

Missed Opportunities!

by Wayne Goff

“The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!” (Jeremiah 8:20).

The Weeping Prophet?

As prophets go, Jeremiah was a real downer! He was always prophesying doom, gloom and destruction! I mean, who did he think he was?! Besides all the other religious leaders of his day – prophets, priests, etc. – were saying things were not nearly as bad as he was proclaiming. Maybe Jeremiah was just depressed. Maybe he needed some pills to pick up his sadness. After all, isn't someone who goes around crying all the time full of mental issues?

The reality was that Jeremiah was speaking exactly what God was telling him, and the nation of Judah was in **denial**! Their denial was caused by their *unbelief*, their *lack of faith* in what God was telling them. Those who only want a positive message do not really want to serve the Lord.

Jeremiah's Prophetic Calling

“Then the LORD put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me: ‘Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant’” (Jeremiah 1:9-10). Notice what God said to Jeremiah. He was to “root out,” “pull down,” “destroy,” “throw down,” then “build” and “plant.” Gospel preachers in the past noticed that Jeremiah's message would be 2/3 negative and 1/3 positive. Jeremiah would have a hard time finding a job today. Then again, he wasn't popular in his day either!

But anyone **planting a garden** knows that a healthy garden begins by rooting out and pulling down the weeds that hinder healthy, productive growth. That is not a negative; it is a positive. When we break up fallow ground and get the weeds out, we are preparing the ground for something good. Only then can we “plant.”

Likewise, anyone who wants to **build on a site** where there is a dilapidated building knows that he first must “destroy,” and “throw down” the old building to make room “to build” the new. Is that a bad thing? No, in fact, it is a good and necessary thing. Imagine trying to build a new building on top of a condemned one! Entire companies do nothing except “demolition” work.

Jeremiah's Job

So Jeremiah was being commissioned to “root out” and “pull down” the wicked, immoral, idolatrous hearts of men and women in Judah. His work was difficult and was about as well-accepted as a root canal! But God had previously destroyed the Canaanite people for the same crimes! *“And the LORD uprooted them from their land in anger, in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day” (Deuteronomy 29:28).*

Jeremiah was commissioned “to destroy” and to “thrown down” the idolatrous high places which littered the land and the hearts of the Jews of his day, **Jeremiah 2:5; 8:19; 10:8; 16:18; 18:15.** *“But they are altogether dull-hearted and foolish; a wooden idol is a worthless doctrine” (Jeremiah 10:8).* *“But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth will tremble, and the nations will not be able to endure His indignation” (Jeremiah 10:10).*

The people were having their consciences soothed with the salve of falsehoods, and Jeremiah was applying the painful medicine of truth! *“The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their own power; and My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end?” (Jeremiah 5:31).* Notice the important question: *“But what will you do in the end?”* Well, the people of Jeremiah's day rejected God's message through Jeremiah! It was too negative, too hard, and too much to accept.

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