**Jeremiah 17 (Lesson 10a)**

**I. Text Of Chapter 17 – Sabbath Discourse @ Public Gate (3 min. to read)**

A. Sin Indelibly Written & Idols Considered As Dear Children (17:1-11)

1. Sin was etched into their heart as w/ diamond point or iron pen. *“Not merely has sin formed an impenetrable layer over national life, but it has permeated the very wellsprings of thought & will.”* (Harrison, 106)

2. Judah is currently like a lonely dwarf juniper in a rocky desert when she could have been a fruitful, well-watered tree (cf. Ps. 1; Matt. 13).

3. God searches the hearts, be they stone or flesh, and examines their yearnings (cf. 11:20; 12:2f; 20:12). Sin is evident; God clearly knows!

4. Judah’s stock in earthen valuables will not avail in the time of wrath (cf. Lk. 12:16-21; Eph. 2:12). Like partridges (or sand grouse?) w/ no hope.

B. Jeremiah’s Prayer for Vindication (17:12-18; cf. v. 15 w/ Am. 5:18; Is. 5:18f)

1. God’s throne is an anchor of hope in perilous times. How ludicrous to not take advantage of God’s throne of grace in the hour of need! (cf. 2:13; Ps. 36:9; Jn. 4:14; Heb. 4:16; 10:19-22).

2. The people ridicule Jeremiah as a false prophet so he pleads with God that his words may be found true (cf. 5:12f; Deut. 18:22; 2Pet. 3:4).

3. Jeremiah offers three proofs of his fidelity: 1) He accepted the role of God’s shepherd; 2) He did what was right, not merely air personal grievances (cf. 18:20c; 14:1ff); 3) He was sincere (1Ti. 1:5; 2Co 2:17)

4. Closes with a request for speedy vengeance (cf. 16:18).

C. Sabbath Discourse @ The Gate (17:19-27)

1. God tells Jeremiah to go to the Benjamin Gate, or gate of my people, and was frequented by those other than the priests and Levites and proclaim the need to hallow the Sabbath, metonymy for the Law.

2. Jeremiah reminds the people of God’s requirement (cf. Deut. 5:12-14).

3. Series of if-then clearly illustrate the choices before them.

**II. Thought Questions For Chapter 17**

A. Compare 17:1 w/ 31:33. cf. 3:10; 12:2; 9:8; 14:14; 23:26; 17:13; Ezek. 14:3

B. Explain the enigmatic illustration used in 17:11. *“The reference to the partridge is to the popular belief that it would hatch the eggs of other birds. Just as soon as the fledglings soon realize the false nature of the mother and depart from the nest, so riches unjustly acquired all disappear just when the owner is counting on them for security.”* (Harrison, 107)

C. Compare the prayer in 17:12-18 with former prayers of Jeremiah.

D. In what way(s) can we incorporate the use of imprecatory language in a scripturally approved manner? (17:18; cf. 16:18; Hab. 1:1-4)

**III. Applications For Chapter 17**

A. Do not trust in earthly things to deliver (17:5; cf. Prov. 16:5, 18; 29:23; 1Pet. 5:5- 7; 1Cor. 3:18-21)

B. Choices are what make the heart deceitful, not inherited curse (17:9; cf. Josh. 24:15; Eccl. 7:29; Jer. 10:23; Ezek. 18:4, 20; Matt. 18:1-3; 19:14; Rom. 3:23- 25; 5:12; 6:16; Eph. 2:1-3; 2Pet. 3:9). Root for deceitful is same as “Jacob.”

C. Be careful not to refuse discipline b/c it is unpleasant (17:23). Correction is important and sometimes it has to tear deeply into us (cf. Heb. 12:6-11).

**Jeremiah 18 (Lesson 10b)**

**I. Text Of Chapter 18 – The Potter & The Clay (2.5 min. to read)**

A. The Potter’s Power Over The Clay (18:1-10)

1. The lump of clay fails to produce what the potter intends so he changes its purpose and destiny (vv. 1-4; cf. Isa. 29:16; 45:9; 64:8; Rom. 9:19-24).

2. If the lump will choose to yield, He will return its original purpose (vv. 5-8; cf. 26:3, 13, 19; Gen. 6:6f; Jonah 3:10). If it will not yield, it’s purpose and destiny may be to serve as vessels of wrath (vv. 9f).

B. Israel Is Clay (18:11-17) – Nation *molded* by exile (v. 11); v. 14 hard to translate

1. Judah defiantly refuses the divine invite & is bent on wickedness (vv. 11f).

2. Nature yields to God; His people refuse (vv. 13-15). *“The sense seems to be that the nation’s sin is completely irrational in character, as contrasted with the course of nature, which is steadfast and consistent. Such unnatural and apostate behavior from a covenant people can only result in punishment...Travellers will shake their heads in astonishment at Israelite stupidity in forsaking the old covenantal paths for the worship of fraudulent, non-existent deities.”* (Harrison, 109f)

3. Their refusal to God’s face will cause them to only perceive His back in their time of calamity (vv. 16f; cf. 1Pet. 3:12). The virgin is defiled!

C. Plot Against Jeremiah (18:18-23; cf. Matt. 10:40f)

1. The leadership proves God’s point by plotting against Jeremiah (again! cf. 11:18-23; 12:1-6; 15:10f, 15-21). They wanted words to tickle their ears, not prick their hearts! (v. 18; cf. 5:31; 6:14; 2Tim. 3). In an effort to prevent the development of a following, the leaders plan to slander Jeremiah (cf. Jesus; also Daniel 6:4f) See also, 11:18-23; 20:1-6.

2. Jeremiah’s role of intercessor has made him an enemy of the people. Rather than remain between God and the people, Jeremiah will move out of the way as he prays for just punishment (vv. 19-23; cf. 7:16; 14:10, 12; 15:1, 6; 16:5)

**II. Thought Questions For Chapter 18**

A. Explain the usage and context of the potter and clay imagery as applied in Rom. 9.

B. Did the Potter fail in his crafting of the clay or was the clay faulted in the illustration? How can we properly and improperly apply this imagery?

C. Does the national invitation in 18:5-10 have bearing on/application today?

D. Can we harmonize Jeremiah’s request for vengeance with Jesus’ forgiveness as extended from the Cross? Or with the requirement of Christians to love their enemies? (cf. Matt. 5:44; Rom. 12:20) If so, how? See Humphries, 201.

**III. Applications For Chapter 18**

A. We choose whether we will be vessels of honor or dishonor (2Tim. 2; Rom. 9).

B. *“The exercise of [God’s] power with respect to any particular nation is in accord with the conduct of that nation; it is not according to an absolute, unchangeable or unconditional and eternal decree.”* (Mott, 106)

C. When we dwell in the presence of God and walk with Him and are open to His guiding hand, He will cause His face to shine on us (cf. Num. 6:24-26).

D. The desire of many for tickled ears will culminate in destruction.