

Handout: Jeremiah Lesson 9

For not having joyfully and with happy heart served Yahweh your God, despite the abundance of everything, you will have to serve the enemy whom Yahweh will send against you, in hunger, thirst, lack of clothing and total privation ... Against you, Yahweh will raise a distant nation from the ends of the earth like an eagle taking wing: a nation whose language you do not understand, a nation grim of face, with neither respect for the old, or pity for the young.

Deuteronomy 28:47, 49-50

Chapter 15 is the continuation of the poetic dialogue between Jeremiah and Yahweh that began in Chapter 14. The suffering that is the result of divine judgment described in 15:7-9 must date to the war years of 601-598/7 BC. The devastation began with the bands of brigands who ravaged Judah in the last years of King Jehoiakim's reign (described in 2 Kng 24:2) that culminated in Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem. The shift from the past to the future in 15:9c gives the impression of a war still in progress and probably points to the time just before the Babylonian subjugation of Jerusalem in 598/7 BC.

Jeremiah's confessions continue in his second confession in Jeremiah 15:10-21

Jeremiah defends his ministerial service in 15:10b-11:

1. He has maintained his integrity by neither lending nor borrowing (money).
2. He has done his best to serve Yahweh in his role as prosecuting attorney in his mission to proclaim the covenant lawsuit.
3. He has acted as covenant mediator and intercessor for the people.

The summary of Yahweh's judgment for Judah in 15:13-14:

1. He will give her wealth to her enemy.
2. She will receive no compensation for her losses.
3. The reason is the accumulation of her sins throughout the land.
4. Her captors will enslave her people.
5. Her judgment is exile.
6. She will experience God's fiery wrath for her sins.

There is both bad news and good news in Yahweh's judgment. What is the good news?

In the Hebrew, the three-time repetition of the word *shuv*, "turn back," (Strong's H7725) echoes the call to repentance in Jeremiah 3:1, 14.

Jeremiah 15:18:

1. *If you repent [shuv = turn back]*
2. *they will come back [shuv = turn back] to you*
3. *but you must not go back [shuv = turn back] to them*

Jeremiah 3:1, 14:

1. *has he the right to go back [shuv = turn back] to her*
2. *you claim the right to come back [shuv = turn back] to me!*
3. *Come back [shuv = turn back], disloyal children, Yahweh declares ...*

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God's promises to Jeremiah in his recommissioning in 15:20-21 repeat the promises of Jeremiah's original commissioning in 1:18-19:

1. God is with Jeremiah.
2. He will give him the strength he needs for his mission.
3. His power to save Jeremiah is stronger than his enemies' power to destroy him.

Chapter 16:1-9 is divided into three oracles preceded by divine commands telling Jeremiah what he may not do:

1. No wife, no children (verses 1-4)
2. No mourning feasts (verses 5-7)
3. No other feasts (verses 8-9)

A list of covenant judgments in 16:10-13 repeats the curse-judgment in Deuteronomy 29:24-26. The judgment is divided into two parts and ends with Yahweh's final judgment:

Part I lists the accumulation of the sins of their ancestors:

1. The ancestors of the Judahites abandoned their belief in Yahweh.
2. They taught the Judahites to follow other gods and to serve and worship them.
3. They abandoned Yahweh's covenant and therefore His Law.

Part II summarizes the sins of the current generation in which each person follows his own inclinations regardless of the Law, repeating all the sins of their ancestors.

The curse-judgment in 16:13 is what Yahweh warned would happen for apostasy from the covenant—the withdrawal of His divine protection and exile into a foreign land. Jesus gives a similar generational curse-judgment in Matthew 23:33-36.

There are three prophetic oracles in Jeremiah 16:14-21:

1. The new Exodus and new oath (16:14-15)
2. No refuge for the wicked (16:16-18)
3. Jeremiah's profession of faith in Yahweh and the prophecy of the conversion of the nations (16:19-21)