Jehovah's Power and Dominion

Zion heard and was glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoiced, because of thy judgments, O Jehovah. For thou, Jehovah, art most high above all the earth: Thou art exalted far above all gods.

Judah during the days of Jeremiah

The word of God came to Jeremiah during the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah over Judah (Jeremiah 1:2). The Holy Spirit records nothing but good things about this young king of Judah. He began his reign at the tender age of 8. When Josiah was 16 years old, he "began to seek after the God of David his father" (2 Chronicles 23:26). When Josiah was 20 years old, he "began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the Asherim, and the graven images and the molten images. And they brake down the altars of the Baalim in his presence; and the sun-images that were on high above them he hewed down; and the Asherim, and the graven images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust of them, and strewed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them. And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and purged Judah and Jerusalem" (2 Chronicles 34:3-5). At the age of 26, five years after God had first spoken with Jeremiah regarding Judah, Josiah began to repair the temple of Jehovah. While the remodeling of the temple of God was being conducted the high priest Hilkiah found a copy of the Mosaic Law. Josiah took it and read it to the people and a spiritual reformation movement was in full swing.

While religious reforms are taking place in Judah God was speaking to Jeremiah about his fierce anger toward his disobedient people. Josiah's grandfather Manasseh had previously taken God's people to new lows of moral depravity. The book of 2 Kings 23:26 states, "Notwithstanding, Jehovah turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations wherewith Manasseh had provoked him." The sins of Judah would not vanish overnight. Some may argue that Josiah's efforts of reformation should have thwarted God's wrath; however, we must remember that Manasseh's evil influence was to be felt for many years to come. Jeremiah records, "But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? Let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah." (Jeremiah 2:28). Judah's corruption, through time, came to encompass all classes of people (Jeremiah 5:1-5; 6:13).

Manasseh's seductive wicked work among God's people had long lasting affects (2 Kings 21:9). Though Manasseh eventually repented, and was reformed, his influence had already gripped the people of Judah to a point of no return. The sins of Manasseh and the consequences thereof are given at 2 Kings 21:1-18. The life of Jeremiah spanned the days of these consequences. No amount of reformation attempted by Josiah would turn the people's deep seeded evil ways back to Jehovah. The hearts of men would only return to the Lord by the intense fires of plagues at the hand of God. The Lord brought upon Israel the "rod of mine anger" (Assyria) (Isaiah 10:5-6) and now he would bring the Babylonians upon Judah (Jeremiah 25:9ff; Habakkuk 1:5-11; Zephaniah 1:12-18). God referred to Babylon as the "wilderness of the sea" and the "destroyer" (Isaiah 21:1-2). As molten gold is purified by the fiery furnace so the Babylonians would unmercifully decimate the land of Judah for a future cleansing.
God’s Perspective of Judah

The Lord described Judah as a "people that are foolish, they know me not; they are sottish children, and they have no understanding; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge" (Jeremiah 4:22). The word "sottish" means to be deluded as being intoxicated. The Lord looked down from heaven and saw the true state of Judah (Jeremiah 7:11). The people had no fear of God (Jeremiah 5:22-24), no shame for their sin (Jeremiah 6:15), and no knowledge of God (Jeremiah 8:7). Judah was rebellious (Jeremiah 6:16) and given to covetousness and falsehood (Jeremiah 8:10). They practiced idolatry and even sacrificed their sons to Baal (Jeremiah 16:10-11; 19:5). The people of Judah were liars (Jeremiah 9:18), Sabbath breakers (Jeremiah 17:19ff), covenant breakers (Jeremiah 34:18ff), and they had completely put God out of their lives (Jeremiah 18:15). Judah's rulers led many astray with their lies (Jeremiah 2:3). These rulers did what they considered to be right rather than following the laws of God (Jeremiah 7:24; 8:6). Judah's prophets and priests were wicked as well (see Jeremiah 5:30-31). The reforms of Josiah had only affected Judah on the surface. Their hearts remained hardened against God.

God called upon Judah to acknowledge their sin (Jeremiah 3:13, 25; 13:16), seek truth (Jeremiah 5:1), stand and obey his laws (Jeremiah 6:16; 7:21-24; 26:13), amend their ways (Jeremiah 18:11; 26:13), and repent of their doings (Jeremiah 18:8-13, 25:5). Judah, however, rejected God’s mercy for 25 years as Jeremiah preached (Jeremiah 25:1-8).

The Lord had nothing but violent fierce anger to spill out on the disobedient people of Judah (Jeremiah 4:8; 13:22 etc.). The Lord tells Judah, through Jeremiah, that they would die "grievous deaths" (Jeremiah 16:3-4). Jerusalem would be burned with fire (Jeremiah 17:27; 21:10; 34:22; 39:8-9) and die by the sword, pestilence, and famine (Jeremiah 14:11-12; 21:7; 24:10; 27:8; 29:17; 34:17). Jehovah God would fight against Judah through Babylon because of the hardness of their hearts (Jeremiah 21:5). Babylon would eventually place Jerusalem under siege for eighteen months and the days would be so gruesome that acts of cannibalism would occur as they try to survive (Jeremiah 19:9; 21:4). All happiness would be removed from Judah (Jeremiah 25:10) and God would correct the survivors for seventy years in captivity (Jeremiah 25:11).

Judah's Self Perspective

The people of Judah had a different view of themselves than did the Lord. They considered themselves to be innocent and without sin (Jeremiah 2:35). Judah believed that its worship was acceptable to the Lord (Jeremiah 6:20; 11:15; 14:11-12; 26:2). They believed that they were wise (Jeremiah 8:8) and not defiled (Jeremiah 2:23). When God's destroying wilderness of the sea (Babylon) came and violently destroyed them they ask, "Why is God doing this to us?" (Jeremiah 13:22; 16:10). Many today blame God for all their hardships yet they will not give him glory and repent of their wicked deeds. The sinful people of the book of Revelation blasphemed the name of God as they experienced his crippling plagues as well (see Revelation 16:8-11). One thing people seem to grasp is that God is behind many of their woes yet they refuse to give him glory and repent of their sins (Revelation 9:20; 21; 16:9). Thousands of people who lived in Judah would go to their death in bitter rebellion against God. What will man do today? The book of Jeremiah teaches us that God demands man's whole heart in obedience rather than partial acceptance of God's laws. The Lord will not rest until his remnant gives him the glory and honor that is due through their perfection of service.

Jesus and the Hebrews Tempted

Introduction

The Hebrews were led into the Wilderness of Sin and there they were tried by God (Exodus 16:1ff). God provided water, meat, and bread from heaven yet they failed time and time again to give him glory and thanksgiving. Similarly, Jesus was led into the wilderness and tempted by Satan. The reaction of the Lord Jesus is much different than the Hebrews. Jesus ruled over the sin that Satan tempted him with and consequentially stands as our example of victory over sin and death (see Genesis 4:7; 1 Corinthians 15:56-58).

I. Satan Tempts Jesus with the Necessities of Life

A. Satan's message, “You can't do without so do what you have the power to do.”

B. Jesus' reply illustrates that there are far greater things than food that sustain a man.

II. Satan Tempts Jesus by putting his own Spin on the Scriptures

A. Satan takes the word of God out of context so as to put God to the test.

B. Jesus would not fall into the same trap that the Hebrews did.

III. Satan Tempts Jesus with Vain Glory

A. Jesus knew that gaining the whole world but loosing your soul would be to give in to temporary pleasures.

B. Jesus commands the devil to leave and so the temptation ended

Conclusion

Jesus stands as an example of one who did not and would not sin though he was intensely tempted to do so. We have Jesus as our example and we to can meet God's expectations and not sin.