

Congregational handout; outline sermon text on following pages

Sermon Notes & References

“The Summer Is Ended, and ...”

Jeremiah 8:20

September 29, 2013

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A. Introduction

1. Our Text

- a. in a few moments we will have our Scripture reading
- b. from which our sermon title and our text are taken
- c. ‘**Harvest is past, summer is ended, And we are not saved.**’
- d. let me attempt to place this verse within its historical setting

2. Downward Paths

- a. to do so, let us journey back to about 400 years before Jeremiah and these words, to 1,000 years before Christ
- b. Israel, the people of God, had reached their highest point
 - (A) king David’s rule had reached to cover substantially all the territory that God had promised to Abraham
 - (B) but after the rule of Solomon, his son, that kingdom diminished
 - (C) and in the view of many Bible teachers, will never again reach that extent, until the son of David, the Lord Jesus, comes again
- c. for Solomon, that man of such great wisdom, acted so foolishly, in following his wives into multiple idolatries
- d. that is why Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, did not inherit the kingdom as a whole, but only the two southern tribes – Judah and Benjamin (known as Judah) – while the ten northern tribes (known as Israel) were given to a former servant, Jeroboam the son of Nebat, to rule
- e. very quickly, the northern kingdom, Israel, began a spiritual decline
 - (A) adopting its own gods – two golden calves
 - (B) setting its own place of worship – Bethel
 - (C) so that part of the nation took a downward path away from God on which they continued for about 300 years
 - (D) of its list of kings you find uniformly that they did evil in the sight of the Lord – there were no

exceptions

- (E) until its people were taken into captivity by the Assyrian empire
- f. on the other hand, the southern kingdom, Judah, containing the temple, did not fall away so rapidly from God as a nation
 - (A) though it had a number of evil kings – Ahaz and Manasseh stand out as notorious – it also had a number of godly kings
 - (B) nevertheless Judah followed the same downward path as its sister nation, Israel, worshipping false gods in addition to the true God
 - (C) so that after about 400 years, it was time for God’s punishment to fall on Judah, following Israel into exile, this time into Babylon

3. Jeremiah and His Times

- a. Isaiah, from whose prophecy Ken Jolley spoke to us last Sunday, had his ministry in Judah about 100 years prior to Jeremiah
 - (A) it was during his time that Israel was taken captive by Assyria
 - (B) the first part of the book of Isaiah relate God’s messages through him while the events of Israel’s captivity were taking place
 - (C) but the second part of the book, from chapters 40 on, foretells the coming captivity of Judah, related in a graphic, visionary form as though it had already come to pass, explaining God’s purpose
- b. Jeremiah was living in the events that Isaiah saw in the future
 - (A) six or seven years before Jeremiah wrote today’s text, the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, had come and defeated Judah and taken king Jehoiakim, the choicest of the people of the land, its princes and nobles, including Daniel, into exile in Babylon
 - (B) this history is contained in the final chapters of the books of Second Kings and Second Chronicles as well as the opening verses of the book of Daniel
 - (C) Jeremiah’s was the heart rending task of living in Jerusalem and of warning Judah that God’s work of cleansing of His people was not yet complete – Jerusalem and Judah were going to be utterly destroyed and their people dispersed throughout the nations

(D) just to put this in perspective, at this very same time, Ezekiel was living with the exiles and had the same task there

c. that is how things were when Jeremiah wrote what is today's ...

4. Scripture reading Jeremiah 8:18-9:2

a. The Prophet: ¹⁸ My sorrow is beyond healing, My heart is faint [within me!] ¹⁹ Behold, listen! The cry of the daughter of my people from a distant land:

b. The Exiles: "Is the LORD not in Zion? Is her King not within her?"

c. The Lord: "Why have they provoked Me with their graven images, with foreign idols?"

d. The Exiles: ²⁰ "Harvest is past, summer is ended, And we are not saved."

e. The Prophet: ²¹ For the brokenness of the daughter of my people I am broken; I mourn, dismay has taken hold of me. ²² Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has not the health of the daughter of my people been restored? ^{9:1} Oh that my head were waters And my eyes a fountain of tears, That I might weep day and night For the slain of the daughter of my people! ² Oh that I had in the desert A wayfarers' lodging place; That I might leave my people And go from them! For all of them are adulterers, An assembly of treacherous men.

B. The Cry of the Exiles

1. The Questions; The Statement

a. ^{19b} Is the Lord not in Zion? Is her King not within her? ... ²⁰ Harvest is past, summer is ended, And we are not saved."

b. these are the cries of the exiles

c. but they are the cries of two different sets of voices

(A) the complaining cry of the godless

(B) the plaintive cry of the godly

2. The Querulous, Rebellious Voice

a. in Isaiah's day, King Ahaz called upon Assyria to be his ally against Syria and the northern kingdom of Israel

- (A) and a treacherous ally they turned out to be
- (B) deciding that Judah and Jerusalem looked like an attractive piece of real estate to make their own
- (C) but God delivered Jerusalem out of Assyria's hands
- b. now, 100 years later, the lesson to Ahaz had been forgotten
 - (A) with Babylon looming on the horizon as a threat
 - (B) Judah turned to Egypt as an ally for her own protection
 - (C) Egypt was quite happy to have Judah wage extraterritorial battle against the common enemy – but she had no intention of sending forth her troops to engage the Babylonian forces
 - (D) Egypt proved herself to be just as Sennacherib's servant had described a century before: "[Behold, you rely on the staff of this crushed reed, even on Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who rely on him.](#)" (Isaiah 36:6)
- c. as Egypt's help failed to materialize, then those who trusted in her complained that their Lord, the one who was their King, the one who was supposed to reside in the temple in Jerusalem – did not step in
- d. the times when help would have been opportune – the harvest-time, the summer – have come and gone, and they are not saved
- e. they voice their complaints in religious terms, but for them salvation is strictly a matter of person comfort, of deliverance from the enemy
- f. but, there is another voice to be heard

3. The Voice of the Faithful Remnant

- a. the same religious words, but a different view, a different attitude
- b. yes, the Lord is in Jerusalem, he is King there
- c. but they are aware of the rightness of His judgement, the need of the people of God for repentance, for cleansing, for returning to God
- d. perhaps for them that conversion should have taken place – the word to Jeremiah of this work of God taking 70 years was to come later in Jeremiah 25:11-12, and 29:10, as the latter reads, "[For thus says the Lord, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place.'](#)" (Jeremiah 29:10)
- e. and these faithful ones look and see that the opportune times for such repentance of their nation have

come and have past:

- (A) the nation had harvested what they had sown – they had sown evil and reaped evil – yet it failed to change their hearts
- (B) the nation had passed through the drought of summer – with the thirstiness of a dry land – yet it failed to break their rebellion
- (C) the nation had lost every opportunity given them by God, and now they were entirely without hope
- (D) the salvation for which this people looked, was spiritual – and despite God’s gracious patience, it had not taken place

f. it is to this voice that Jeremiah adds his own prophetic voice ...

C. Jeremiah Weeps

1. The Prophet Sympathises

- a. the attitude of Jonah among the prophets is a rarity
 - (A) he went to proclaim judgement on that Assyrian city, Nineveh
 - (B) he didn’t want to go, for he knew God might show mercy
 - (C) even knowing that, he went out to look for Nineveh’s destruction
- b. but Jeremiah, as with Isaiah before him, and others following
 - (A) is broken by the brokenness of his people
- c. on a physical level he recalls the splendid stands of pine trees in the heights of Gilead, from which flows the medicinal balm or resin
 - (A) used for treatment of many ill by the ancients
 - (B) so that such physicians would gather there
 - (C) in such a place one could readily find medical help
- d. so it should have been in Jerusalem for the people of God
 - (A) because in the temple there God had set the Name of His Presence
 - (B) the God who said, “... **I, the Lord, am your healer.**” Exodus 15:26
 - (C) despite this, the daughter of his people had not been healed
- e. and Jeremiah feels it greatly into the core of his being

2. The Prophet Sorrows

- a. small wonder this weeping prophet grieves
- b. 'my sorrow is beyond healing,' he says, verse 18
- c. 'I mourn, dismay has taken hold of me,' in verse 21
- d. 'O that my head were waters ... a fountain of tears ... weep day and night,' in the next chapter, verse 1
- e. he would desire to leave the presence of this people
 - (A) people for whom he cares, for whom he has a shepherd's heart
 - (B) even as he looks upon them and sees their unfaithfulness to God and to their fellow countrymen
 - (C) perhaps these words come to his mind by which Isaiah described the coming Zion: "The daughter of Zion is left like a shelter in a vineyard, Like a watchman's hut in a cucumber field, like a besieged city." (Isaiah 1:8)
 - (D) 'a watchman's hut' – the same word – oh! that he might be taken from this place of sorrow to a simple, peaceful 'wayfarer's lodging place' away from having to see this people's rebellion
- f. for the salvation that they need
 - (A) was not from the hand of Babylon which was but the hand of God
 - (B) but a spiritual salvation

3. Spiritual Salvation

- a. there is in the book of Psalms a lovely description of the spiritual salvation that God intends for His people – Psalm 85:8ff
- b. let us turn to it – it applies equally well to both the OT church of God and to the NT church of God – a timeless, eternal description

⁸ I will hear what God the Lord will say;
For He will speak peace to His people, to His godly ones;
But let them not turn back to folly.

⁹ Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him,
That glory may dwell in our land.

¹⁰ Lovingkindness and truth have met together;

Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

¹¹ Truth springs from the earth,
And righteousness looks down from heaven.

¹² Indeed, the Lord will give what is good,
And our land will yield its produce.

¹³ Righteousness will go before Him
And will make His footsteps into a way.

- c. peace unto His people, glory in the land, lovingkindness (or mercy), truth, righteousness, and even fruitfulness to the land
- d. all these missed, lost, taken away – because a people who knew the truth rejected that truth – that is why Jeremiah wept

D. Application

1. Look Around

- a. all the root causes – the sin; the rebellion against God and His truth; the feigned and hypocritical religiosity of a nation – are to be seen here in the western world, in North America, in Canada today
- b. wherever we look:
 - (A) at government and their laws contrary to the laws of God
 - (B) at our educational system, teaching the wisdom and values that are man's rather than those which are of God as they once did
 - (C) at the media, proclaiming values rather than those pleasing to God, those that pander to the desires of man: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world." (1 John 2:16)
- c. and we, as with the faithful remnant of Jeremiah's time, may be led to say with them, "Harvest is past, summer is ended, And we are not saved." (Jeremiah 8:20)
- d. and yet,

2. There Is Still Opportunity

- a. though the time be short, what Paul said in 2 Corinthians 6:2 is still true: "... behold, now is 'the acceptable time,' behold, now is 'the day of salvation' –"
- b. Jesus says to us even now: "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; ... Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. " (Matthew 5:14, 16)
- c. you have sung and you know the salvation message of Calvary, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners: echo this forth, the only message of your lips and your life that can rescue people from the judgement of God towards which this world is headed.

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