lord is enough for today’s problems. We live with true contentment. We accept suffering. We understand that we live in a world in which people reap what they sow, and there are consequences for sin. We receive God’s grace to manage today. Our future is certain because we know who holds the future. All of the covenant blessings of God listed out for us in Jeremiah chapters 31, 31, and 33 belong to us, because God belongs to us, and we belong to God. We have a new covenant in Christ Jesus, and we have God’s love, God’s favor, God’s blessing, God’s forgiveness, God’s protections, God’s presence, and God’s peace. We have God’s Word, and we treasure it. 1 Peter 1:21, our “faith and hope are in God.” The future of the church is with those who trust God and obey His Word.