

Outline

-**Big Idea:** Human kings, leaders, and false shepherds cannot save God's people; only the righteous Branch from David's line can restore a remnant through judgment.

- **Introduction: A Shift in Focus**

- Jeremiah's message moves from the people at large to leadership
- Key questions the text raises
 - Can Judah's kings save her?
 - Can the throne of David protect the people?
 - Can the professional prophets clarify the moment?
- God's devastating answer: Judah's earthly leadership is bankrupt
 - Kings are unjust
 - Prophets are deceptive
 - Confidence in governmental structures is collapsing
- Application to America and the American church today
 - Cultural strife
 - Corruption and bias in government
 - Waning influence of the church
- Leadership must be evaluated in times of spiritual decline
 - The problem is never only "out there"
 - Weak shepherds shape the spiritual climate of an entire people

- **Chapter 21: Zedekiah's Request and God's Response**

- Zedekiah sends Pashhur and Zephaniah to seek a word from Jeremiah (Jeremiah 21:1-2)
- Zedekiah hopes for a miracle like the deliverance in Hezekiah's day
- He wants God's intervention without repentance and submission
- Jeremiah's stunning answer
 - God will not fight for Jerusalem on Zedekiah's terms
 - God Himself will turn against the city in anger
 - Judah's greatest problem is no longer Babylon; it is that God has turned against them
- God's ultimatum: the way of life and the way of death (Jeremiah 21:8)
 - The path of life is to surrender to Babylon
 - Surrender is obedience because Babylon is God's appointed instrument of judgment
- Application: The way of life is not always resistance
 - Sometimes it is humble submission to God's hand of discipline
 - Salvation often begins with surrender, not resistance

- **Chapter 22: Addressing the House of David**

- The continuing call to practice justice and righteousness
 - Deliver the oppressed
 - Stop violence and oppression
- We cannot separate good doctrine from moral responsibility
 - Israel had correct theology and worship but failed in everyday living
 - Good theology must play out in righteous living
- Review of Judah's failed kings
 - Royal lineage without covenant obedience is worthless

- Shallum, Jehoiakim, and Coniah condemned for how they lived
- Jehoiakim built his house through injustice (Jeremiah 22:13)
- Jehoiakim compared to his father Josiah
- Josiah did justice and righteousness
- He judged the cause of the poor and needy (Jeremiah 22:16)
- To know God is to reflect His character in life
- Application to the modern church
- Modern conservative Christianity can be deeply orthodox and ethically shallow
- Winning theological arguments while failing to display justice and compassion
- Those overlooked: single parents, struggling young families, the disabled, the mentally ill, widows, widowers, lonely young adults

- ****Chapter 23: False Shepherds and the Righteous Branch****
- Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep (Jeremiah 23:1)
- Characteristics of a good shepherd vs. a false shepherd
- Good shepherd: guides, feeds, guards, remains near the sheep
- False shepherd: uses, neglects, flatters, or abandons the sheep
- God's judgment on false shepherds
- Not a light consequence; God promises their destruction
- False prophets have caused ungodliness to spread into all the land (Jeremiah 23:15)
- God's promise to gather the remnant Himself
- He will raise up shepherds who will truly care for the flock
- Divine judgment is followed by divine provision
- The Messianic Promise: The Righteous Branch (Jeremiah 23:4-6)

- A new King will come from David's line
- He will reign wisely, execute justice and righteousness
- His name: "The Lord Our Righteousness"
- The weight of that name
 - Kings have failed
 - The people are guilty
 - Priests are corrupt
 - God Himself will provide righteousness in the coming King
- Application
 - We do not survive by self-made moral performance
 - Christ the righteous Branch becomes righteousness for His people
 - No human shepherd will ever be the savior of the flock
 - All human shepherds must be measured beneath the greater Shepherd-King, Jesus
- The danger of false prophets
 - They tell those who despise God that everything will be fine
 - They use optimism to deceive
 - They remove the conviction of the Holy Spirit
 - What they say does not sound immoral; it sounds hopeful
 - But it is a hope that leaves people unchanged
- The true prophet vs. the false prophet (Jeremiah 23:18)
 - The true prophet has stood in God's council and speaks what God actually says
 - The false prophet speaks from dreams, impressions, social correctness, and personal bias

- ****Chapter 24: The Vision of Two Baskets of Figs****

- One basket of very good ripe figs; one basket of very bad rotten figs
- The good figs: the exiles taken to Babylon
- The bad figs: Zedekiah, his officials, and those who remained or fled to Egypt
- This depends on our assumptions about judgment and discipline
 - Those taken into captivity are the objects of future mercy
 - Those clinging to false security are the objects of coming judgment
- God's promise to the exiles (Jeremiah 24:6-7)
 - He will set His eyes on them for good
 - He will bring them back and build them up
 - He will give them a heart to know Him
 - They will be His people wholeheartedly
- The heart of Jeremiah's message
 - The judgment of exile becomes the path of knowing God more deeply
 - God often does His deepest work not in seasons of strength but in seasons of struggle
 - Babylon is not the end of hope; it is the furnace in which false hopes are burned away
 - Life lesson: Outward circumstances do not always tell the truth about spiritual reality

- ****Four Take-Aways****

- Do not place trust in human leaders
- False shepherds are deadly because they scatter the sheep while pretending to care for them
- The Lord Himself promises a righteous King from David's line, culminating in Christ
- God often uses what looks bad to bring about His greatest good

- ****Closing: These Four Chapters Point Us to Jesus****

- He is the righteous Branch

- He is the Good Shepherd

- He is the One who gathers the remnant

- He is the One who gives righteousness to the guilty