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Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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Practice Justice Jeremiah 21:8-14

Lesson Background and Introduction

The prophet Jeremiah ministered from about 626 to 575 BC. That ministry was to a people—the Judeans—who had disobeyed the Lord on a level far beyond the mundaneness of a late term paper. The opening verses set the scene. Pashur and Zephaniah were sent by Judah's final king, Zedekiah, to Jeremiah. Pashur (not the same Pashur as in Jeremiah 20) was a dogged opponent of Jeremiah, even trying to have him executed (see Jeremiah 38:1-4). Zephaniah, a priest (and not to be confused with the prophet of the same name), was not actively hostile to Jeremiah (see 21:1; 29:25-29). The two emissaries intended to enlist Jeremiah's help in order to ensure God's aid against King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon (Jeremiah 21:1, 2). King Zedekiah apparently thought that he would be aided by the Egyptians if he rebelled against the Chaldeans (compare 2 Kings 18:21). The situation quickly became desperate when Jerusalem was besieged (25:1, 2). Today's lesson brings us to one of the most somber moments in the history of God's dealings with His covenant people. Jerusalem was beyond the point of repentance. The people's trust in their own wisdom meant death. Whether or not we are immunized against such a mind-set depends on whether we are willing to learn from history. And we realize that the grace of God may come to us in the mere fact that we avoided the worst possible outcome of a bad decision or a bad pattern of living. "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God" (Romans 11:22). May we, unlike the people of Jeremiah's day, repent while there is time.

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

The Message - Jeremiah declared God's Word to Judah for about 40 years. The Lord called this prophet as a young man and told him that the message he would give from God would be rejected. And that's what happened. When Jeremiah spoke, the people closed their ears and stubbornly refused to listen. One entire book in the Bible (Lamentations) expresses Jeremiah's heartbreak over the destruction that God's people received because they defiantly rebelled against Him. Jeremiah warned what would happen to Jerusalem if the people did not repent and practice justice. King Zedekiah and the other leaders refused to believe God's message, but the prophet continued to warn them. He begged them to surrender to the Babylonian enemy and live—that was God's desire—but they labeled him a traitor. He warned them that their ungodly, idolatrous behavior would bring God's judgment upon the nation. God firmly stood against those arrogant people who said, "We are safe because we live in God's holy city. Nothing can happen to us here."

The Outcome - God's judgment is seen throughout Scripture coming to those who disobey Him and refuse to repent. Many today want to talk exclusively about God's love and forgiveness saving everyone, the believer in Christ and the unbeliever alike. This is not what God's Word teaches. Those who ignore God or believe they will be fine at the end because they are "good people" will experience God's judgment. People want a god who comes in times of trouble to help them, but they are not interested in following Him throughout their lives. God wants to have a relationship with us; He is not our genie for erasing challenging times.

(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
God's standard of justice leaves no room for prejudice

POEM FOR THE WEEK:
Justice is the clarion call for Christians We cannot step aside from what God said; He has told us how to treat our neighbor, And we must follow in the path He's led. -Hess

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice
(Exodus 23:2 NKJV)
(from "Our Daily Bread", Jan 16, 2006)

Series: Justice and the Prophets

UNIT: Called to God's Work of Justice

NEXT WEEK

Repent of Injustice (Jeremiah 22:1-10)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Surrender and Survive (Jer 21:8-10)

Choose life or death (8)

Choose life or death for blessings or wrath (Deut 30:15-19)

Choose to be a slave of sin or righteousness (Rom 6:16-18)

Choose to be obedient or disobedience (Josh 1:7)

Choose life or death based on whom you will serve (Josh 24:15)

Choose to be focused on God not our desires (Prov 4:25-27)

Choose to resist or yield to Satan (1 Peter 5:8-9)

Life through submission (9)

Submit so that there can be life and peace (Rom 8:5-7)

Submit so that Satan will flee (James 4:7)

Submit because someday all will confess and know Jesus is Lord (Rom 14:11-12)

Submit out of reverence (Eph 5:21)

Submit with all our soul and spirit (Heb 12:9)

Submit so that He will lift us up (James 4:10)

Death through God's wrath (10)

Death through wrath because it is the punishment for wickedness (Rom 1:18)

Death through wrath because of stubbornness and unrepentant hearts (Rom 2:5)

Death through wrath because of disobedience (Eph 5:6)

Death through wrath because of a sinful and earthly nature (Col 3:5-6)

Death through wrath because of God's judgment (2 Peter 2:4, 9)

Death through wrath because of falling into God's hands (Heb 10:31)

Death through wrath because it is consuming (Heb 10:26-27)

Justice or Judgment (Jer 21:11-14)

God demand justice (11-12)

Justice that comes from righteous wisdom (Ps 37:30)

Justice that comes from doing right (Prov 21:3)

Justice because God loves it (Ps 99:4)

Justice by living a clean life and not doing wrong (Isa 1:16-17)

Justice because God will not forsake those who are just (Ps 37:28)

Justice because God guards the path of those who are just (Prov 2:7-8)

Justice because of being the type of fasting that God desires (Isa 58:6-11)

Judgment comes to all (13-14)

A judgment that will bring everything to light (1 Cor 4:5)

A judgment that judges men's secrets (Rom 2:16)

A judgment of the nations (Matt 25:31-33)

A judgment entrusted to Jesus by God (John 5:21-22)

A judgment that all will stand before (Rom 14:10)

A judgment that judges what was done in the body (2 Cor 5:10)

A judgment that is destined for man (Heb 9:27)