



Lesson 12 May 16th, 2020

Practice Justice

LESSON FOR JUNIORS

Study Scripture – Jeremiah 21:8-14

Background Scripture – Jeremiah 21

Key Verse:

“O house of David, thus saith the Lord; Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor.”

Jeremiah 21:12

INTRODUCTION

Mary and her brother Jim had an aunt who owned a bakery. Times were really hard in their village and many people and their children had a difficult time obtaining bread or cakes. There was a food shortage. But Mary and Jim had a kind aunt that would bring all kinds of leftover goodies to them and their mother encouraged them to take some to school and share it with the other children who are in need. The mother warned them that they should be fair when they were handing out these breads and cakes for that kind of behaviour was the kind of behaviour that God liked.

The children did just that but when it came to sharing they decided to give it only to the children that they liked and they excluded those that they did not really like too much. So some of the children that were left out had to simply sit and watch the others that had received the bread enjoy themselves. Nobody, not even the teachers thought much about this lack of fair play.

But the time came when Mary and Jim knelt down at their bedside to pray to God and thanking Him for the good life that they had. They had all kind of requests that they needed answers for in their prayers. God seemed to answer some of their request but some of them He did not answer. Mary and Jim were puzzled at this.

Now what do you think? Is there an explanation for what God did? Why doesn't God answer all their prayers? Why does God not answer our prayers?

Our Lesson looks at this issue. It also looks at the very important matter that every choice we make is either a choice for life, a life of blessings and always receiving good things from God, or a life which leads to being away from God which will lead to death.

The event in our Study Lesson takes place in the land of Judah several thousand years ago. The most powerful nation on earth at that time named Babylon came to fight against the much

smaller and weaker nation of Judah because they refuse to keep their agreement of loyalty with this powerful nation.

The nation of Judah had been blessed by God on many occasions. God had protected them against many of their enemies. God had had them to build a beautiful Temple so that they could come there and worship God and offer sacrifices to Him so that He would forgive their sins.

But God was displeased with them for they often went their own way, doing what they wanted to do. They did not listen to God's advice so that they could live a good life. They did not help the people who are poor and who had a hard time surviving. They would be very unkind to strangers. They would not treat the poor women and children well even though God warned them that they should make special provision for these people. They even worshiped idols which they had carved out of wood or made out of metal. This made God very angry at them for they wanted God's help when they were in trouble but they did not want to listen to God's advice or to treat Him or their fellow citizens well.

We know that in the 10 Commandments God had told the nation that they first should love God with all their heart and should not make images and worship those images, and secondly, they should love their neighbours just as they loved themselves.

But they did not want to listen. The leaders went their own way doing their own things to benefit themselves, and the other people in the country went along with this disgraceful behaviour. They forgot that they had a covenant or a special relationship with God which involved an Agreement with God. God had guaranteed that He would protect them and help them and make them prosperous but in turn they should obey His commandments.

But they simply wanted the blessings God promised them but did not want to go along with the obedience part of it.

This is not much different from what children and even some adults do even nowadays. They love for their parents to look after them and provide for them and love them, but they sometimes don't really want to listen to the instructions of their parents. They simply want to do their own thing even if it made their parents mad at them.

So God was displeased with the nation of Judah. They were in a desperate situation for this powerful country was ready to destroy them. Mind you, this powerful country had given them many chances to behave, but they did not feel like doing that.

The situation was so desperate that the king of Judah, who was quite a bad fellow, who did not respect the Commandments of God, and who did not really treat the people well, for he spent much of his time accumulating money, property and wealth for himself and his family, knew that he was in bad trouble.



He did not even treat the prophet of God Jeremiah well. He even threw him in jail when Jeremiah warned him that he should obey the commandments of God and practice Justice. Jeremiah told him over and over again that he should be fair in how he was leading the country, and how he treated the people. He should not try to keep everything for himself. He should make sure that everybody had a good life. He ignored all the warnings.

But now he was in bad trouble and he wanted the man that he had treated badly, the prophet Jeremiah to talk to God on his behalf. He wanted Jeremiah to pray to God to help them and the nation.

But God told him that he would not answer that prayer because even though he would pray over and over again God did not consider it good that he kept on misbehaving. God wanted him to follow His commandments and behave properly. This was always the condition that God had if the nation wanted help from Him.

So Jeremiah told the king bluntly that his behaviour and the behaviour of the other powerful rulers in the nation was so bad that God would not help him. God would allow his enemies to destroy him and the nation and even the Temple that had been so beautiful.

God would even join the enemies of Judah in fighting against Judah. The nation had gone too far in their disobedience and misbehaviour and their practice of NO JUSTICE.

They had a choice between life and death. If they wanted to live they should surrender to the powerful nation. If they did not it would come to the stage where they would have no food to eat, no medical attention to look after their wounds or injuries. They would simply die.

The lesson for us therefore is that they are consequences for not doing what God wants. We cannot expect God to be like a genie lamp where we simply rub the lamp, the genie appears, and gives us anything that we want, fulfilling all our wishes.

We should not deny when we are doing wrong and we should not delay in obeying God for that will make the consequences worse. We must face the music.

This is not a very popular kind of message that God gave the prophet Jeremiah to give to the nation and the king. But it is a good message.

We all have to be 100% honest, 100% humble, 100% courageous in doing what we should do. We should share with everybody and help everybody. We should not want to keep things only for ourselves. We should not play favourites and only help our friends and people we like.

We should not try to blame others for the things that we do wrong for that kind of attitude will do bad things to the state of our hearts. So we should remember what the psalmist said in Psalm 139:23-24:



“Search me, or God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me”.

It is not so difficult to turn to God and tell God honestly about what we have done and ask Him to guide us so that we can make things right. When you surrender to God it might cost you a little bit but in the end you will have life.

So learn to share with others that are in trouble. Learn to be fair in how you live.

God is waiting on you. He is very nice and kind. He will not hold your mistakes against you. All He wants is for you to come to Him, talk to Him often, pray often, and practice Justice or fairness.

