**Jeremiah 11 (Lesson 7a)**

**I. Text Of Chapter 11 – “I Earnestly Protested” (2.5 min. to read)**

A. Violation Of The Covenant (11:1-8; cf. Deut. 27:15ff)

1. Written during the period when Hilkiah found the book of the law in the temple and Josiah reestablished the covenant (2Kgs. 22-23; 623 BC).

2. God gave the covenant and Israel was to obey. If they did, they would be His people and He would be their God.

3. Being not only a prophet, but also of a priestly family, it was Jeremiah’s responsibility to direct people to covenant obedience and away from repeating past sins. If you don’t learn from history, you’ll repeat it.

B. Like Father, Like Son: The Inadequacy Of Empty Ritual (11:9-17)

1. Some time has past & proven their recommitment under Josiah to be empty. They chose to run after evil, now evil will run after them. And when they cry out to God, He will shut His ears.

2. v. 13 – as many gods as cities of Judah & streets in Jerusalem (2:28); very religious, but not toward God (cf. Acts 17). *“Only a true spiritual conversion could breathe new life into the moribund covenantal forms, and since this condition was obviously lacking, the prophet had no choice but to proclaim the approach of catastrophe.”* (Harrison, 96)

3. They were once a beautiful olive tree; now they are dead, dried out wood. Hebrew conveys the idea that she is struck by lightning and set ablaze.

C. Threats On Jeremiah’s Life (11:18-23) – Conspiracy against God in previous unit

1. *“When people reject God they also reject His messengers (cf. 2 Chron. 36:15- 16; Acts 7:51-53).”* (Harkrider, 39)

2. This is a turning point in the ministry of Jeremiah. After this, any time he spoke for the Lord, his life was in peril (cf. 18:18-23; 20:1-6, 10-18; 26:8-15). God reassures him by promising justice (Ezra 2:23?).

**II. Thought Questions For Chapter 11**

A. What result did the persistent warnings of God accomplish? (11:7) How does God persistently warn us today? Elaborate.

B. What other passages in Jeremiah, and outside, command God’s people to not pray for others? (11:14; cf. v. 11; 7:16; 14:11f; Ps. 66:18; Prov. 15:29; 28:9; Jn. 9:31; 1Pet. 3:12; 1Jn. 3:22; 5:14-22)

C. Where else do we see God’s people likened unto an olive tree? (11:16) What is the point of this comparison in each context?

D. Why did the people of Anathoth seek Jeremiah’s life? (11:18-23) How does this relate to Jesus & others that are unwelcome in their hometowns? (Mt. 10:36)

E. What Messianic significance/parallels does 11:18-23 hold?

**III. Applications For Chapter 11**

A. God has taken us out of the iron furnace. That extraction bears responsibilities.

B. We should be incredibly grateful that God has grafted us Gentiles into the olive tree of His people. But we should never become arrogant to think that we cannot be taken back out and burned in the fire.

C. God despises rote worship. We need vigilance in our lives to ensure rote worship does not become our standard operating procedure.

D. Isolation, or even downright hostility, may occur from family and friends once conversion results (cf. 12:6).

**Jeremiah 12 (Lesson 7b)**

**I. Text Of Chapter 12 – “How Will You Run W/ Horses?” (2 min. to read)**

A. “Why Do The Wicked Prosper?” (12:1-6) – God is *“just and irrefutable in argument, though amenable to complaints”* (Harrison, 97)

1. It seems that while the plot of 11:18-23 was at the very least delayed, that no judgment has come upon the wicked. In fact, the wicked boast against Jeremiah. Wicked often appears stronger than the righteous.

2. vv. 5f – God tells Jeremiah point blank that it will get tougher. Even Jeremiah’s family will riotagainst him (remember, a priestly family!).

3. Though prosperous for now, the wicked are posed on the brink of disaster.

B. Punishment For Covenant Violations (12:7-13) – cf. v. 9 to “The Ugly Duckling”

1. Jeremiah’s own trials are minor in comparison to the grief borne by God.

2. God’s heart is utterly broken, yet no person in Judah took it to heart.

3. Verbs rendered in prophetic perfect; so sure it’s as if already happened

C. Hope To Come In The Messiah (12:14-17)

1. Here we return to the opening question of the chapter. Those outside Judah will be judged for their evil as well. No unrighteous soul will escape God, be it in Judah or outside of Judah.

2. God will return His people (Deut. 30:1-10). And those outside of Judah will gain access to this restoration if they turn aside from pagan passions.

3. *“This outline of Jehovah’s world-plan completes Jehovah’s reply to Jeremiah’s complaint. Judgment will fall upon the wicked Judah and its heathen neighbors. But judgment will be followed by restoration, with blessings extended to all. Thus Jehovah shows himself to be a God of grace, whose real and ultimate desire is to show mercy—to build rather than to tear down, to plant rather than to pluck up. That explains the long delay in bringing judgment. This passage is ‘a brief anticipation of the predictions contained in chapters 47, 48, 49’ (Henderson).”* (Mott, 85f).

4. Remember that Jeremiah is a prophet unto the nations as well (cf. 1:10).

**II. Thought Questions For Chapter 12**

A. What other passages convey a struggle in understanding the prosperity of the wicked? (e.g. Job 21:7-34; Ps. 37; 73:3-18) How does God answer? (Hab. 2:4)

B. Given the ensuing judgment upon Judah and Jerusalem, what irony does Jeremiah’s question hold?

C. Does God ever forsake His people? (12:7) Other passages related to this?

D. Does 12:16 suggest that Gentile inclusion into the gospel call requires proselytizing to Judaism first? Why or why not? Support your answer.

**III. Applications For Chapter 12**

A. Our struggle to comprehend the seeming success of the wicked needs to be measured against the backdrop of the proven history of God’s faithfulness.

B. Just because we have run with footmen that does not mean that we are ready to run with the horses! Our pride can cloud our perception of the true state.

C. Just because someone says nice things to us, does not mean there is a truly strong relationship there. Let us be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves in our relationships.

D. God’s compassion is something He exercises again and again (12:15). Let’s praise Him always for this characteristic that we all benefit from daily!