

Jeremiah 17:9-11 – Why the Jews lacked faith: The Heart of the Matter

HebrewLexicon, TSK, Handfuls, Armstrong, Gaebelien, Henry, Poole, Trapp, Delitzsch, JFB, Geneva, Clarke, Eclectic, INT, Maclaren, Gill?
Congregation of the Lord Jesus: The last time you heard **the man who trusted in himself or in other men was hopeless and cursed**, but the **man who trusted in Yahweh was hopeful and blessed**.

Jeremiah wrote this in the context of a rebuke of the Jews who trusted in their **walls, wealth, and war-partners** and did not trust in **Yahweh – their Covenant God!**

Today you will hear the reason man trusted **in their walls, his wealth, and war partners- and rejected Covenant God**.

Our headings are:

Man’s heart is Hopeless – Pronounced

Man’s heart is Hopeless – Proved

Man’s heart is Hopeless - Pictured

Our goals are: **That you will understand your salvation was impossible because of the wretchedness of the human heart, but your salvation was wonderfully brought to you by your Covenant Keeper, the Lord Jesus.**

Man’s Heart is Hopeless – Pronounced

9 "The heart is **deceitful** above all things, And **desperately wicked**;
Who can know it?

1. The heart is the most deceitful, insidious thing in existence in this world.

The word “heart” (kidney, or bowel) is used to signify the total inner being and it includes man’s reason.

The heart is not just “deceitful,” **it is desperately wicked also.**

2. How is the heart deceitful and desperately wicked?

Man is deceitful and desperately wicked in the extent of his soul. He is not as sinful as he could be because God stops him.

Man wants to violate God’s law day and night. There is no time man wants to say, “I want to please God.” He doesn’t even have the desire to please God.

Man’s greatest wickedness is to think he is not so bad. He deceives himself in doing so. He even deceives others who think he is good. This is **often a problem for “church people.”**

Man deceives himself and says, “I will not surely die and be lost in hell forever!”

Galatians 6:3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, **he deceives himself.**

Man’s wickedness is deep inside.

Man is deceitful and desperately wicked; he can’t understand how wicked he is!

Man’s heart is so deceitful and desperately wicked, it is beyond cure.

3. While Jeremiah’s statement was likely used to designate Jehoiakim or Zedekiah because of their deceitful and desperately wicked hearts, it was used to designate all of mankind also.

4. So let’s answer the question: Who can know the heart?

The answer to the question is God knows the heart - how sinful it is, and how incurable it is!

5. Lessons:

a. The biggest troubles of our times is this: Man has convinced himself he is morally good but he is not. Man ignores that he is obsessed with wealth, knowledge, and power and thinks these things will satisfy his soul. Such self-deception!

(Maybe this explains why Christians were disappointed when President Trump lost the last elections, but power can’t save!)

b. A man who views himself as morally good – deceiving himself - is most displeasing to God.

c. If you see the wretchedness of your condition, be patient. Guard yourself from these evils – these corruptions of the heart. Put on good! Put-off evil.

Proverbs 4:23 **Keep your heart with all diligence,** For out of it spring the issues of life.

Psalms 39:1 I said, "**I will guard my ways, Lest I sin with my tongue; I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle,** While the wicked are before me."

James 1:21 Therefore **lay aside all filthiness** and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

Man's Heart is Hopeless – Proved

10 I, the **LORD, search the heart, I test the mind**, Even to give every man **according to his ways**, According to the **fruit of his doings**.

1. God searches man's heart, God tests man's mind to show how sinful man really is, and God sees man's actions.

He knows the very intentions of the heart. He has perfect acquaintance with the heart of man.

Man can be fooled by someone who pretends to be good and godly, but there is no such possibility with God.

1 Samuel 16:7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "**Do not look at his appearance** or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance (only), but the LORD looks at the heart (also)."

Again, many people marry and then find out their spouses weren't exactly as they thought-sometimes better but mostly worse. Even the wise Samuel (a prophet, priest, and king) was deceived. And wisest man who ever lived was told that God knew the darkest parts of the human heart.

1 Chronicles 28:9 "As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for **the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts**. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.

God is able to search the deepest recesses of man to expose and prove man's true nature.

God knows man's actions of this body, of his mind, and of this soul.

Hebrews 4:13 And there is **no creature hidden from His sight**, but **all things are naked and open** to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

2. God knows you so well, he is a better judge of your nature than when you judge yourself.

Luke 12:19 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'" 20 "**But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you;** then whose will those things be which you have provided?'

3. God not only proves man is deceitful and desperately wicked by exposing the condition of his heart, but also by watching man's outward actions.

4. Lessons:

a. Get your wealth honestly, use your wealth generously, don't trust in your wealth to save you, and by so doing you will save up treasures eternally. Judah missed this lesson.

Luke 16:25 "But Abraham said, 'Son, **remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.**'

And you can add: Don't trust in your job, your friends, or your knowledge to save you.

b. Your worldly wealth will not follow you to the other life, but your guilt will.

This is why you have to work to make sure your heart issues are worked on and fixed now – in this life! Ask Nabal, whose name meant “fool,” who tried to hoard until he was dead and become as a stone. His wickedness (as was Judah's at this time) was to trust in his money! He took nothing!

c. You can't fool God. He knows your heart and exposes its evil condition though you might doubt it.

Proverbs 28:26 He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered.

When you deny you are deceitful and desperately wicked, you prove it! Even if you were baptized, you are desperately wicked.

d. If your heart has been exposed and the wretchedness of the human condition revealed (you trust in your wealth, job, friends, or knowledge) God who made the heart and can also mend the heart! There is hope for the exposed heart.

Man's Heart is Hopeless - Pictured

11 "As a partridge that **broods but does not hatch**, So is **he who gets riches, but not by right; It will leave him in the midst of his days**, And at his end he will be a fool."

1. God illustrated how wicked man was by comparing him to a partridge with useless eggs.

The eggs didn't hatch

because the eggs were bad from not being kept warm,

or **because they were stolen by wild animals,**

or **because she or someone else stepped on her eggs!**

Eggs, like wealth, are fragile, and are easily destroyed.

Job 39:15 She forgets that **a foot may crush them,** Or that a wild beast may break them.

2. God was teaching the Jews that all the wealth circulating in Jerusalem – all the wealth the Jews hoped would be the ground of their hope and happiness – would come to nothing.

Israel (the northern 10 ½ tribes often called Ephraim) thought his wealth he gained by fraudulent means, he could enjoy! But it turned out to be useless. Hear what God said!

Psalms 49:16 Do not be afraid when one becomes rich, When the glory of his house is increased; 17 **For when he dies he shall carry nothing away;** His glory shall not descend after him.

Psalms 39:6 Surely every man walks about like a shadow; Surely they busy themselves in vain; **He heaps up riches, And does not know who will gather them.**

3. God was showing the Jews they were so wicked, they were like Jacob, the supplanter, who cheated his brother to get his blessings.

Hosea 12:3 He took his brother by the heel in the womb, And in his strength he struggled with God.

But supplanting brought nothing good, as the wise man testified.

Proverbs 10:2 **Treasures of wickedness profit nothing,** but righteousness delivers from death.

4. Either the riches left them, as they were stolen by the Babylonians, or they were removed from their riches, as when the Babylonians took them away.

This is the explanation of the illustration. The partridge (the Jew) lost what he thought would last!

Proverbs 11:28 He who trusts in his riches will fall, But the righteous will flourish like foliage.

And remember the case of the hoarding fool Nabal (and Achan).

1 Samuel 25:25 "Please, let not my lord regard this scoundrel Nabal. For as his name is, so is he: Nabal is his name, and folly is with him. But I, your maidservant, did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent.

5. Lessons:

a. If you get rich by working well, praise God. There is nothing wrong with that! Those who are tempted to rob their fellow men in order to get rich, though they may prosper for a time, would find they are at the losing end.

Don't hoard your wealth as the partridge sets on her eggs. Learn to share so others may have joy. Hoarding reveals a heart problem.

If you have good friends, praise God, but don't think they are going to save you. Death can take them away.

If you have a great job, thank God, but it won't save you! Economic depression can take it away.

If you have higher education, great, but don't think your knowledge would save you. Alzheimer's can take it away.

b. To trust in these things exposes the wretchedness of your heart! Put your trust instead on the Lord God! Let the one who hold the future hold you!

c. Even though the wicked may seem to enjoy their wealth, friends, job, and education now, they really can't enjoy them as they ought to. These things are not the ground of hope. God is!

Conclusion:

The Jews were hopeless! They were so wicked they trusted in themselves...their **wealth**

and their walls. They even trusted in their war-partners, the Egyptians! So their sins were **pronounced, proved, and pictured.**

Beloved in the Lord Jesus:

1. It was impossible for you to be saved because you were hopeless in your sins!

Maybe it was a lust for wealth...or security, like the Jews. Maybe it was a lust for independence from God! So Jesus lived and died to redeem you.

2. Never stop praising the Lord for his mercies – his mercies that not just with your salvation but mercies that continue forever. Teach your children from early to praise God for his mercies.

3. Live like you understand how hopeless you were and then you were saved by grace. Show humility. Show kindness. Show patience. Show generosity. Show love. Show courage.

4. Be kind enough to tell the world they are hopeless without Jesus. They are!

Finally: If you are not a Christian, ask God to show you how hopeless you are because of your sins. Only then will you desire to cry out for help. If you do cry for help, know God will hear you. He always will!