

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing **Part XXXII: God's Instruction To His Painfully Persecuted Servant** **(Jeremiah 15:10-21)**

I. Introduction

- A. If a believer is called of God to minister His Word to hearers, he will face either a positive or a negative reaction, for the Word of God is powerful and creates a reaction in those who hear it, Hebrews 4:12.
- B. If God's servant gets a negative reaction, he will experience mental and emotional pain, which pain if not handled correctly will trip him up into sabotaging his own ministry for the Lord.
- C. Jeremiah faced this problem, and God directed him on how to overcome it, and we view it for our insight:

II. God's Instruction To His Painfully Persecuted Servant, Jeremiah 15:10-21.

- A. Having faced great hatred for his ministry of God's Word, Jeremiah voiced grief that his mother had given him birth, for he was a man of strife and contention to the whole land, Jeremiah 15:10a. He had neither loaned nor borrowed anything from anyone, but all the people cursed him as though he had cheated them, Jer. 15:10b.
- B. God addressed Jeremiah's grief, assuring that He would deliver Jeremiah and punish his foes, Jer. 15:11-14:
 - 1. God told Jeremiah that He would surely deliver Jeremiah for a good purpose, that He would surely make his enemies plead with Jeremiah in their coming times of disaster and distress, Jeremiah 15:11 NIV.
 - 2. The Lord rhetorically asked Jeremiah's enemies if their iron could break the iron or bronze from the north, a reference to the overpowering Babylonians who would invade them from the north, Jeremiah 15:12 NIV.
 - 3. Obviously Jeremiah's enemies could not withstand such invaders, so Jeremiah's enemies in Judah would see God give their wealth and treasures as free plunder to the Babylonians due to all their sins throughout the land, v. 13. God would enslave these enemies of Jeremiah to enemies from Babylon, taking them to a foreign land, for God's anger would kindle a fire of judgment that would burn against them, Jer. 15:14.
- C. Such words from God did not satisfy suffering Jeremiah, so he replied to God with a petition, Jer. 15:15-18:
 - 1. Jeremiah testified that God knew of his sufferings, so he asked God to take vengeance on his persecutors with *swift* justice *before* Jeremiah was taken away in death *due to all his sufferings*, Jeremiah 15:15a,b.
 - 2. God's prophet then expressed his just reasons for making such a bold request in Jeremiah 15:15c-17:
 - a. First, Jeremiah's suffering of reproach was caused by his ministry for God, not for himself, Jer. 15:15c.
 - b. Second, in contrast to his hearers in Judah, Jeremiah had personally accepted God's words, and they had even become the joy and delight of his heart, for Jeremiah was called by God's Name, Jeremiah 15:16.
 - c. Third, Jeremiah had not sat in the company of Judah's revelers or rejoiced with them, but he had sat alone, separate from them as God's hand was upon him filling him with anger over Judah's sins, Jer. 15:17.
 - d. Fourth, God's prophet suffered increasing bouts of mental pain over his persecutions, like an incurable wound that refused to be healed, Jeremiah 15:18a. This suffering led Jeremiah faithlessly to ask if God Himself would be to him like a deceitful brook, like waters that fail, Jeremiah 15:18b. The incessant suffering Jeremiah faced led him to focus on that suffering that in turn caused him to doubt that God would actually deliver Him as He had said He would rescue him! (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1149)
- D. Jeremiah's focus on his persecution sufferings had led him to distrust God akin to how Judah's ungodly people he was supposed to call to repent distrusted God, so the Lord corrected Jeremiah, calling him to shift from his troublesome subjectivity and return to trust in God's objective words of promise to him, Jeremiah 15:19-21:
 - 1. The Lord responded to Jeremiah, calling him to repent if he expected to serve the Lord, Jeremiah 15:19a.
 - 2. God's prophet was to utter precious and not worthless words like he had just uttered about the Lord, for he was to get Judah's people to turn to his good words and not for him to turn to their faithless ones, v. 19b.
 - 3. If Jeremiah would thus repent, God would make him a fortified bronze wall so his foes could not prevail against him, for God would be with him to deliver him from wicked, ruthless men, Jer. 15:20-21. This promise repeats God's promise to Jeremiah in his call to the ministry back in Jer. 1:18-19, showing that God wanted him to shift from focusing subjectively on his persecution pain to trust God's objective Word!

Lesson: *The persecution Jeremiah faced tempted him to focus subjectively on his persecution pain and thus to fail to trust God's Word to help him, so God directed him to shift his focus away from his pain back to God's Word.*

Application: *To handle painful persecution we face for the Lord, may we avoid subjectively focusing on the pain and instead stay focused on God's objective Word regarding how He promises to deal with our foes for His glory.*