A Word Of Warning For The Nations
Jeremiah 25:15-38

Introduction

Judgment begins in the house of God.

The Prophet Jeremiah delivers two messages; one to the people of Judah (vv.1-14) and one to the surrounding nations (vv.15-38). This is Jeremiah’s 12th sermon.

Jeremiah was not simply called to the Jewish people and the Jewish nation but also to the Nations (Jeremiah 1:5). God set Jeremiah over the nations (1:10) and gave Jeremiah authority to speak the Word of God to those nations.

The Bible teaches that the true and living God is not simply the God of the Jews but also the Gentiles (Nations). The Bible teaches that the Nations will be judged using the same standard that God applied to His own people. Strangely Jeremiah leaves out the reasons (perhaps they are not needed--they are evident!).

The sins of the surrounding nations were well known and well documented.

Paul in the book of Acts argues persuasively to the Greek philosophers in Athens “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.” Nor is He worshipped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. “And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us” (Acts 17:24-27).

God placed each and every person in each and every nation for the purpose “That they should seek the Lord” that they might grope for Him and find Him”--Paul argues they do not have to look far!

The Lord gives Jeremiah eight vivid images--metaphors of the upcoming Judgment on the Nations.

The Cup Of Wrath (vv.15-29)

Jeremiah 25:15–38 (NKJV) 15For thus says the Lord God of Israel to me: “Take this wine cup of fury from My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it.
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How did Jeremiah deliver the message?

Wiersbe: “To drink a cup is a symbol of submission to the will of God. “The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” (John 18:11) Jeremiah called the nations to submit to God’s will, surrender to Nebuchadnezzar, and be spared destruction. Jeremiah would later illustrate this message by wearing a yoke (Jer.27). If the nations did not drink the cup of submission, they would end up drinking the cup of judgment and “get drunk and vomit, and fall, to rise no more” (25:27 NIV).

The cup of judgment is a bitter cup indeed. But the judgment is nothing compared to the cup Jesus choose to drink on our behalf. Jesus will atone for the sins of the world (see Luke 22:42).

16And they will drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them.”

The judgment is overwhelming!

17Then I took the cup from the Lord’s hand, and made all the nations drink, to whom the Lord had sent me:

18Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, its kings and its princes, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, a hissing, and a curse, as it is this day;

19Pharaoh king of Egypt, his servants, his princes, and all his people;

Blackwood states the list is more suggestive than exhaustive (see page 183). The list follows a geographical order--south Egypt; Uz--southwest--Philistia East; Edom and her neighbors; Northwest; Tyre and Sidon Northeast; Dedan and other desert tribes north.

The Pharaoh is Necho. The title Pharaoh means “great house”.

20all the mixed multitude, all the kings of the land of Uz, all the kings of the land of the Philistines (namely, Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod);

The mixed multitude are the foreigners living in Egypt; the people from the Greek islands of Ionia and Caria; the land of Uz was the homeland of Job (Job 1:1; Saudi Arabia or the transjordan?); the name means “soft and sandy earth” (sand-dunes?)
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the lands of Philistines include the places previously occupied by the Philistines; what we would call the coastlines of Israel and Gaza. The word “Philistines” means the land of the wanderers; Ashkelon—(migration?); was a port city about 10 miles north of Gaza (fortified, strong) Ekron (eradication) on the Judean border. Remnant of Ashdod (fortified place, castle); about 35 miles north of Gaza; Pharaoh Psammetichus 1 (663-606 BC) had destroyed Ashdod (Herodotus Hist. II, 57).

21Edom, Moab, and the people of Ammon;

This is the land east of the Jordan river—parts of Syria (North) and Jordan (South). Edom—the name of Jacob’s older twin brother; Esau—the land of Edom was south of Judea; Moab (water, seed, progeny); the land east of the dead sea (modern Jordan). Ammon Gen. 19:38; “son of my relative” (incest—of Lot). The country beyond the Jordan, between the rivers Jabok and Arnon; roughly north east of Judah.

22all the kings of Tyre, all the kings of Sidon, and the kings of the coastlands which are across the sea;

Tyre (rock) Capitol city of the Phoenicians. It lay on the western border of the land claimed by the tribe of Asher; Sidon (another important harbor Phoenician City about 22 miles north of Tyre—in modern Lebanon. Phoenicia had many colonies along the Mediterrannium coast including North Africa

23Dedan, Tema, Buz, and all who are in the farthest corners;

Dedan (a tribal name--northern arabia--bordering on Edom).

“Tema” (a desert) was an Arab tribe living in the deserts of Syria (see Genesis 25:15-16; Isa. 21:14; Job 6:19).

Buz (contempt) was a tribe descended from Nahor (Abraham’s relative brother Gen. 22:21).

Who are those in the farthest corners or utmost corners (see also Jeremiah 9:26)?

Some of the tribes “cut the corners of their hair” a practice forbidden to the Jews (Lev.19:27).

24all the kings of Arabia and all the kings of the mixed multitude who dwell in the desert;

“mixed multitude” (ereb)--sounds like Arab.
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25all the kings of Zimri, all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Medes;

The kings of Zimri are unknown (meaning “celebrated in song”)?

All the kings of the Medes; a region east of the Zagros mountains, south of the Caspian Sea; west of Parthia; and north of Elam. Media began to emerge as a major player and powerful nation about a century before Jeremiah—Nebuchadnezzar formed an alliance through marriage with the daughter of the Median King.

26all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another; and all the kingdoms of the world which are on the face of the earth. Also the king of Sheshach shall drink after them.

The king of Sheshach (may be a cipher--code--for the king of Babylon).

27“Therefore you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Drink, be drunk, and vomit! Fall and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you.” ’

These are the signs of a drunk!

The wicked will be as helpless as a drunk fighting a well trained fully equipped special forces warrior. The wicked will be struck down never to rise again.

28And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup from your hand to drink, then you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: “You shall certainly drink!

What if the nations do not want to be judged? Doesn’t matter.

29For behold, I begin to bring calamity on the city which is called by My name, and should you be utterly unpunished? You shall not be unpunished, for I will call for a sword on all the inhabitants of the earth,” says the Lord of hosts.’

No sin is mentioned against the nations.

The Roaring Lion (vv.30a; 38)

30“Therefore prophesy against them all these words, and say to them: ‘The Lord will roar from on high, And utter His voice from His holy habitation; He will roar mightily against His fold.

The Winepress (v.30b)
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_He will give a shout, as those who tread the grapes, Against all the inhabitants of the earth._

The Lawsuit (v.31)

31 _A noise will come to the ends of the earth— For the Lord has a controversy with the nations; He will plead His case with all flesh. He will give those who are wicked to the sword,’ says the Lord._

The NIV reads; “The Lord will bring charges against the nations” (see also Hosea 4:1; Micah 6:2). The Lord is using the mixed metaphors; justice is a part of what God does in relation to the nations.

What does Court look like? There is a judge but no jury. There is an indictment but no defense; there is a sentence but no appeal. The Lord God has given the people plenty of opportunity to admit guilt and repent but they have refused. Now it is too late” (see Wiersbe TBEC Vol. Old Testaments The Prophets; p.116).

The Storm (vv.32-33)

32 _Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Behold, disaster shall go forth From nation to nation, And a great whirlwind shall be raised up From the farthest parts of the earth._

The storm visits the nations; or it may be that the nations attack and destroy one another.

The Garbage Heap

33 _‘And at that day the slain of the Lord shall be from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth. They shall not be lamented, or gathered, or buried; they shall become refuse on the ground._

Once again the judgment is so great there is no one to bury the dead.

A proper burial was important to every observant Jew. For the body to be treated like garbage was disgraceful. The dead would cover like the earth so much garbage. The word “refuse” is the word which means dung (excrement) (see Isa. 25:10-11).
The Shattered Shard (v.34)

34 “Wail, shepherds, and cry! Roll about in the ashes, You leaders of the flock! For the days of your slaughter and your dispersions are fulfilled; You shall fall like a precious vessel.

The precious vessel is either an expensive vase or an exquisite and delicate piece of pottery.

The Lord desires clean vessels, holy vessels.

The Lord Jesus will break the nations like a bull in a China Shop; the Lord smashes the nations like clay pots (Psalm 2:9).

The Slaughtered Flock (vv.34-38)

(v.34) “wail shepherds. . . For the days of your slaughter”

35 And the shepherds will have no way to flee, Nor the leaders of the flock to escape.

The Shepherds are the leaders who exploited God’s flock; who refused to exercise care and compassion towards God’s people.

36 A voice of the cry of the shepherds, And a wailing of the leaders to the flock will be heard. For the Lord has plundered their pasture,

The screams are heard as the massacre unfolds; there is no place to hide; the shepherds do not hear the bleating of the sheep but their own wailing as they see their pasture (Judah) destroyed.

37 And the peaceful dwellings are cut down Because of the fierce anger of the Lord.

38 He has left His lair like the lion; For their land is desolate Because of the fierceness of the Oppressor, And because of His fierce anger.”

Once again we are given the image of a fierce lion.
Conclusion

Is this what Peter had in mind when he wrote; “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God”? (see 1 Peter 4:17).