

## Rest for Your Souls, Jeremiah 6:16

- I. R & R (Rest and Recuperation)
  - a. The military provides R&R for the troops stationed in combat zones
    - i. When I was in Kuwait, it was an old power plant right by Camp Doha
    - ii. When I was in Iraq we visited the Ziggurat of Ur
  - b. It was meant to be a day or so of respite from the rigorous pace of working in a combat zone
  - c. The rest that God offers is much more than a couple days of respite
- II. Destruction
  - a. Jeremiah 6:1–2 (ESV); <sup>1</sup> Flee for safety, O people of Benjamin, from the midst of Jerusalem! Blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and raise a signal on Beth-haccherem, for disaster looms out of the north, and great destruction. <sup>2</sup> The lovely and delicately bred I will destroy, the daughter of Zion.
  - b. God continually sent prophets to Israel and Judah to get them to return to Him
    - i. But Israel and Judah (for the most part) ignored God and worshiped idols
    - ii. God details Jerusalem’s destruction because of their faithlessness
    - iii. Jeremiah 6:6–8 (ESV); <sup>6</sup> For thus says the LORD of hosts: “Cut down her trees; cast up a siege mound against Jerusalem. This is the city that must be punished; there is nothing but oppression within her. <sup>7</sup> As a well keeps its water fresh, so she keeps fresh her evil; violence and destruction are heard within her; sickness and wounds are ever before me. <sup>8</sup> Be warned, O Jerusalem, lest I turn from you in disgust, lest I make you a desolation, an uninhabited land.”
    - iv. The first part of verse 11, “therefore I am full of the wrath of the Lord; I am weary of holding it in”
  - c. God’s wrath is also promised for people today
    - i. Romans 2:2–9 (ESV); <sup>2</sup> We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. <sup>3</sup> Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? <sup>4</sup> Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? <sup>5</sup> But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed. <sup>6</sup> He will render to each one according to his works: <sup>7</sup> to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; <sup>8</sup> but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. <sup>9</sup> There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek,
    - ii. 2 Thessalonians 1:5–9 (ESV); <sup>5</sup> This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— <sup>6</sup> since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, <sup>7</sup> and to grant relief to you who are afflicted

as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels<sup>8</sup> in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.<sup>9</sup> They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,

- d. Those who continue to live selfishly for themselves, for what they can get, will be subjected to the wrath, the judgment of God
- e. I know our subject is 'rest,' but we have to know what it is we are resting from – what we are escaping

### III. Rest

- a. God, being the kind, loving, benevolent, and merciful Creator He is, continually tries to bring His people back to Him
  - i. Jeremiah 6:16 (ESV); Thus says the LORD: "Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'"
  - ii. God, through Jeremiah, is calling the people back to the Law of Moses, to the correct way for Israel to worship Him
- b. Jesus repeats the very words He gave to Jeremiah – to the very same people (Israel)
  - i. Matthew 11:28–30 (ESV);<sup>28</sup> Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.<sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.<sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
  - ii. Jeremiah was a very well known and honored prophet – there is folklore (not Gospel) that he took the Ark of the Covenant and hid it before Babylon carried them off into captivity
  - iii. 2 Maccabees 2:1-5;<sup>1</sup>In the records it will be found that Jeremiah the prophet ordered the deportees to take some of the fire with them as indicated,<sup>2</sup>and that the prophet, in giving them the law, directed the deportees not to forget the commandments of the Lord or be led astray in their thoughts, when seeing the gold and silver idols and their adornments.<sup>3</sup>With other similar words he exhorted them that the law should not depart from their hearts.<sup>4</sup>The same document also tells how the prophet, in virtue of an oracle, ordered that the tent and the ark should accompany him, and how he went to the very mountain that Moses climbed to behold God's inheritance.<sup>5</sup>When Jeremiah arrived there, he found a chamber in a cave in which he put the tent, the ark, and the altar of incense; then he sealed the entrance.
  - iv. Jesus' words certainly would have reminded the Israelites of the prophet Jeremiah and the captivity they endured because they did not heed his words
  - v. Jesus is speaking to the Israelites about faithless cities (the people in them)
  - vi. He says it will be better for the Gentile cities that repented than for the Israeli cities that did not
- c. Our world today is certainly filled with faithlessness and agnosticism (a belief that nothing is known, or can be known, about God (or a higher power))

- i. That kind of life is filled with uncertainty – everything changes based on the whim (or changing beliefs) of others
- ii. Not too long ago, adultery was illegal – there are still 6 states in the US that have laws against adultery and one of them provides for 1 year in jail (although it is not enforced)
- iii. But now it is a common practice – there are websites dedicated to those who are married yet want to have illicit affairs
- iv. Jesus offers us rest from that kind of uncertainty – from changing values and morals
- v. Jesus wants us to return (or come) to Him so we can live a life of certainty
- vi. The world may change around us, but we don't have to worry about that – God does not change – He is the same God today as He was 5000+ years ago at the creation of the world
- d. All we have to do is “stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls”
- e. This is where Christians find their service
  - i. We talk about the mighty works of God in Christ Jesus
  - ii. We are zealous for (and created for) good works in Christ Jesus
  - iii. We use every opportunity to share the message of salvation – the message of ‘rest for your *(their)* souls’
  - iv. We tell people they don't have to be uncertain (salvation is a certainty, you can know)
  - v. They don't have to be concerned about shifting morals and values
- f. God has given us His word (His message and His promise) – and His Word
- g. We shout the message just as loud and as long as we can
- h. We live the message so that other may see and glorify God

#### IV. Rest For Your Souls

- a. Jeremiah 6:16 (ESV); Thus says the LORD: “Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls. But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’
- b. We have asked for and found the ancient path
- c. We have found the good way (The Way)
- d. And now we walk in it and find rest for our souls