

When God Calls and Man Says, “No”

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 1:4-10

This is the time of celebrating our nation’s birth. Some have chosen to bitterly protest and ungratefully speak of our nation. Their focus is on people and issues that they don’t like. We need to experience something like Isaiah’s vision in Isaiah 6:1. They were in troublous times. King Uzziah had died. What a challenge to the kingdom! Yet, Isaiah’s attention was drawn to see *“the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up...”* So what everyone thinks about the United States of America isn’t as important as what God thinks of it! And that would include what God thinks of us, as individuals, as Christians, as citizens of this nation.

The book of Jeremiah is a very large, deep, and comprehensive book. In this study, it is only possible to give a brief highlight from a few chapters. We are looking for how God thinks and speaks to a society of people – as a group and as individuals. Much depth of detail must be overlooked in order to get a few principles that may be applied to us now. Those principles could be expanded by looking into the book of Jeremiah and also the book of Isaiah.

God’s Call to Send a Messenger – Jeremiah 1:4-10

God uses people – people who received His word and wrote it down and spoke about it (II Peter 1:21). God uses people who learn His written word and teach others (II Timothy 2:2). Jeremiah was called by God to cry out against the sins of Jerusalem and many others. His calling involved very negative teachings that would bring down empires and religious systems. It also included positive things that would establish truth and order (Jeremiah 1:10). Jeremiah needed to be strengthened, encouraged, and warned (Jeremiah 1:6-9,17-19). We need to respect, support, and encourage the faithful ministry of God’s word. We must not do the devil’s work of destroying the ministry of the word (Jeremiah 2:30 cp. I Peter 5:8; II Corinthians 4:1-4; 11:13-15).

God’s Confrontation of Jerusalem – Jeremiah 2:9

God made a plea against Israel. Note the plea to their *“children’s children”* (cp. Exodus 20:1-6). The Hebrew word for “plead” (KJV) means *“to plead a case; to bring charges, as in a court of law; to quarrel, contend, complain, debate.”* God wants them to give reasons for their distrust, disobedience, and departure from Him (Jeremiah 2:5 cp. Proverbs 21:30 cp. Psalm 145:1-10). God wants them to *“plead / bring charges”* against Him, if they can. See Jeremiah 2:29. Here are some of God’s charges against them:

Jeremiah 2:7-8

- The Lord gave them a land – fruitful and good. But they defiled it by committing idolatry and other sins.
- The priests did not seek the Lord.
- The Lord gave them a law – for their good. But they that handled the law knew not God.
- The Lord gave them prophets – to guide them. But the prophets decided to serve Baal and other unprofitable things.
- *“There are too many men who are ministers before they know how to be Christians.”*
– Richard Baxter

Jeremiah 2:13 – The Lord charged them with two great evils:

- They forsook the Lord, who is the fountain of living waters.
- They created faulty cisterns that could not hold water.
- See also Jeremiah 2:17-18 cp. Isaiah 12:1-3; 55:1-2; John 4:4-15; 7:37-39.

Jeremiah 2:19 – God tells them to blame themselves for their problems – not Him!

See Jeremiah 6:17,19; Isaiah 50:1; 59:1-2; Proverbs 5:21-22; Psalm 9:16

God’s Consequences for Sin – Jeremiah 6:16-17

God shows His promises and then shows man’s response. Often, people quote verses like these without the last part – *“but”*. Compare Jeremiah 13:11; Isaiah 30:15-18. See the word *“Therefore”* in Jeremiah 6:14-15,18-19.

Conclusion

God’s promise of rest to those who take heed and seek Him – Jeremiah 6:16a cp. Isaiah 30:15. Compare Christ – Matthew 11:28-30; John 1:14-17.

God’s warning of judgment to those who harden themselves and rebel against Him – Jeremiah 6:15,18-19 cp. Acts 17:30-31 (God “winked” – KJV means that He did not deal with it. He overlooked it – Acts 14:16-17. All men are accountable to God – Romans 1:18-20; 2:1-16). See also Psalm 2:1-12.

Footnote for Jeremiah 2:5 – Can man bring charges against God? (Proverbs 21:30 cp. Psalm 145:1-10) Consider the Son of God is prepared to stand up to those who would contest Him. See Isaiah 50:4-11; 45:22-24 cp. Philippians 2:6-11. Isaiah 45:24; Matthew 21:33-46 cp. Romans 9:33; I Peter 2:6; I John 2:1-2.