



The Prophets & Kings

From Rehoboam To Zedekiah

Book 1

A Daily Devotional Study Guide

Week 54

“Too Late”

Study: Jeremiah 14:10-18

Reading: John 9:1-40

Memory: Isaiah 40:22

There were a few times when I was a substitute teacher in middle school where I had to deal with some children who wouldn't listen. I was normally a very patient teacher, but when a student would fail to listen after repeated warnings, it was time for me to act. Often, when I would finally decide to take them down to the principals office, their demeanor would change. They would beg me and plead with me to allow them to stay in class, but it was too late for them. They created their own consequences by their failure to obey.

Today, we will read how the Israelites had fun doing their own thing until they had to face the consequences. Though they were warned over and over to turn back to God, by the time they experienced the predicted judgment, it was too late for them.

What Does the Bible Say?

Though Jeremiah prayed that the Lord would help the people and deliver them from the severe drought they were experiencing, God revealed that this was a punishment from Him. The people had chosen to go after other gods and rejected His commandments. Jeremiah was told not to pray for the situation of the children of Israel to improve. The people could fast all they wanted to and could cry out to God, but He would not listen to them. Their prayers and sacrifices would not be accepted. God had determined that He was going to bring judgement upon them. Though this message appears to be in contrast with God's constant calls for repentance, the point that God is making is that the people just wanted deliverance from their situation. Many times in Scripture God challenged His children to follow Him from their hearts and not just with their outward acts of worship (vs 10-12).

Though God had sent true prophets to declare judgement, many prophets rose up who contradicted them. Their general message was that God loved them since they were His children so God would not allow any harm to come to them. These prophets were often the ones that the

children of Israel listened to because their message was so much easier to handle. The Lord made it clear that these false prophets would not get away with their atrocious acts. They, along with those who chose to listen to them, would become victims of famine and war. Many would be killed and have no one to bury them because their family members would also be killed or taken as captives (vs 13-16).

God knew they were going to experience great pain and sorrow, and He also would experience great sorrow. God described how His eyes would be filled with tears day and night as He saw what His children were going through. He described them as His “virgin daughter” and “precious people.” Just as a parent finds great pain and heartache in seeing their children suffer, God experienced this deep sorrow. He watched them starve and watched them suffer destruction. Everywhere that He looked in the land of Israel, this pain was evident. Even when all this misery was taking place, the false prophets continued to declare that everything would be okay. They didn’t realize that the more they proclaimed this, the worse things would become for the nation (vs 17-18).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you realize that there are many false prophets today? They disguise themselves as preachers and teachers. They build great religious empires based on a message that appeals to the masses, but instead of helping people, they make things worse. Some of the things they declare help people feel better about themselves or produce temporary relief, but they deepen the pain and heartache on the end. This is why it is so important that you have a faith that is centered around the Word of God. It is vital to read and study the whole counsel of God for yourself on a regular basis. You can’t just pick and choose which Bible passages you will follow and which ones you won’t. You can’t develop your own theology of God based on a few verses that you like and will support your ideology. Choose today to surrender your whole heart and whole self to Him, making following His truth a priority in your life.

Thought for the day

What did Jeremiah pray for in verse 7-9?

What did God say Israel loved to do (vs 10)?

What do you think He meant by this?

What did God say He would not do (vs 10)?

What did He say He would do (vs 10)?

What did God tell Jeremiah not to do (vs 11)? Why?

What would God not pay attention to (vs 12)?

Why do you think God stated this?

What did Jeremiah say was happening (vs 13)?

Did this mean that Israel would not be held accountable? Explain.

What did God say about the false prophets (vs 14)?

What did God not do (vs 15)?

How can you know if someone is delivering the message of God?

What would happen to the false prophets and those who listened to them (vs 16)?

How did God view His children (vs 17)?

Why do you think it was painful for Him to bring destruction to them?

What was going to happen all over Judah (vs 18)?

Why was this going to happen (vs 18)?

What lesson can you learn from this?

“Grace and Judgment”

Study: Jeremiah 14:19-15:9

Reading: Revelation 2:1-7, Romans 6:1-14

Memory: Isaiah 40:22

When my children were young, I tried my best to be a patient father, giving my children clear warning before they had to face punishment. Often one warning was enough, but there were times where I had to warn them more than once. Occasionally, I had to stop warning and act so they would be made aware that their behavior would not be tolerated. Though I didn't always do this perfectly, I wanted my children to see the right balance between grace and punishment.

Today, we will be reminded that God is both a God of grace and a God of judgement.

What Does the Bible Say?

In his conversation from God, Jeremiah asked God if He had decided to reject Judah. It appears that Jeremiah felt that God was treating Judah as if they were beyond any hope and that no healing would come to them. All he saw was terror in their future. He confessed the fact that they had sinned greatly against God and that they were continuing in this sin. Though they were guilty of this, He asked God not to turn them away as a nation and to remember the covenant He had made with the nation of Israel. Jeremiah declared that none of the false gods could do what God could do and that He was the God of Israel. He stated that the nation would set their hope in Him knowing that He was the God who could bring and alleviate destruction (vs 19-22).

Jeremiah was pleading on behalf of the people for deliverance, but this was not the first time that a leader had done this. Moses and Samuel pled for the nation and for help in the past and God had chosen to relent from the disaster He had planned. Though He had done this in the past, His patience had run out and this time He was not going to relent from the disaster He had promised. Even if Moses and Samuel would plead for the people it would make no difference. God basically commanded that the people leave His presence. By this God was saying that He was

removing His protective hand from them and that they would face death, war, famine and captivity without Him choosing to intervene (vs 1-2).

In a gruesome picture of what would take place, God described the four different destroyers that would disgrace the people. First, the enemy soldiers would arrive and kill many of the people. The dogs would then drag the dead bodies, tearing them apart and leaving them for the vultures to feed on. Whatever was left would be finished off by the rest of the beasts of the earth. Their deaths and the way their bodies would be treated would be a horror to all the nations around them. This was going to be a punishment for what Manasseh had done and how he had led the people of Judah into horrific actions while worshiping their idols. Though few, if any, men were still alive from that time period, the results of the actions of that people from that time still polluted the land (vs 3-4).

God then declared that He was tired of relenting destruction because the children of Israel would just repeat their sin, each time getting worse and worse. He had tried to get their attention by bringing destruction and temporary disasters, yet they would still not turn. He had caused the death of many, multiplying the widows in the land, yet they would still not turn from their wicked ways. Judah had become like a widow who had seven children and had to watch most of them die. This caused her heart to grow weary as she watched the last of her children die. Her joy which was at its peak when her seven children were alive was taken away little by little until there was nothing left. God had taken things away from Israel, yet they failed to turn to Him. Now, there would be nothing left (vs 5-9).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you realize that God grows weary of relenting? God is a patient and forgiving God, but when His children continued down the path of sin, choosing not to turn back to Him, He finally reached a point where He no longer wanted to hold off disaster. Scripture is very clear that God will forgive your sin and cleanse you when you come to Him in confession and repentance, but when you choose not to turn to Him, His patience will only last so long before He brings punishment. This warning is not for those seeking after God with their whole heart and desiring to please Him, but is for those who have the idea that they can live however they want because of the grace of God. God loves pouring out His grace on those who are humble and repentant of sin, but this patience will come to an end for those who continually reject Him.

What questions did Jeremiah ask God (vs 19)?

Why do you think he asked these questions?

What did Jeremiah state about the wickedness of the nation (vs 20)?

Why do you think that Jeremiah's prayer of repentance for the people was not enough?

Why did Jeremiah talk about the name of God in verse 21?

What did Jeremiah state about God (vs 22)?

Why do you think God mentioned Moses and Samuel (vs 1)?

What did God instruct to be done with the children of Israel (vs 1)?

Where did God say the children of Israel were to go (vs 2)?

What four things were going to happen to the people and their bodies (vs 3)?

Why do you think God chose to describe this?

What would they become (vs 4)? Why?

Do you think this means that you are going to suffer greatly for the sins of your grandparents? Explain.

What do you think was the point that was being made in verse 5?

How were the children of Israel going "backwards" (vs 6 - ESV)?

How had God "winnowed" the people (vs 7)?

What had happened to many in the land (vs 8)?

What point do you think verse 9 was attempting to get across?

"Weary of Doing Good"

Study: Jeremiah 15:10-21

Reading: 1 Peter 3:8-17, Galatians 6:1-9

Memory: Isaiah 40:22

Over the years I have trained for a few marathons and triathlons. I have always loved the results at the end of my training periods, but have found that the training periods are full of ups and downs. There were days where I simply did not feel like doing any exercise because my body hurt from the day before. There are other days where I felt wonderful because I was able to physically do things that would have been much more difficult before I started training. Throughout the whole process I have found that I had to focus on the end results rather than what I felt during the process.

Today, we are going to see how Jeremiah struggled with his emotions because of the constant persecution he was facing. We will see how he was challenged to endure the suffering as God reminded him that his obedience was worth it.

What Does the Bible Say?

Jeremiah asked God to relent of the impending judgement, but God told Him that He was going to carry out His punishment on the people of Judah. Jeremiah didn't want Judah to experience the judgement that God had called him to proclaim and he faced the severe reality of his position as a prophet. His call was not a glorious one since he was sharing the truth of God which had stirred up anger rather than repentance. The emotions of the circumstance overwhelmed Jeremiah and he stated that he wished he had never been born. He was being cursed by all men and compared what he was going through to a lender who had chosen to foreclose on the buyers who chose not to pay. Many of the people were treating Jeremiah as the unforgiving lender and that brought great discouragement to his heart (vs 10).

God replied to Jeremiah's complaint by reminding Jeremiah that he would be safe. God was on Jeremiah's side, and even in a time of trouble, God would take care of Him. The enemies of Jeremiah would turn to him, begging for him to plead to God for them when the

Babylonians attacked. The power of Babylon would be great, they were compared to bars or iron or bronze, this greatness was controlled by God.

God was going to give the wealth of Judah over to them because of the sin of Judah. Many would be killed and many would be taken captive, but through all of it, God would protect Jeremiah (vs 11-14).

Though God had given some words of encouragement to Jeremiah, Jeremiah was still discouraged. He asked God to step in and help him because of the suffering he was facing. He was being persecuted and asked God to take care of those who were committing these acts. In his defense, Jeremiah reminded God how he had devoured the words of God. God's words were his joy and delight. He wanted to live in a way that revealed he represented God. He had avoided the evil feasts which the people celebrated and often was lonely because many others around him participated in evil. Instead of experiencing the blessings for obedience, Jeremiah felt like he was being punished for doing what God wanted. His suffering was continuous and he compared the help that God was giving him to a brook that was dried up (15-18).

The choice that God gave Jeremiah was pretty clear. God called Jeremiah to change his attitude and choose to continue to serve Him. He wanted Jeremiah to stop complaining about God and to start rejoicing in Him. Jeremiah could not be a tool for God if he allowed his persecutors to influence him into quitting. They would continue to fight against him, but God would give him amazing strength. God would keep him safe and rescue him from the hands of those who sought to hurt him (vs 19-21).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you get discouraged when things get difficult in your life? Does it seem that the more you serve God the harder life gets? There will be times in your life where following God will produce amazing results and there will be other times where you will experience great difficulties. Understanding that you will face both ups and downs as a follower of Christ should challenge you and encourage you to endure. You can also find solace in the fact that many great men of God went through difficult times and felt the emotional pain of rejection and loneliness. It should be noted that sometimes the suffering you experience is brought about by your own choices. 1 Peter 3 tells us that it is good to suffer for doing what is right, but that it is not a good thing to suffer because of foolish choices. Choose today to be a committed, faithful servant of Jesus Christ no matter what comes your way.

Why did Jeremiah wish he had never been born (vs 10)?

How did he say he was being treated (vs 10)?

What did God tell Jeremiah He would do (vs 11)?

What would the enemies of Jeremiah do (vs 11)?

What was the power of the Babylonians compared to (vs 12)?

What was going to be handed over to the Babylonians (vs 13)?

Why was this going to happen (vs 13)?

What was God going to tell the enemies of Israel to do (vs 14)?

What did Jeremiah ask God to do (vs 15)?

What did Jeremiah state about his life (vs 15)?

What argument did Jeremiah use when talking to God (vs 16)?

Do you have this view of the words of God? Explain.

What did Jeremiah not do (vs 17)?

What was the result of Jeremiah's choice to be righteous (vs 17)?

What questions did Jeremiah ask (vs 18)?

How did Jeremiah describe the help of God (vs 18)?

What did God say He would do (vs 19)?

What were the enemies of Jeremiah going to do (vs 20)?

What would God do for Jeremiah (vs 20)?

What promise did God make for Jeremiah (vs 21)?

“Forced To Worship Idols”

Study: Jeremiah 16:1-13

Reading: 1 Peter 2:13-25, Luke 15:11-32

Memory: Isaiah 40:22

I love traveling. Flying in airplanes, staying in hotels and eating out at restaurants are all exciting things to me. I used to envy people who were able to do this all the time until I talked to some of them.

We had a man in one of the churches I pastored who traveled at least six months out of the year, if not more. He reached the point where he hated flying, staying at hotels and eating out because that is how he lived much of his life. He told me how at first he liked it, but it didn't take long for something that seemed to be wonderful to become something that was a wearisome chore.

Today, we are going to see how God was going to force the Israelites to worship false idols day and night by causing them to be taken into captivity. What was a thrill for them, would soon become despised.

What Does the Bible Say?

God told Jeremiah that He was not to get married or have sons and daughters in Judah. The reason for this was because the sons and daughters born into the land would face terrible diseases and many would die with no one to care for them during their sicknesses or help bury them when they died. The outlook for children was not good. They would die in war or would die of starvation with their bodies left in the fields to be eaten by birds and wild animals (vs 1-5).

Jeremiah was also instructed not to attend funerals or the meals associated with them. The purpose for attending these was to help bring peace to the family, but God was symbolically declaring that there would be no peace for the nation. God was removing His love and mercy from the people. Death and destruction would come to all the people of the land, both great and small. There would simply not be time or ability to grieve for the dead. People would not be able to console one another because the amount of people dying would be so great (vs 6-7).

When there was a feast, Jeremiah was to stay away to symbolize that the days of their feasting and gladness would come to an end. Instead of

sounds of joy and rejoicing, there would be mourning and silence. There would not be weddings or celebrations because there would be no one to get married or to attend the events (vs 8-9).

The people of Judah would wonder why God chose to do evil to them. They would wonder what sin they had committed. They were to be told that it was because their fathers had turned to idols and had forsaken the law and plans of God. Yet, it wasn't just their father's sins they would suffer for. The present generation was acting worse than their fathers. They followed their “stubborn, evil will” and refused to listen to God. As a result, God was going to throw them out of the land into a place they were unfamiliar with. They would be forced to live in a land that continually worshiped these false gods and they would be forced to do the very things they were being judged for doing. This would not be a pleasant experience because they would be captives in the land and lose their freedom (vs 10-13).

How Does this Apply to Me?

It is very interesting that some of the punishment that Judah would face was the very thing that they longed to do while they were in Judah. They longed to worship false gods and when they were taken captive, they would be forced to worship these false gods day and night. The fact that they would no longer be free to make their own choices, but be captives forced to do what others told them would be difficult enough, but to be forced to worship the false gods would continually remind them of what they once had in Judah. The people were stubborn and wanted to live for themselves, doing what they wanted to do. They did not realize that this attitude was the very thing that would bring destruction to them. This happens over and over today. People want freedom to do their own thing instead of following God's way, but the end result is consequences they never realized would be so miserable.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Thank God for the freedom you have to serve Him.
- * Ask God to help you to listen to His instructions.

Thought for the day

What did God tell Jeremiah not to go (vs 1-2)?

What was this to symbolize (vs 3)?

What was going to happen to the children (vs 4)?

Why would this be such a tragedy (vs 4)?

Where was Jeremiah told not to do (vs 5)?

What was going to be taken from the land (vs 5)?

Why is it significant that both “small and great” would face this judgement (vs 6)?

What would not happen for the people (vs 6)?

Why is a death that goes unmourned or unnoticed such a tragedy?

What would not be done (vs 7)?

What was Jeremiah told not to do in verse 8?

What did God say He was going to do (vs 9)?

What did God know the people would ask (vs 10)?

What does this reveal about our human nature?

What did God say about their fathers (vs 11)?

Were they only punished for their father’s sin (vs 12)? Explain.

What does the beginning of verse 13 illustrate about the severeness of God’s judgement?

What were they going to be forced to do (vs 13)?

Why was this such a great punishment?

“Steeling Allegiance”

Study: Jeremiah 16:14-21

Reading: Matthew 6:19-24, Isaiah 46:1-11

Memory: Isaiah 40:22

In today’s society, it is becoming more and more important to prove that you are who you say you are. Many times a simple password is not enough to access financial documents online. Many places are making you go through a “two-factor authentication” process where you not only tell them who you are, but have to respond to a text sent to your phone along with other credentials to prove who you are. Why is this? Because there are so many criminals and thieves who act as imposters in hopes to steal your identification and money.

Today, we will be reminded how there are so many things that want to become your god and steel your affection from God. They want to be gods in your life and take your allegiance away from the One true God.

What Does the Bible Say?

For hundreds of years, the Israelites had made reference to how God had brought them out of Egypt and had given them the promise land. Though this would not be forgotten, the children of Israel in the future were going to talk about how God returned them from the countries of the north to give them the promise land. This was indicating how great the judgement was going to be on the people of the land and also to let them know that God wasn’t going to completely destroy them (vs 14-15).

This restoration was going to be in the future after the people of Judah would suffer great tragedy and heartache because of their sin. God compared the enemies of Israel to fishermen and to hunters. God was going to send the Babylonians into the nation to capture the people like fisherman would catch fish. They would also be hunted down like a hunter who tracked his prey, even into the caves and hard to find spots in the land. No one would be able to hide from the judgement of God. He was going to repay them harshly for their constant rejection of His commands and their disregard for His unwavering love for them. They had polluted the land with idols and filled the sacred land with all types of wicked deeds (vs 16-18).

Jeremiah expressed his own personal feelings as he described God was His “strength” and “stronghold.” God was the One the people should turn to in the time of trouble. Jeremiah expressed his disappointment in their ancestors who had passed down evil to them and had led the people from God rather than towards Him. The simple fact that people made up their own gods seemed so foolish to Jeremiah. Creating an idol and then worshiping that object seemed ridiculous compared to worshiping the One true God (vs 19-20).

The result of their constant sin was going to be severe punishment from God. God would make them know and understand His power and that He was greater than any idol they could make up or natural power of the earth they would look to. When all the prophecies would come true, they would recognize and realize that God was telling the truth and realize that He was God (vs 21).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Then the Israelites failed to realize who God was and what He could do. Though He had showed them His power and might over and over again, the people found themselves seeking after idols and the things of this world. God was attempting to do what He could to get them to see and recognize that He was God and they needed to worship and obey Him alone, yet the only thing that was truly going to get their attention was destruction. Passages like this one today remind you of the importance of giving your attention and allegiance to God before He has to show you how great He is by bringing destruction into your life. It is easy to claim you are a follower of God, but it is more difficult to follow Him in your everyday life when the idols of this world are ever present around you. Choose today to live like Jeremiah and count on God to be your refuge and strength, rather than trying to find that in the world you live in.

Suggestions for Prayer

* *Ask God to help you give your full allegiance to Him.*

Thought for the day

What had been talked about for centuries (vs 14)?

What would be said in the future (vs 15)?

What was God planning to do for Israel (vs 15)?

How does this reveal His great love and faithfulness to His people?

What two groups of people did God say Israel’s enemies would be like (vs 16)?

- 1.
- 2.

How did fishermen catch fish (vs 16)?

****Just like today, they used both rod and hook as well as large nets.*

How did hunters hunt their prey (vs 16)?

What does God see (vs 17)?

Why is this such an important thing to understand?

What was God going to do because of the sin of the people (vs 18)?

How is their sin described (vs 18)?

How do you think Christians can commit the same types of sin today?

What did Jeremiah say God was (vs 19)?

What had Israel’s ancestors done (vs 19)?

What are you passing down to the next generation?

What do you think verse 20 means?

What was God going to make the children of Israel know (vs 21)?

“A Tree Planted By Water”

Study: Jeremiah 17:1-13

Reading: Psalm 1:1-6, John 7:37-39

Memory: Isaiah 40:22

What Does the Bible Say?

The sin of Judah was pictured as being inscribed on the horns of their altars. (See the picture for an example of the horns.) The fact that they were inscribed with an iron tool and a diamond point indicates that this was not a temporary writing. The sins of Judah weren't just a small misstep, but they had become a permanent practice in the land. Children were taught from a young age how to worship idols that filled the whole



Reconstruction of altar with horns on the corners

land. Idol worship had become a common, ordinary practice of every day life for the children of Israel. The result of their sin would be seen when God chose to let the foreign nations conquer them, causing the riches of Israel to become the spoil for their enemies. The price they would have to pay for their sin was very high as they would not only lose their possessions, but also the land that God had given them to be their inheritance (vs 1-4).

With powerful words of rebuke, God declared that those who trust in men would be cursed. The trust in men and the things of the flesh turn a person's heart away from God. The person who trusts in the strength of men would be like a shrub in the middle of the desert. They would have no hope for the future and dwell in constant barrenness (vs 5-6).

The opposite was true for those who trusted in God. They would be like a tree planted by the water whose roots grow deep and do not have to fear during the hot, dry seasons of life. Even when everything is drying up around them, the people who trusted in God would not live in the fear of drought and would continue to produce fruit (vs 7-8).

In a powerful statement, God described how the hearts of men are full of deceit and are naturally bent towards evil. A person can not fully trust

his own heart or own path that he desires to take. God is the only one who can fully understand the hearts of men. He has the ability to give you the right way of thinking and living. God will also reward those who rely on Him and follow His way for their lives (vs 9-10).

Those who became wealthy by unjust gain were compared to a partridge who took over the nest of another bird and treated the eggs as his own. Once the true parent came back to the nest, that partridge would be forced out. The point was that the end result of unjust gain would be taken away from that person and his foolishness would be revealed (vs 11).

Unjust gain and trusting in the human flesh was not the plan of God for His people. God wanted them to worship Him as the eternal, high and glorious king. He was their only hope. If they turned to God, they would not be disgraced. Those who did not turn to God would be abandoned by Him and would not experience the living water He had to offer (vs 12-13).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Are you like that tree planted by the river of water? God had great plans and desires for His people, but they chose to follow their own path and became like a shrub in a barren land. Instead of continuing to flourish in the mist of life, they became dry and brittle. God wants you to look to Him for your energy and strength. He does not want you to trust in your heart or your own desires, but wants you to seek Him and His Word. It is very easy to trust in your flesh rather than to trust in God, but you read today how this is very foolish. Make it a point in your life to seek your counsel, wisdom and direction from God, letting Him be your source of strength and guide in life.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for giving you the keys to a successful life.*
- * *Ask God to show you areas where you are trusting your own heart.*
- * *Praise God because He knows what path is best for you.*

Thought for the day

What was the sin of Judah written with (vs 1)?

What point was being made in verse 1?

What were the children being taught to do (vs 2)?

What consequence was Judah going to face (vs 3)?

What consequences of their sin were listed in verse 4?

Who is cursed (vs 5)?

What do you think it looks like to trust in the flesh?

What is the person who trusts in the flesh compared to (vs 6)?

What will God do for those who trust in Him (vs 7)?

What is the person who trusts in God compared to (vs 8)?

What is deceitful and full of wickedness (vs 9)?

What do you think it looks like to trust in your own heart rather than in God?

How can you know if you are trusting in your heart or in God (vs 10)?

What will God do (vs 10)?

What is the person who gets unjust gain compared to (vs 11)?

How is the throne of God described (vs 12)?

What will happen to those who forsake God (vs 13)?

How is God described in verse 13?

What do you think that means?

Memory Verses

Isaiah 40:1 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. 3 A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God? 4 Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. 5 Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together. The LORD has spoken!" 6 A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. 7 The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass. 8 The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. 9 Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" 10 Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. 11 He will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in his arms, holding them close to his heart. He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young. 12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? 13 Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD, or what man shows him his counsel? 14 Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding? 15 Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales; behold, he takes up the coastlands like fine dust. 16 Lebanon would not suffice for fuel, nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering. 17 All the nations are as nothing before him, they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness. 18 To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him? 19 An idol! A craftsman casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and casts for it silver chains. 20 He who is too impoverished for an offering chooses wood that will not rot; he seeks out a skillful craftsman to set up an idol that will not move. 21 Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? 22 It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in;