

*Beulah Baptist Church  
Rev. Jerry D. Black, Pastor*

*Sunday School Lesson  
May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
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## **Lesson: Repent of Injustice**

## **Text: Jeremiah 22:1-10**

### **I. Aim for Change**

By the end of the lesson, we will: RECOGNIZE that the covenant relationship between God and His people requires justice, REPENT for the injustice, and seek to deliver the oppressed, and BECOME active agents of deliverance for the oppressed.

**In Focus:** Mr. Quency was a devoted family man and attendee of his Quency Farms. There were live animals for the kids to play with and ride, agriculture for adult patrons to purchase, and nothing like the sweet corn produced by his land. Mr. Quency worked so hard that family and friends often encouraged him to slow down and take it easy. His best friend once warned that it all could be taken away, and he should relax, enjoy family, friends and thank God for the blessings of the farm. Mr. Quency replied, “God would never take his farm away.” One day a strong storm came and destroyed the farm, and Mrs. Quency observed her husband shed a tear as he looked up to the sky. *What do you hold onto so dearly? How would you react if you lost something you deeply cherished?*

**Key Verse—** (*Jeremiah 22:3 KJV*) *Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place..*

### **II. People Places and Times**

**The Throne of David.** Although David offered to build a house for God, he was not found worthy to do so, but instead, God would build a house for David, a line of kings to reign forever, as long as they remained faithful to the Lord (2Samuel 7:12). God’s covenant with David was that one of his descendants would always occupy the throne in Israel to rule over the people of God and the world (Isaiah 9:6-37; Micah 5:2, 4). Such stability would insure peace and prosperity. But David’s sons did not remain faithful to God, thus he allowed the Babylonians to conquer and exile the people. The Lord would not fail in keeping His covenant, though. Through the royal line of David, the King of kings was born, and He will reign forever.

### **III. Background**

This chapter finds Jeremiah expressing the grounds for the Babylonians leading the people of Judah away from their land, and those grounds are the people of Judah’s blatant disregard for the covenant. However, their dismissal is not permanent. God always provides an opportunity to return home. No matter how far away they go and even if they cannot

immediately return physically, they can return to the “hometown” values, which are epitomized by *the covenant*.

### ***The Lesson At-A-Glance...***

- Responding to God’s Call to the Powerful (22:1-56)
- Remembering God’s Covenant with God’s People (vv. 6-10)

#### ***IV. In Depth with More Light on the Text***

The message that God has the prophet speak to the king of Judah and his entourage was a simple set of imperatives: Make decisions based on fairness. The message is addressed to the leadership, because if they respond to God’s call, then the people whom they lead will be affected by their decisions. Any government that shows favoritism to certain groups of people or further pushes down the downtrodden or increases obstacles for the already dispossessed is a government that has chosen to refuse to heed the call of God.

The prophet imagines the nation in ruins. When people from other places inquire about how Jerusalem arrived at this point of despair, their answer will contain three actions that were committed: (1) abandoning the covenant, (2) worshiping other gods, and (3) serving other gods.

*Jeremiah 22:1 ¶ Thus saith the LORD; Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and speak there this word, 2 And say, Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these gates:*

The context of this lesson begins with continued messages from the Lord to the kings of Judah. The messages “indict” or criticize them for their sins and then declare God’s judgment against them for their wrongdoing. We know that Jeremiah is speaking to a king in the lineage of David based upon 2Samuel 7, but we are not sure who. After Babylonia destroyed Jerusalem in the days of Jeremiah, there was to be no Davidic king reigning over Israel for hundreds of years to follow. But with the coming of Christ, God fulfilled His promises to David. The son of David will now reign over the kingdom of David and the kingdom of God for all eternity.

*Jeremiah 22:3 Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place.*

Two words in the text “judgment (usually translated justice) and righteousness” are not necessarily two different ideas, but two words that together express one concept, something similar to what we mean today by “social justice.” Jeremiah lists three categories of people in society who tend to be marginalized, forgotten, or in need of special care: *the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow*. To do justice and righteousness means to maintain God’s laws for all and treat everyone rightly in society, but it especially means to care for those who cannot care for themselves. There are three ways the king must not treat people: they must not wrong, oppress, or cheat them; they must not act violently toward them; and third they are not to shed innocent blood.

*Jeremiah 22:4 For if ye do this thing indeed, then shall there enter in by the gates of this house kings sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, he, and his servants, and*

*his people. 5 But if ye will not hear these words, I swear by myself, saith the LORD, that this house shall become a desolation.*

If the king and the people turn from their wicked oppression of the defenseless, God will respond by extending grace toward them. But there is of course, another option. The king and the people could ignore the Lord and continue to misuse and abuse the underprivileged. If they persist in abusing the poor, judgment would come against “this house” which is probably a reference to the royal palace. What God is looking for here, is repentance. When God’s people repent, He delights in responding with mercy, compassion, grace, and forgiveness of sin.

*Jeremiah 22:6 For thus saith the LORD unto the king's house of Judah; Thou art Gilead unto me, and the head of Lebanon: yet surely I will make thee a wilderness, and cities which are not inhabited. 7 And I will prepare destroyers against thee, every one with his weapons: and they shall cut down thy choice cedars, and cast them into the fire.*

Jeremiah continues to lay out the judgement of God, comparing the king’s house to Gilead, and the “head” or summit of Lebanon. Both were fertile regions, representing strength, beauty, stability, and prosperity. God is now going to make the land like a desert, empty and forgotten cities. All the former glory will be taken away, all will be destroyed.

*Jeremiah 22:8 And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every man to his neighbour, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this great city? 9 Then they shall answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God, and worshipped other gods, and served them.*

The question is asked and answered as to why the Lord is planning to destroy them. The prophet Jeremiah envisions travelers along the road to the once glorious city wondering why God destroyed the city. One traveler has a divinely inspired answer, “God destroyed His own people because they abandoned their covenant with Him and worshiped and served other gods.” This refers to the covenant relationship the nation had agreed to at Mount Sinai. Jesus Himself tells us that the two greatest commands are to love God and to love your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:28-31). Now, travelers from many other nations who Israel was meant to reach with blessings shake their heads as they see how Israel has been cursed by her own God.

*Jeremiah 22:10 ¶ Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him: but weep sore for him that goeth away: for he shall return no more, nor see his native country.*

The final verse of this message from Jeremiah appears to be a reflection on how one ought to respond to this message of judgment from the Lord. The judgment will be so severe that it is better to be dead than to be alive in exile as a refugee.

***Liberating Lesson & Application for Activation—see Sunday School book***

### **Vocabulary-New Words**