



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Jeremiah; Lamentations Sermon Series
Supports Session 6: Exclusive
Sermon Title: "The Promise Keeper"
Passage: Jeremiah 23:1-8

Connection to Session 6

God will send a Righteous Ruler will fulfill God's promises.

Introduction/Opening

Leaders have struggled to stay faithful to God throughout history. Adam walked with God in the Garden but ate from the only tree forbidden. Cain tilled the ground but killed Abel. Noah built the ark but got drunk and naked. Abraham walked by faith but lied. Isaac was the child of promise, but he lied, too. Jacob wrestled with God but schemed. Judah inherited the promise but slept with a woman he thought was a prostitute. Moses led Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness, but his anger kept him out of the Promised Land. Aaron spoke well on behalf of the Lord and Moses, but he built a golden calf in Israel. Samson worked works of power, but he chased Delilah. Saul defeated Philistines but relied upon the witch of Endor for guidance. David sang His praise to the Lord but committed adultery and conspired for murder. Solomon wrote the proverbs of all but loved his wives more and worshipped their idols. Joash followed the Lord while Jehoida the priest lived and advised him, but once he died, Joash lead Judah into idolatry. Peter took a bold stand for Christ but denied Him three times! John followed Christ but wanted to call fire down from heaven upon the Samaritans. The failure of God's people appears often in Scripture and creates the mournful questions: "Can't someone get this right? Do they all fail?"

Jeremiah faced similar persons in his ministry. The Lord and His people expected Judah's kings, priests, and prophets to work in favor of the faith when they, in fact, undermined it. The Lord complained about this through Jeremiah (Jer. 23:1-2, 9-12).

The Lord compensated for Jeremiah's sorrow, and ours, with numerous promises divided into three categories.

Outline

- 1. Category 1: Promises of Ministry (Jer. 23:3-4).**
 - a. After threatening judgment on unfaithful shepherds, the Lord promised Judah shepherd-leaders who would prioritize ministry to the sheep. This included several promises: I will gather them, I will return them, I will multiply them, I will oversee them, and I will count them.

- b. God fulfilled these promises in Ezra, Zerubbabel, and Nehemiah, and their shepherd-leadership had two awesome results. One, the Jews never struggled with worship of Baal again. Two, these shepherd-leaders rebuilt the city and temple that would host the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Category 2: Promises of Majesty (Jer. 23:5-6).

- a. While human shepherd-leaders will struggle, the Lord promised One who would never struggle.
 - i. As a Righteous Branch of David, this One will verify that He is a descendant of David.
 - ii. He will reign wisely.
 - iii. He will administer justice and righteousness.
 - iv. In His day, Judah would be saved.
 - v. In His day, Israel will dwell securely. As a result, His sheep would nickname Him “The LORD is our Righteousness.” (v. 6)
- b. The depiction of the Lord Jesus here is so majestic, we may fear offending Him by saying too little. Our best words are too small to capture His greatness. No wonder the psalmists needed 150 psalms to praise the Lord.

3. Category 3: Promises of Victory (Jer. 23:7-8).

- a. The Lord promised more for Judah and Israel. He promised He would perform another exodus that would eclipse the first (vv. 7-8). This second exodus would mean Judah and Israel would “dwell once more in their own land” (v. 8). To perform this, the Lord reshuffled geo-political relationships between Babylon and Persia. This reshuffling resulted in the Persian ruler, Cyrus, acting as a shepherd when he released Israel and supported their return to the land (Isa. 44:28).
- b. The Lord gave them victory over their captivity. Unfortunately, fewer than 50,000 exiles returned to Israel (Ezra 2; 8; Neh. 3; 7).
- c. While only 50,000 experienced this victory, Paul said more will later. In Romans 9-11, Paul makes a complicated but encouraging argument about salvation of Jews and Gentiles. While the text has been subject to impassioned debate in recent years, it should unify all believers in the conviction that God knows how to save a resistant people.

Conclusion

While we all make promises, we have not kept them all. The Lord can keep all his promises, though, and he has never made a promise He could not, would not, or did not keep in its time. God is generous in His promise-making and faithful in keeping each one.

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