

THE MESSENGER



“... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:15

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It Is Not In Man

by L. A. Mott, Jr.

“O Jehovah, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.”

Our use of this verse to lay stress upon man’s need of divine direction will be even more effective if we put more emphasis on the context. The large unit of which Jer. 10:23 is a part is Chapters 7-10, appropriately headed “The Way of Salvation.” The previous section is headed “The Rejection of Impenitent Israel” (3:6 – 6:30). Jeremiah exposes the delusion that the presence of the temple guaranteed Judah’s security (7:1-15), shows that destruction could not be averted by prayer and intercession so long as the people continued in sin (7:16-20), and that neither was sacrificed a substitute for the obedience demanded by God (7:21-28); then issues a call to lamentation in view of the shameful and horrible ruin to come upon the disobedient people (7:29 – 8:3).

The subdivision 8:4 – 9:1 sets forth the stubborn and stupid commitment to apostasy which brings Judah to ruin, and 9:2-11 depicts Judah as a people destroyed for lack of knowledge. Judah does not know Jehovah (v. 3); they refuse to know him (v. 6); therefore judgment must come (vv. 7 – 11).

I would then make 9:12 – 10:25 a subdivision headed “The Wisdom Attained Through Judgment.” The reason for the bitter judgment must be made clear by Jehovah’s spokesmen: It is due to Judah’s abandonment of Jehovah (9:12-16). That point, the lesson of the judgment, must not be missed.

After a call to prepare for mourning (9:17-22), the true wisdom is set forth (9:23 – 10:16). The knowledge of Jehovah is the only real ground of confidence (9:23 -24). Judah’s trust in human wisdom, military power, and wealth had brought it to ruin, and the judgment demonstrated that such things are unworthy of confidence. Only in the knowledge of Jehovah (with its practical impact) can man find reason to glory. Judah had

nullified the advantage of circumcision (9:25-26); and idolatry is foolish – the incomparable Jehovah is the one true and living God and alone to be feared (10:1-16).

Finally, 10:17-25 summarizes the great lesson of judgment and captivity. Vv. 17-18 fix the setting to be imagined – Judah in exile. In vv. 19-25 Jeremiah gives voice to the response of the people to their fate. V. 23 is part of that response. Jeremiah is not just speaking for himself, but expressing the realization the people will come to through experience of destruction and exile. Judah had put all its trust in human wisdom and expedients such as alliances with pagan nations. Now she sees the disastrous end to which trust in human wisdom leads. The judgment practically forces upon her that one great lesson which she had refused to learn in any other way. Only the experience of the disastrous end to which trust in human wisdom leads brings the people to acknowledge that control over life's affairs is in other hands than man's. Their human leaders sought to rule independently of Jehovah (v. 21), and the result was disaster. At last they perceived that man's only hope of survival is in submission to and reliance upon Jehovah.



I try to live my life
For Christ who died for me.
I know I often fail to do
The things he wants me to.
I try and fail so many times
I often wonder why
He gave His life for those like me
And why He had to die.
But what keeps me from giving up
Is the knowledge that I know
No matter how I let Him down
He'll never let me go.

by Bev Creasy

Remember to check the prayer list for those with ongoing spiritual weaknesses and physical illnesses.

"...Pray for one another...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

James 5:16