

Exposition of Jeremiah - Lesson 42

" Reversionism, Dissimulation and Consequences"

By:

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Applicational Text: James 4:17 *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*

Expositional Text: Jeremiah 42:20-22 ²⁰ *For ye dissembled in your hearts, when ye sent me unto the LORD your God, saying, Pray for us unto the LORD our God; and according unto all that the LORD our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do it.* ²¹ *And now I have this day declared it to you; but ye have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God, nor any thing for the which he hath sent me unto you.* ²² *Now therefore know certainly that ye shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, in the place whither ye desire to go and to sojourn.*

Introduction:

We titled this message which is based on the forty-second chapter of Jeremiah and correlated with our Applicational Text from James 4:17, *"Reversionism, Dissimulation and Consequences."*

Reversionism is the act of reversing one's attitude or principles from a previously accepted point of view.

Dissimulation is based on the Hebrew word *"taw-aw"* which is translated in our Expository Text by the English word *"dissembled."* This Hebrew word means *to vacillate*. The Children of Israel vacillated in their hearts.

Consequences are the results of our decisions dictating our behavior in our daily walk.

It is important to note they had vacillated in their hearts. The word *"hearts"* refers to the right frontal lobe where one's norms and standards are stored. Although information is received and comprehended through our various empirical senses (touch, taste, smell, see, and hear) in the left-frontal lobe, our behavior is dictated by that information which is in the right frontal lobe. Information that we have comprehended and accepted as a norm for our behavior is cycled from the left frontal lobe into the right frontal lobe to form our conscience and dictate our behavior. This cycling of information from the left frontal lobe to the right frontal lobe is identified in Scripture by the word *"faith."* The Greek word for faith is *"pisteuo"* which

means **to place your weight or dependency upon something**. That something for salvation is Jesus Christ, that something for living the Christian Life is the Word of God.

We will see in our study today that the Children of Israel said to Jeremiah, ***Pray for us unto the LORD our God; and according unto all that the LORD our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do it.*** However, now Jeremiah says, ***“...ye have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God, nor any thing for the which he hath sent me unto you.***

In our study passage in Jeremiah, he told them, ***“...ye dissembled in your hearts...”*** Not only had they not done what God had said to them, they no longer put their trust in Him to deliver them. They were unwilling to place their dependency upon Him. They vacillated in what they believed.

We are studying this Book of Jeremiah in order to learn, by observing the experience of the Children of Israel, how to avoid the pain, loss, and suffering of Divine Discipline. The focus of chapter forty-two is their refusal to trust God. He had delivered them time, after time, after time. But they were unwilling now to depend upon Him. So then, they were destined for the pain, loss, and suffering designed to modify their behavior into a lifestyle more profitable for them.

The message for us today is identified in our Applicational Text of James 4:17; ***Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*** We are being taught the Word of God. We are repeatedly reviewing the mechanics for living the Christian way of life. Many of us have accepted that Word as truth, but when it is not according to our liking, or we don't have a clear directive we too tend to vacillate, that is, we slip into reversionism – reversing our attitude or principles from what we have previously accepted as a norm or standard for ourselves. We modify our priorities related to the aspects of our daily life. The test of what we really believe is revealed in our behavior. Head knowledge concerning God and His promises must be converted to heart knowledge. Head knowledge is information in our left frontal lobe. Heart knowledge is information in our right frontal lobe, information we accept in faith and apply to the circumstances encountered in our daily walk.

Well! there! That's the sermon! But you have driven up a road filled with pot-holes and you have come all the way up the hill, so let's look at it anyway. Jeremiah chapter 42...

I. Circumstances Motivate Us to Seek God:

The Children of Israel had been given ***“a land that flowed with milk and honey”*** (Deuteronomy 26: 9). It was given to them perpetually. But God had stipulated some conditions for the occupation of it. They had violated those conditions and had experienced four previous cycles of discipline. The fifth cycle of discipline required the loss of occupational rights, and God used Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Chaldean empire as His instrument to exercise that fifth cycle of discipline. Discipline is designed to modify one's behavior, and each previous cycle had resulted in increasing degrees of pain, loss, and suffering. There had been periods of repentance, but they were short lived and now

God had invoked the fifth cycle as per Leviticus 26. God had initiated it and then revealed that they were going to be out of the land for seventy years. You see, one of the conditions for occupation of the Land was to observe the Sabbatical Year – Every seventh year they were not to plant crops or harvest commercially. It was a time to let the land rest and for the people to manifest their reliance upon God. They had refused to observe it over a period of four hundred and ninety years. That means, they had refused to observe seventy of those Sabbatical Years. So, God removed them from the land for seventy years before bringing them back for another four hundred and ninety years. Danial explains God plan for their return in his book of prophecy. Jeramiah was used of God to call them to repentance, but they would not respond, so most of the people were taken captive to Babylon.

God's message through Jeremiah as a message of surrender and live or resist and die. There was a remnant of the people that were left in the land as caretakers, but in that remnant, there were those who had their own agenda, ignored God's instructions, and attempted to do things the way they thought they should be done rather than being obedient to God. That was not working out very well, so they went to the prophet Jeremiah to see if there was a word from the Lord.

That's where I text picks up here in Jeremiah chapter forty-two.

Jeremiah 42:1-1-3 ¹*Then all the captains of the forces, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiah, and all the people from the least even unto the greatest, came near,* ²*And said unto Jeremiah the prophet, Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the LORD thy God, even for all this remnant; (for we are left but a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us:)* ³*That the LORD thy God may shew us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do.*

Well, Hallelujah! Praise God! Revival Is in the air! Did you see that? ¹“...*all the people from the least even unto the greatest, came near,* ²*And said unto Jeremiah the prophet, Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the LORD thy God, even for all this remnant; (for we are left but a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us:)* ³*That the LORD thy God may shew us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do.*

Could it be that they have had a enough, that they have had a change of heart? They are asking the prophet Jeremih to pray for them “...*that the Lord thy God may shew us the way were in we may walk and the thing we may do.*”

But wait a minute! I've been a preacher far to long and have had all too many requests for prayer than to take this statement at face value. No! the Bible tells us to be swift to hear, slow to speak and slow to wrath. So before announcing a national revival, let's look at a few things here before we print a news release.

You may notice that the people asked Jeremiah to “...unto the LORD thy God...” Did you miss that? They asked him to pray “unto the Lord THY God.” God desired that the Children of Israel be His people and that He be their God. As you can see they weren’t yet.

But Wait! Did you notice that they wanted Jeremiah to pray to his God for them that Jeremiah’s God MAY show them the way wherein they MAY walk and the thing they MAY do what Jeremiah’s God wants them to do. Ah! You see! They do not consider themselves God’s Children! There is no repentance! There is no commitment! They simply want Jeremiah’s God to bail them out. The word MAY indicates no commitment but a possibility.

II. The Prophet’s Response and Play on Words:

Jeremiah 42:4 *Then Jeremiah the prophet said unto them, I have heard you; behold, I will pray unto the LORD your God according to your words; and it shall come to pass, that whatsoever thing the LORD shall answer you, I will declare it unto you; I will keep nothing back from you.*

Did you see it this time? did you catch it? Or Is it just a preacher thing? Jeremiah said, “...I will pray unto the LORD YOUR God...” Jeremiah knew if this thing was to work the people had to become God’s people and God had to become their God. But the preacher did not stop there, notice he said, “...I will pray unto the LORD your God according to your words;” See that? The prophet is willing to become the petitioner. He will present their petition. Jeremiah makes no commitment to pray for them, but to present their request to the Lord. The preacher is looking for commitment and informs them that he will tell them everything the Lord says and will not keep anything back from them. That prompts a verbal commitment from the people.

Jeremiah 42:5-6 ⁵ *Then they said to Jeremiah, The LORD be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all things for the which the LORD thy God shall send thee to us.* ⁶ *Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God, to whom we send thee; that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the LORD our God.*

It is interesting that they recognize the qualifier for things to go well with them is their obedience to the Lord OUR God. Yes! They finally got around to acknowledging that He is God regardless of whether they want Him to be theirs or not, and He is the one who determines the outcome. They give a verbal commitment to obey Him whether it be good or whether it be evil. (The word “evil” here is from the Hebrew word “rah” which means bad.) They make a verbal commitment to do what God says whether it be good or bad. They agree to do “...according to all things for the which the LORD thy God shall send thee to us. – good or bad!

And they add a further commitment and to *obey the voice of the LORD our God.*

I might get excited over this commitment if I had not read the rest of the chapter.

III. The Word of The Lord Came to Jeremiah:

Perhaps God is busy, He does have a lot of people to attend to, or perhaps, because He is eternal, time is not a “Big Deal with Him, whatever it is, it seems that God operates on a different schedule than us. Most of us are like the man who prayed for patience, he prayed, **“Lord, give me patience, and give it to me right now.”** You will notice that the text in verse seven says **“... And it came to pass after ten days, that the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah.”** They had to wait ten days before getting an answer from the Lord.

God had waited on them for about five hundred years. His messages had repeatedly been ignored by them, so what is ten days in His eternal scheme of things? It is worth noting, that the number ten in Jewish numerology is the number of a rounded total. This message sent to Jeremiah is the rounded sum of the instructions God had repeatedly given to this rebellious people. So, **“... it came to pass after ten days, that the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah.”**

When Jeremiah received this word from the Lord he called all the people together to tell them what God had said concerning their prayer request...

Jeremiah 42:8-9 ⁸ *Then called he Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces which were with him, and all the people from the least even to the greatest,* ⁹ *And said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, unto whom ye sent me to present your supplication before him;*

Notice that Jeremiah called ***all the people from the least even to the greatest*** and reminds them that they had sent him to the Lord, the God of Israel to present their supplication before Him. They had told Jeremiah they would do what the Lord told them to do, so God tells them plainly what they are to do and the consequences associated with their actions. Remember our message is titled **“Reversionism, Dissimulation, and Consequences.”** There are consequences of **“Reversionism** – reversing one’s attitude or principles from a previous accepted practice.” **“Dissimulation** – to vacillate in one’s norms and standards. The Children of Israel had made a commitment to do whatever the Lord said to do. Would they follow through and maintain that commitment or would they vacillate concerning the norms and standards they committed to?

Listen to Jeremiah’s presentation of God’s instruction per their request and commitment.

IV. Clear and Simple Instruction:

There are three simple, but important aspects contained in this part of the message: (1). It has an If Clause, (2). It has an Encouragement Clause, and (3). It has a Result Clause.

Jeremiah 42:10-12 ¹⁰ *If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull you down, and I will plant you, and not pluck you up: for I repent me of the evil that I have done unto you.* ¹¹ *Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are afraid; be not afraid of him, saith the Lord: for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand.* ¹² *And I will shew mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land.*

The “If Clause” is “...*If ye will still abide in this land...*” The “Result Clause” is, “...*then will I build you, and not pull you down, and I will plant you, and not pluck you up: for I repent me of the evil that I have done unto you.*” There is that word repent again. Remember, it is a translation of the Hebrew word “**maw-kham**” and it means **to reverse one’s action toward something or someone**. If they stay in the land, God will reverse His action toward them, He will back off from the discipline He has designed for them. The “Encouragement Clause” is “...*Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are afraid; be not afraid of him, saith the Lord: for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand. And I will shew mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land.*” Poor old Nebuchadnezzar does not know that he is a pawn in the plan of God. But the Children of Israel are given this bit of encouragement from the Lord – If they stay in the “**land**” they need not fear the King of Babylon, God promises to manipulate him so that he has mercy upon them and restores them to their own land. The Hebrew word translated “**land**” used in the phrase “**return to your own land**” is a different Hebrew word than had been used earlier in the phrase, “...*if you will still abide in this land...*” In this earlier phrase the word “**land**” is from the Hebrew word “**eh-rets**” and refers to **their country**, but in the latter phrase, the Hebrew word is “**ad-aw-maw**” and refers to **their personal property**- Nebuchadnezzar will cause you to return to your own home (**your personal property**).

In the passage that follows, the prophet enlarges upon “...*the word of the Lord...*” with its conditional clauses...

V. Another Side of the If and the Result Clauses:

But there is another side of the “If Clause” and of the “Result Clause.”

Jeremiah 42:13-14 ¹³ *But if ye say, We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the LORD your God,* ¹⁴ *Saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell:*

In the Greek of the New Testament we are able through the grammatical structure of the four if conditional clauses to determine what is going to take place - If and it is true, If and it is false, If and maybe it’s true or maybe it is false, If and I wish it was true, but it is not. We don’t have that in Hebrew grammar, but we do have the omniscience of God and in His omniscience, God already knew that they would not follow through with their commitment and would opt to go to Egypt, so He gives us the other side of the result clause as well...

Jeremiah 42:15-18 ¹⁵ *And now therefore hear the word of the LORD, ye remnant of Judah; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; If ye wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt, and go to sojourn there;* ¹⁶ *Then it shall come to pass, that the sword, which ye feared, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine, whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there ye shall die.* ¹⁷ *So shall it be with all the men that set their faces to go into Egypt to sojourn there; they shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: and none of them shall remain or escape from the evil that I will bring upon them.* ¹⁸ *For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As mine anger and my fury hath been poured forth upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem; so shall my fury be poured forth upon you, when ye shall enter into Egypt: and ye shall be an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach; and ye shall see this place no more.*

The Lord describes the result of their failure to believe Him and be obedient to Him and He summarizes it in the phrase *and ye shall be an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach; and ye shall see this place no more.*

The word “*execration*” is translated from the Hebrew word “*aw-law*” which means a spoken curse or prayer that calls down evil or misfortune on a person. This is part of the reason that there is such hatred for the Jews – it is part of the result of their disobedience to God. The word “*astonishment*” is translated from the Hebrew word “*sham-maw*” which means to marvel in bewilderment at the devastation. Do you recall your astonishment concerning the Holocaust or your amazement with regard to the slaughter of the Jewish people at the hand of Hamas in the October 7th. Massacre? As a result of their disobedience the Children of Israel continue to be a spoken curse and bewilderment to the world.

But remember, before you become critical of God’s action, these are the chosen people of God - chosen to receive God’s message and take to all the world, chosen to be the people through whom the Messiah would come, and all nations could be blessed. Remember *No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.* (Hebrews 12:11) Ah, Yes! Discipline produces the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto those who are “*exercised*” by it. That is, to those whose behavior is modified to reflect the application of God’s Word to their lives.

Conclusion:

¹⁹ *The LORD hath said concerning you, O ye remnant of Judah; Go ye not into Egypt: know certainly that I have admonished you this day.* ²⁰ *For ye dissembled in your hearts, when ye sent me unto the LORD your God, saying, Pray for us unto the LORD our God; and according unto all that the LORD our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do it.* ²¹ *And now I have this day declared it to you; but ye have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God, nor any thing for the which he hath sent me unto you.* ²² *Now therefore know certainly that ye*

shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, in the place whither ye desire to go and to sojourn.

God's word was clear to Israel, but they were disobedient. What a tragedy when a person goes to God for advice and then rebelliously rejects that advice. Many of the Children of Israel perished *"by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence."* Yet more tragic than that is the reality that the Lake of Fire and Brimstone will be filled for eternity with those who have known God but have rejected His plan of deliverance.

If you don't believe God is serious about Hell, then you have not been observing His dealings with the Children of Israel. He has provided blessing and protection for all who will receive it.

Remember our Applicational Text **James 4:17** *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*

Like Israel in the Old Testament, the Church has been chosen as God's people. He has called us out to live for Him. **Reversionism** is the act of reversing one's attitude or principles from a previously accepted point of view. **Dissimulation** is based on the Hebrew word **"taw-aw"** which is translated in our Expository Text by the English word **"dissembled."** This Hebrew word means **to vacillate**. The Children of Israel vacillated in their hearts. Let us avoid these and escape the consequences associated with them. **Consequences** are the results of our decisions dictating our behavior in our daily walk.

God has given us His Word, He has structured the church with pastor teachers to equip us to do the work of ministry, we are without excuse. His Word informs us of His will for us. His word instructs us in the techniques of living the Christian way of life. His Spirit enables us to do the tasks He has assigned us. *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*

But it all begins at Salvation:

- *For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God...*
- *The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life...*
- *With the heart man believes unto righteousness...*
- *But with the mouth confession is made unto salvation...*
- *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved..*

*Let Us Learn From The Failure of Others and Avoid
The Pain, Loss, or Suffering of
Personal Discipline!*