



# The **Fiery** Bones

Jeremiah 20:9

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Text

Jeremiah 25:1-38

Topic

Jeremiah pours-out wine to represent the coming pouring-out of the wrath of God against sin

Title

*"The Bartender's Bible"*

Introduction

Neat. Straight-up. Dirty. Two fingers.

If you've ever been in a bar, or tended bar, you recognize those as bartending terms.

You may think that tending bar is a profession a Christian should avoid, and ordinarily I'd say you're right. But in our text God called upon Jeremiah to tend bar.

He said to His prophet, "Take this wine cup of fury from My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it" (v15).

Not just drink it; "Drink, be drunk, and vomit!" (v27).

The cup of wine is a symbol of the wrath of God against sin that must eventually be poured out upon unrepentant sinners.

Jesus picked-up on the illustration of the cup when, in the Garden of Gethsemane just before He was to be crucified He said to His Father, "if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me" (Matthew 26:39).

The amazing thing is that Jesus took the cup of God's wrath into His hands and drank it down - down to the last drop.

Jesus drank the cup and, when He did, He drank it in the place of every believing sinner.

What about those who are not saved? They must drink the cup for themselves - meaning they will die in their sins and be lost forever.

What we are going to see in chapter twenty-five is a people of God who ought to have been announcing to the surrounding nations that God was going to pour out upon them His wrath against sin. They didn't announce God's judgment - they couldn't - because they were living in sin. God found it necessary to discipline them using those surrounding nations.

We are a people of God - the church - who ought to be announcing to everyone that the wrath of God is coming upon all those who have rejected Jesus Christ. As the people of God we must see to it we are not living in sin or God will first discipline us.

Keeping with God's own illustration I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 God Took His Cup From You; Are You Sober?, and #2 God Gave His Cup To You; Are You Pouring?

## #1 God Took His Cup From You; Are You Sober?

(v1-14)

You can hear God's longing for His people in the opening words.

### Jeremiah 25:1-7

1 The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon),

2 which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying:

3 "From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, even to this day, this is the twenty-third year in which the word of the Lord has come to me; and I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, but you have not listened.

4 And the Lord has sent to you all His servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, but you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear.

5 They said, 'Repent now everyone of his evil way and his evil doings, and dwell in the land that the Lord has given to you and your fathers forever and ever.

6 Do not go after other gods to serve them and worship them, and do not provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands; and I will not harm you.'

7 Yet you have not listened to Me," says the Lord, "that you might provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt.

God had been wooing His wayward people, warning them, for going on three decades. He had sent prophets, droughts, famines, and pestilences. God's people continued in their idolatry. It was time to bring on the final discipline - the one that would turn their hearts back to The Lord.

Jeremiah 25:8-10

8 "Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Because you have not heard My words,

9 behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,' says the Lord, 'and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land, against its inhabitants, and against these nations all around, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, a hissing, and perpetual desolations.

10 Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp.

God's people are called upon in every generation to have an effect on the surrounding culture. Too often we surrender to the surrounding culture.

The Jews ought to have evangelized the Babylonians. Instead God would use them to discipline His people. Instead of merely acting like Babylonians by adopting their wicked idolatry, the Jews would be exiled to Babylon and experience a massive overdose of the world.

God's people are called upon in every generation to have an effect on the surrounding culture. Too often we surrender to the surrounding culture. When that happens it is certainly within God's rights to use the surrounding culture against us.

### Jeremiah 25:11

11 And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

For the first time the exact length of the exile was given. Why "seventy years?" In Second Chronicles 36:21 we're told it was "to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept the Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years."

From the time of King Saul until the final Babylonian invasion was a period of close to five hundred years. Every seventh year the Jews were supposed to observe a Sabbath Year during which their land was to lie fallow. They did not observe the Sabbath Years - seventy of them to be exact.

### Jeremiah 25:12

12 'Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the Lord; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation.'

Did I hear someone say it was unfair for God to use "the king of Babylon" as a tool? It wasn't unfair to the Jews. They were behaving as if they were Babylonians so God was simply letting them experience the consequences of their unbelief.

It wasn't unfair to the Babylonians. It provided a great opportunity for them. If you are familiar with the story you know that King Nebuchadnezzar gets saved during the Jewish exile. Later his successor will act foolishly and God will pour out His wrath against him and against Babylon as they fall to the Medes and Persians.

We are to be effective in the world, not be infected by worldliness. It requires vigilance, discipline, and watchfulness over our spiritual lives. We don't want to merely be better than the world; we want to better the world by our presence.

In light of the fact that there is a cup of the wrath of God coming that nonbelievers must drink for themselves and thereby become drunk you might ask yourself, Am I remaining sober?

Am I turning away from the things of the world or am I returning to them as if I'd never been delivered from them?

We are to be effective in the world, not be infected by worldliness. It requires vigilance, discipline, and watchfulness over our spiritual lives. We don't want to merely be better than the world; we want to better the world by our presence.

## #2 God Gave His Cup To You; Are You Pouring? (v15-38)

Jeremiah was portrayed as a server of this cup of wine that was the wrath of God against sin. We'd say he was a bartender - a sober bartender.

Think of yourself as a sober bartender in that you are in the world, surrounded by it, pressured by it, but you need not surrender to it.

What does a bartender do? He or she pours. In keeping with the current illustration, we are to pour-out the warning that God's longsuffering with sinners will one day end and His wrath against sin will come upon them.

Jeremiah 25:15-16

15 For thus says the Lord God of Israel to me: "Take this wine cup of fury from My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it.

16 And they will drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them."

"To whom I send you." Wherever you are think of it as your having been "sent" there by God with this knowledge of the Gospel. Without it men are lost and will perish.

Jeremiah 25:17-26

17 Then I took the cup from the Lord's hand, and made all the nations drink, to whom the Lord had sent me:

18 Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, its kings and its princes, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, a hissing, and a curse, as it is this day;

19 Pharaoh king of Egypt, his servants, his princes, and all his people;

20 all the mixed multitude, all the kings of the land of Uz, all the kings of the land of the Philistines (namely, Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod);

21 Edom, Moab, and the people of Ammon;

22 all the kings of Tyre, all the kings of Sidon, and the kings of the coastlands which are across the sea;

23 Dedan, Tema, Buz, and all who are in the farthest corners;  
24 all the kings of Arabia and all the kings of the mixed multitude  
who dwell in the desert;  
25 all the kings of Zimri, all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of  
the Medes;  
26 all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another; and  
all the kingdoms of the world which are on the face of the earth.  
Also the king of Sheshach shall drink after them.

If you looked at a map you'd see this was a list that put the nations in geographic order starting from Judah and working toward "Sheshach," which was how the Jews referred to Babylon.

Did Jeremiah literally make such a journey and, in each nation, act out the drama of pouring out wine into a cup to symbolize the wrath of God to come upon nonbelievers?

Most commentators say "No," he didn't literally make such a journey. But I don't think this was all simply a spoken word, either; I do think he acted it out somehow, somewhere. These Old Testament prophets were dramatic and visual.

You want to talk PowerPoint, it's a guy like Jeremiah speaking forth the Word of God in power then making his point with a compelling visual aid.

Jeremiah 25:27-29

27 "Therefore you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Drink, be drunk, and vomit! Fall and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you." '

28 And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup from your hand to drink, then you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "You shall certainly drink!"



29 For behold, I begin to bring calamity on the city which is called by My name, and should you be utterly unpunished? You shall not be unpunished, for I will call for a sword on all the inhabitants of the earth," says the Lord of hosts.'

Some smug smart alec might say, "I'll just refuse to drink this cup." Not an option. The wrath of God against sin is a reality. Just look at the succession of world ruling empires accurately predicted in the Bible in relation to Israel that have come and gone just as God said they would.

There is also a future time of God's wrath being poured-out upon all the world at once. You can read all about it in the Revelation of Jesus Christ, in chapters six through eighteen.

The closing verses of our chapter read like a tragic poem which summarizes the future time of God's wrath.

Jeremiah 25:30-38

30 "Therefore prophesy against them all these words, and say to them: 'The Lord will roar from on high, And utter His voice from His holy habitation; He will roar mightily against His fold. He will give a shout, as those who tread the grapes, Against all the inhabitants of the earth.

31 A noise will come to the ends of the earth - For the Lord has a controversy with the nations; He will plead His case with all flesh. He will give those who are wicked to the sword,' says the Lord."

32 Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Behold, disaster shall go forth From nation to nation, And a great whirlwind shall be raised up From the farthest parts of the earth.

33 And at that day the slain of the Lord shall be from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth. They shall not be lamented, or gathered, or buried; they shall become refuse on the ground.

34 "Wail, shepherds, and cry! Roll about in the ashes, You leaders of the flock! For the days of your slaughter and your dispersions are fulfilled; You shall fall like a precious vessel.

35 And the shepherds will have no way to flee, Nor the leaders of the flock to escape.

36 A voice of the cry of the shepherds, And a wailing of the leaders to the flock will be heard. For the Lord has plundered their pasture,

37 And the peaceful dwellings are cut down Because of the fierce anger of the Lord.

38 He has left His lair like the lion; For their land is desolate Because of the fierceness of the Oppressor, And because of His fierce anger."

History is rushing towards this pouring-out of the cup of God's wrath against sin upon unrepentant sinners.

Meantime God's wrath is upon sinners all the time in the sense they are perishing day-by-day. Jesus has taken the cup full of the wrath of God and drained it. Whosoever believes in Him is free from the wrath of God.

That freed person, that saved sinner, ought to remain sober to tell others about the coming wrath and the conquering Savior.

Is that all? Yes; but it's a lot, especially as we see the day approaching.

I hate to quote Jim Morrison, and this is slightly out of the context he intended, but I'd say, "the time to hesitate is through; no time to wallow in the mire."

I'll refrain from saying, "come on, Jesus, light my fire," but it is a proper sentiment, and we do sing (more appropriately),

*Holy fire, burn away,  
My desire for anything,  
That is not of You but is of me*

May that be more than our song. May it be our settled conviction in these last days.