

LESSON 232

TRUTH REJECTED

Related Scripture: Jeremiah 2:4-13

KEY VERSE: "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."—Jeremiah 2:13.

Lesson Scripture: Jeremiah 5:21-31

Introduction:

Among the principles of divine judgment clearly set forth in the Bible is the fact that while all men are alike in being sinners they are not alike in their degree of sin. All sins are bad, but some sins are worse than others. (Gen. 13:13; II Chron. 33:9; Jn. 19:11.)

We may note further that ignorance of the law is no excuse for disobedience. (Lu. 12:48.) What shall be said then of the sinfulness of those who are willingly ignorant (II Pe. 3:5) and do not like to retain God in their knowledge (Ro. 1:28)?

Our present lesson tells of an ancient people who, like too many people today, rejected the truth of God when it was plainly preached to them. Scripture declares and history demonstrates that when people will not believe God's word, when they refuse His way of salvation, they must suffer His righteous judgment.

For an outline of the lesson, Jeremiah 5:21-31, we note:

1. Sinful Hearing, v. 21
2. Sinful Hearts, 22-24
3. Sinful Hindrance, 25
4. Sinful Houses, 26-28
5. Sinful Heritage, 29
6. Sinful Heresies, 30, 31

Notes on the Printed Text:

Sinful Hearing, Jeremiah 5:21.

God calls men foolish who refuse to hear Him. If we will give the matter a little sober thought, our own good sense must agree that certainly a creature owes attention to his Creator. To reject God's word is in itself a most heinous sin, especially for those who profess to be His people.

Unbelievers may have much knowledge of the things of this world, but they are "without understanding" where God is concerned. They may have perfectly good eyes and ears to see and hear the things that appeal to their fleshly nature, but they are blind and deaf to the things of God.

Yet God commands sinners to hear His word. Let no theological theories obscure this fact. If they cannot hear, it is because they will not hear; they hear what they wish to hear.

Sinful Hearts, Jeremiah 5:22-24.

How can puny man fail to fear the almighty God? Must not the guilty sinner tremble at the realization of the presence of the God Who rules even the roaring waves of the storm-tossed sea?

Sinful hearts in rebellion against God obviously do not fear Him. (Ps. 36:1.) They fail to remind themselves of God's goodness to them even in the blessings of nature, and so they are able to forget that He is also the God of judgment.

Sinful Hindrance, Jeremiah 5:25.

"In the day of adversity consider." (Eccl. 7:14.) Too often God's people are deprived of the good things with which God would be pleased to bless them but for the hindrance of their sins. Certainly material poverty or affliction is not always a consequence of sin: the case of Job should warn us against being hasty in our judgment of others. But we may well examine ourselves: is our own course of life a sinful hindrance to divine blessing?

Sinful Houses, Jeremiah 5:26-28.

Regardless of political propaganda, there is such a thing as guilt by association, and there is such a thing as national guilt. When wicked men are allowed to prosper, when deception, oppression, and injustice are the accepted road to riches, then the whole nation is ripe for judgment.

Sinful Heritage, Jeremiah 5:29.

Nations, like individuals, must reap what they sow. There is a God in heaven Who overrules in the affairs of men, and His righteous character demands a visitation of vengeance upon the wicked.

Sinful Heresies, Jeremiah 5:30, 31.

Prophets pretending to speak for God but prophesying falsely, priests pretending to minister for God but serving and ruling for men—is this not "a wonderful and horrible thing"? But this is the thing to be expected when "people love to have it so." Generally speaking, people get the kind of leaders they want, the kind of government they deserve. And generally they want to be told by their leaders that wrong is right, and right is wrong.

The question remains, however well they may be satisfied with the sinful heresies of hireling prophets, what will they do in the end? The answer is, of course, that they will suffer the consequences of their sin.

Key Verse:

"For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."—Jeremiah 2:13.

Leaving the true Source of all spiritual life and blessings is foolish enough; trying to find sustenance in false gods of our own making can only add to our misery. Let us stay close to the Fountain of life.