**BCM Bible Study – September 28/29, 2022**

**Jeremiah 21-23 Leadership & the Hope of the Branch of David**

These chapters confirm the certainty of Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar’s war against Judah. Jeremiah spends much time in this confronting the leadership (both the king and the priests) about how their actions played a role in this fate. There is a glimmer of hope in the leader that God will one day send to Judah and Israel.

* In your experience, how have you seen a lack of godly leadership affect a group negatively?

Wrongs of the Kings: **Read Jeremiah 21:11-14 and 22:1-5**

*Helpful information: “House of David” refers to the king and those who rule alongside of him.*

* What seems to be the most important qualities in a leader to God? [look at the commands given to them in vs. 11-12, and 22:3-4]
* In 22:3, what do you think it means to “do justice and righteousness”?

“In the critical evaluation of the kings in this section, readers encounter an emphasis on social responsibilities. The king and his administration should “administer justice” (21:12) and “do what is just and right” (22:3). The Hebrew words for “just/justice” and “right” are recognized terms to describe social rectitude and a healthy communal life. They overlap much in their meaning and often occur together as a word pair in the Old Testament.” (Dearman)

* What does it look like to take care of those with the greatest need? What are some practical expressions of what this could look like?
* Look at 22:4. If the kings had obeyed God’s commands, what would have been the outcome for Judah? Given this information, how does that make you feel about the chances God gave Judah to save itself?

**Read Jeremiah 22:11-17**

* What are some of the qualities of bad leadership that you find in these verses?
* What are the contrasting qualities you find in these verses compared to what God expects from leaders in the previous passage?
* In v.15, Josiah is remembered as being a good king, however his son, Shallum (or Jehoahaz) has done evil in the sight of the Lord. How do you think Jehoahaz turned so opposite of what his dad was as a king?
* How do you think leadership affects the attitude of the people that they rule over? (not just in Jeremiah, but in general)
* What do the judgments against Shallum reveal to us about God’s character?

Hope for Judah: **Read Jeremiah 23:5-8**

Remember back to chapter 7: Judah’s leaders had assured the people of Judah that God would not bring destruction on them because they overemphasized the *Davidic Covenant*. “The people assumed David’s descendants would rule forever, and God’s blessing would rest on Jerusalem and the temple no matter how Judah lived.” *Encountering the Old Testament*

* + Knowing/remembering that background, how does this section become even more powerful to you as you read it?
* What are the characteristics of the king that the Lord will rise up to reign over Judah?
* Pay attention to v. 6. There are two powerful points here, “Judah will be saved.”, “And this is the name by which he will be called: The Lord is our righteousness.”
  + What New Testament glimpse do you see here?
* **Read Romans 10:4 & 1 Corinthians 1:30**
  + How might God’s plan to save the Judeans be bigger than they ever imagined?
    - *Although the Judeans need physically saving from harms way at this point, God has a much bigger plan of salvation in store for their souls through Jesus birth, death and resurrection.*

False Prophets: **Read Jeremiah 23:13-32**

* Do you think God is harder on the government leaders or the spiritual leaders? Why might this be so?
* “Spiritual adultery begins with ungodly spiritual leaders.” – ESV study bible footnote
  + How have you seen this come into play in your own life?
* Look back at 23:13-14. How is Judah described as worse than the Northern Kingdom?
* How do 23:23-25 make you feel when considering God’s presence and our sin?
* As Christians, why is it important that we be able to tell the difference between an ungodly spiritual leader (or false prophet) and those who are walking in God’s ways?
  + What are some ways we might be able to tell them apart?
* False teaching is a recurring theme in both the Old Testament and The New Testament. **Read Galatians 1:6-9**
  + The Galatians have likely encountered visiting pastors who have tried to persuade them that they ought to require circumcision and obedience to the law as a means of justification before God.
    - Tim Keller adds his thoughts on how the Gospel was being misconstrued to the Galatians: “If you add anything to Christ as a requirement for acceptance with God—if you start to say: To be saved I need the grace of Christ **plus** something else—you completely reverse the ‘order’ of the gospel and make it null and void. Any revision of the gospel reverses the gospel.”
    - What are some things that we’re tempted to add to the gospel – (i.e. grace of Jesus + \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ saves us)?
      * How can we protect ourselves from these Gospel additives?

**Challenge:** 1 Timothy 2:1-2 refers to how we should pray for all people (especially leaders). Spend some time over the upcoming week praying for leaders (pastors, BCM staff, politicians [potentially focus on those politicians/leaders you dislike!]).