

# EMERGENCY RESCUE NEEDED: A NATION IN DISTRESS

*Volume 1*

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## Emergency Rescue Needed: A Nation in Distress

### Introduction:

Recently, I have been watching some videos on youtube – clips from some Rescue 911 shows. It dawned on me – this is just what our nation needs, an emergency rescue. Our country is in desperation, just like many of the folks in these videos. The problem is that many do not realize what is happening or that it is so serious. Others are too afraid to act. Others think someone else will do something about it. We are in desperate need of Emergency Rescue, or we just are not going to make it.

Lord, help us! And raise up rescue workers willing to risk their own lives and to sacrifice to save our nation, before it is too late!

Some of the reasons our nation is in such bad condition are the same reasons that some of the physical emergency situations got so bad before they were dealt with.

1. People are in denial. They see signs that something is wrong, but they don't want to think it is that bad
2. People are proud. They see a problem but are too proud to admit it needs to be taken care of.
3. People are afraid to admit that they are at fault. They do not want to think that they are part of the problem, or they do not want others to know they are part of the problem.

I Peter 4:17 says, *"The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God."* However, in order for judgment to begin in the house of God, God's people must realize that they are part of the problem. The problem and the solution lie with them. *"If **my people**, which are **called by my name**, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."* (II Chronicles 7:14)

One story on the Rescue 911 videos really stood out to me. A man was camping in the back yard with his kids. It was hard for him to sleep on the ground, so he decided to use an air mattress. It can be hard work to blow up an air mattress. Because the man worked with heating and air, Freon was a big part of his work. It was readily available to him. So, instead of taking the time to pump the mattress up with air, he just got out the Freon, hooked it up to the valve on the air mattress, and let it quickly pump up. But,

there was one thing the man did not think about. The man had a little boy, and boys will be boys. While everyone else was outside playing, the little boy decided to suck air out of the mattress. Only, the mattress was not filled with air.

Freon is heavier than air, and so it displaced the air inside the boy's lungs. The father found the boy collapsed and not breathing and noticed the valve opened on the air mattress. What did the father do? He did not say, "Oh the dumb boy! He should have known better than to suck air out of the air mattress. Well, he is getting what he deserves." No! The father did everything in his power to get air back into that boy's lungs. Why? Well, for one it was his own child, and he did not want to see him hurt. Secondly, he knew that he was responsible for being careless and leaving danger in the boy's way. When he recognized that he was part of the problem, he did everything in his power to provide a solution for that problem. The boy did live, and the story had a happy ending.

Let us think for a minute. Suppose the father had not taken the responsibility. Suppose he thought, *If I admit what I did, everyone will hate me. Besides, the boy should have known better than to suck air out of an air mattress anyway.* What would we think of that father if he had acted like that? Not much. But, the sad thing is that we Christians are part of the problem for our nation being in distress. Our nation has gotten into the poison of sin and the very life is going out of it. It is perishing, and we are partly responsible. Our nation is in desperation and is about to perish. We must realize that we are part of the problem and do everything in our power to provide a solution. We have the solution because God has given it to us in His holy word and through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Let us take a look in the Holy Scriptures to see what they have to say. The book of Jeremiah is an excellent place to start. It gives a good look at the problem, and also the remedy. A description of the problem is given and the solution is held forth to all who will take it.

## **Chapter 1**

### **God's Assurances to the Faithful**

#### **1. Fear Not, Faithful Ones**

God told Jeremiah, *"Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD."* (Jeremiah 1:8) Jeremiah was one of God's faithful prophets, and God promised to be with him and to deliver him. God takes care of those who trust in Him.

Here are some wonderful thoughts to ponder.

I am with thee, God says.

Fear not.

I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

There is no need to fear when asked to do God's work, because God is always present. He is with His own to deliver them.

#### **2. God Will Give the Right Words**

*"Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth."* (Jeremiah 1:9)

God will put His words into His servant's mouth. They do not have to try to think of what to say. They just need to trust God's assurance, *"Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."* (See Psalm 81:10)

God will teach His servant what to say. He will put His words in His servant's mouth.

### **Why God Would Judge Jerusalem and Judah?**

Jeremiah began his ministry at the time that the hand of God began to bring judgment upon Jerusalem and the cities of Judah. Why was God judging Jerusalem and Judah? Verses fifteen and sixteen explain, *"<sup>15</sup>For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith the LORD; and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah. <sup>16</sup>And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands."*

In these verses, God pronounces judgment against Jerusalem and Judah. God would judge the city that He loved, "*Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there.*" (See I Kings 11:36)

Many years later, Jesus would cry out in Jerusalem, "*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!*" (Matthew 23:37)

Many times God had called out to Israel to repent and given them opportunity after opportunity, but they rejected it. And now, God looked over the city and saw its condition, and He agonized because of their unbelief and refusal to hear His words and obey.

God would utter judgments against Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah. Why?

1. They had forsaken God
2. They had burned incense to other gods
3. They had worshipped the works of their own hands

What can be said about America? Have we believed God's word? Have we chosen to obey? Or have we forsaken God and turned our hearts after the gods of pleasure and prosperity and self-seeking and self-satisfaction? Are we in awe of God's great works, or are we proud of the works of our own hands?

If God so judged the city that He loved, the city where He had chosen to put His name, should we not tremble before Him and bow in humility at the thought of our own sins and God's holiness? Do we not deserve just such judgment ourselves?

One way that a nation slips away farther and farther into sin is that it forgets the good hand of God upon it and the might of our great God.

Great God, We Sing Your Mighty Hand

1. Great God, we sing Your mighty hand  
By which supported still we stand;  
The opening year Your mercy shows,  
That mercy crowns it at the close.

2. By day, by night, at home, abroad,  
Still are we guarded by our God;  
By His incessant bounty fed,  
By His unerring counsel led.

3. In scenes exalted or depressed,  
You are our joy, and You are our rest;  
Your goodness all our hopes shall raise,  
Adored through all our changing days.

4. When death shall interrupt our songs  
And seal in silence mortal tongues,  
In fairer realms, O God shall we  
Your praises sing eternally.

~Philip Doddridge, alt.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Go and Cry**

Remember?

Jeremiah 2:2 says, *“Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.”*

God remembers a time when Israel sought Him, when Israel went after Him.

Remember the time when America went after God? Remember the time when people came to this land to seek the freedom to worship God? Remember the Mayflower Compact, part of which says, “Having undertaken, for the Glory of God, and advancements of the Christian faith and honor of our King and Country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the Northern parts of Virginia...” Not all the people on the ship were Christians, but all signed a document with God as their witness.

Remember that the first English Bible brought to America was the Geneva Bible and the first English Bible printed in America was the King James Bible?

<http://greatsite.com/timeline-english-bible-history/colonial-bibles.html>

Remember how the Puritans established schools for the purpose of teaching the Bible?

Remember the words of Benjamin Rush? "The only means of establishing and perpetuating our republican form of government is the universal education of our youth in the principles of Christianity by means of the Bible."

Remember the Declaration of Independence at the founding of our nation? "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Some argue that not all of our founding fathers were good examples of these truths, especially considering that some of them owned slaves. That may be the case, nevertheless the words are still true.

Do we remember what John Adams said about our Independence? "I am apt to believe that [Independence Day] will be celebrated, by succeeding Generations, as the great anniversary Festival. It ought to be commemorated, as the Day of Deliverance by solemn Acts of Devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with Pomp and Parade, with shews, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more."

How Quickly We Have forgotten

Mayflower compact photo

By William Bradford (1590-1657) - Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Public Domain,  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=847329>

## Holiness

Jeremiah chapter two continues, *"Israel was holiness unto the LORD, and the firstfruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the LORD."* (verse 3)

Not all of our founding fathers were Christians. Some surely were not. Most did, however, have a fear and respect for Almighty God. Some of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were outspoken about their Christian faith. The framers of the Bill of Rights were Christians, as were some of the generals of the Revolutionary War. "Of the 56 men who signed the Declaration of Independence, nearly half (24) held Bible school or seminary degrees."

Consider just a few quotes,

John Adams

SIGNER OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE; JUDGE; DIPLOMAT; ONE OF TWO SIGNERS OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS; SECOND PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

“The general principles on which the fathers achieved independence were the general principles of Christianity. I will avow that I then believed, and now believe, that those general principles of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God.”

John Quincy Adams

SIXTH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES; DIPLOMAT; SECRETARY OF STATE; U. S. SENATOR; U. S. REPRESENTATIVE; “OLD MAN ELOQUENT”; “HELL-HOUND OF ABOLITION”

“My hopes of a future life are all founded upon the Gospel of Christ.”

Josiah Bartlett

MILITARY OFFICER; SIGNER OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE; JUDGE; GOVERNOR OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

“Called on the people of New Hampshire . . . to confess before God their aggravated transgressions and to implore His pardon and forgiveness through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ . . . [t]hat the knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ may be made known to all nations, pure and undefiled religion universally prevail, and the earth be fill with the glory of the Lord.”

Elias Boudinot

PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS; SIGNED THE PEACE TREATY TO END THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION; FIRST ATTORNEY ADMITTED TO THE U. S. SUPREME COURT BAR; FRAMER OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS; DIRECTOR OF THE U. S. MINT

“Let us enter on this important business under the idea that we are Christians on whom the eyes of the world are now turned... [L]et us earnestly call and beseech Him, for Christ’s sake, to preside in our councils. . . . We can only depend on the all powerful influence of the Spirit of God, Whose Divine aid and assistance it becomes us as a Christian people most devoutly to implore. Therefore I move that some minister of the Gospel be requested to attend this Congress every morning . . . in order to open the meeting with prayer.”



John Dickinson

SIGNER OF THE CONSTITUTION; GOVERNOR OF PENNSYLVANIA; GOVERNOR OF DELAWARE; GENERAL IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

“Rendering thanks to my Creator for my existence and station among His works, for my birth in a country enlightened by the Gospel and enjoying freedom, and for all His other kindnesses, to Him I resign myself, humbly confiding in His goodness and in His mercy through Jesus Christ for the events of eternity.”

President Ronald Reagan

“Freedom prospers when religion is vibrant and the rule of law under God is acknowledged. When our Founding Fathers passed the First Amendment, they sought to protect churches from government interference. They never intended to construct a wall of hostility between government and the concept of religious belief itself. ... To those who cite the First Amendment as reason for excluding God from more and more of our institutions every day, I say: The First Amendment of the Constitution was not written to protect the people of this country from religious values; it was written to protect religious values from government tyranny.”

Many more quotes can be found here - <http://christianpoliticalparty.com/the-founding-fathers-on-jesus-christianity-and-the-bible/>

When Israel was holiness unto the Lord, Israel was concerned about keeping pure. They were fruitful because God was able to bring forth fruit through them. They were the firstfruits of His increase. God protected Israel from anyone that would try to hurt them and caused evil to come upon their enemies.

God has protected American in many amazing ways from our enemies, within and without. But are we concerned with being pure anymore? Is it our purpose to educate the people in the principles of Christianity and see the Gospel enlighten the people in this country and around the world?

### **But Now**

*“Thus saith the LORD, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?” (Jeremiah 2:5)*

But now they have walked after vanity and become vain. God wants to know why they have done this. Have they found iniquity in God and so decided to go after their own way? Has God failed them? Many today think that they find iniquity in God. They think

He is cruel and that He condones bad things. Then they go their own way, and it is a way of iniquity. That way is hard because the way of transgressors is hard. (See Proverbs 13:15) They do not consider that they do not know God but have only imagined what they think God to be. Their god is not the true God but a god made up by their own imaginations. They don't understand what is happening, so they keep going their own vain way and blaming God for the problems that come into their lives.

*“Neither said they, Where is the LORD that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt?” (Jeremiah 2:6)*

When they had forsaken God and gone their own way, they did not even miss the Lord. They did not even wonder where He was. They forgot the God who had brought them up out of Egypt and had led them through the wilderness, through the deserts and the land of pits, through the land of drought, through the land of the shadow of death, and through a land where people did not live.

Some Christians today forget that God has brought them up out of the world, that He has led them through the wilderness and the deserts and the land of the shadow of death, through barren and empty places. When they have plenty, they forget God. Perhaps they don't even think about Him. Is that not true even in some of our churches?

*“And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination.” (verse 7)*

God is the one who brought them into the plentiful country and gave them to eat of the fruit of it and blessed them with its goodness. But, when they had entered the land, they defiled it, and they made God's heritage an abomination.

Remember how God helped those who came to this “new world.” He took care of them through harsh weather, famine, and more. They were very thankful in the beginning. But how long did it take them to forget what God had done?

*“The priests said not, Where is the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit.” (verse 8)*

Those who were supposed to lead them spiritually, did not even know God. Their pastor transgressed against God. Their prophets prophesied by a false god. Their spiritual leaders walked after things that do not profit.

Look at some of our churches today, and some of the television evangelists and some of the “great men” among our spiritual leaders. Does it not appear that many of them do not even know God? They only teach what they make up or maybe what they say they received in visions or dreams. But they do not teach the word of God.

*“Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the LORD, and with your children's children will I plead.” (verse 9)*

Yet God would still plead, and He still pleads for His own to come back to Him today.

### **Other Gods**

*“Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.” (verse 11)*

Nations that worship false gods do not change gods, but Israel did. What about Christians and Christian nations today? Do we forget the glory that comes from knowing God and change that glory for things that do not profit?

<sup>21</sup>Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. <sup>22</sup>Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup>And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things." (Romans 1:21-23)

What are some signs that we have forgotten the glory that comes from knowing God and have changed that glory for things that do not profit?

We are unthankful

We imagine vain things

Our hearts are darkened, we cannot see afar off. (See I Peter 1:5-9)

We think we are wise, when we are really fools

We hold the creature to be higher than God.

*“Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD.” (verse 12)*

Be very afraid.

What happens to those that reject God and change his glory into vain and corruptible things? God gives them up. <sup>24</sup>Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: <sup>25</sup>Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. <sup>26</sup>For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections." (Romans 1:24-26a)

## Two Evils

*"For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."* (verse 13)

In Jeremiah's day, God's people committed two evils.

1. They forsook God, the fountain of living waters
2. They made cisterns and tried to fill them up with their own sources of water. But this water did not satisfy because they cisterns were broken and could hold no water.

Only God can satisfy. None of the worldly pleasures can give any satisfaction. The temporary pleasures slip through the cracks of the broken cistern and leave dry and empty lives. Yet, how many Christians spend their days seeking things that bring temporary pleasure? How much money is spent on things we want, things that last only a short time? How much money is spent on a good time, a time that may last only a few hours or maybe a few days? Do we spend just as much time and money laying up treasures in heaven, treasures that will last for eternity? Do we put effort into partaking of the wonderful riches of Christ? "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33) Sadly, it seems that we often exchange that for a few moments of temporary, fleeting pleasures that soon fly away beyond our grasp.

According to catholic-doc.org/**stewardship**/stats, "By age of 50 the average American will have spent 11 years in front of the television." And, what will they fill up with as their treasure?

TREASURE, money spent on:

44 Billion	Soft Drinks
35 Billion	Sports
29 Billion	Diets
12 Billion	Candy
8 Billion	Pets
5.5 Billion	Video Games
3.4 Billion	Cut Flowers
2.7 Billion	Skin Care
1.7 Billion	Religious

Religious, not necessarily even God and the church, but religious. Of that religious spending, how much is really spent for God? Why is that last? How terribly sad. None of the other “treasures” can ever satisfy and none of them will go with us to eternity.

### **You Have Brought It Upon Yourself**

*“Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, when he led thee by the way?” (verse 17)*

They procured God's punishment to themselves because they forsook the LORD their God. God led them by the way, but they would not follow Him. They took their own way, a way that led to destruction.

*“And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river?” (verse 18)*

They were apparently making agreements with other nations.

Christians should watch and not join hands with the world, even if it is to accomplish some good thing. Our agreements should be with God; we should not be making affinity with the world.

*“Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.” (verse 19)*

Sin pays its wages, and its wages are evil and bitter.

*“For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot.” (verse 20)*

They started right but soon began to sin. However, they either tried to hide their sin or to say that the sin they were doing really wasn't sin.

*“Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?” (verse 21)*

God made them noble and right. Oh, what had happened! Now they were degenerate and "strange."

Strange - adulterous, alien, or foreign. (Strong's)

*“For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord GOD.” (verse 22)*

They could not make themselves clean. They could not wash away their own sin. And neither can we.

*“How canst thou say, I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? see thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done: thou art a swift dromedary traversing her ways.” (verse 23)*

They could not even see their own sin.

*“Withhold thy foot from being unshod, and thy throat from thirst: but thou saidst, There is no hope: no; for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.” (verse 25)*

They were dying of thirst, but would not seek after God, their fountain of living waters. Instead, they chose to follow other paths.

*“Saying to a stock, Thou art my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth: for they have turned their back unto me, and not their face: but in the time of their trouble they will say, Arise, and save us.” (verse 27)*

They turned their back on God and turned to worship things which could not save them. When trouble comes, they will cry out to God to save them.

*"But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah." (verse 28)*

But God will say, "Where are your gods that you have made? Let them arise to save you in your trouble, if they can. You have now as many gods as you have cities in Judah."

*"Wherefore will ye plead with me? ye all have transgressed against me, saith the LORD." (verse 29)*

Why are you pleading with me for help, God asks? You have all transgressed against me.

*"In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correction: your own sword hath devoured your prophets, like a destroying lion." (verse 30)*

I chastened your children, but they would not listen; and it was your own sword that killed your prophets.

*"O generation, see ye the word of the LORD. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee?" (verse 31)*

Though God had provided everything for them, they thought they were self-sufficient and had no more need of God.

### **My People Have Forgotten Me**

*"Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number." (verse 32)*

They forgot God, days without number. They did not even think about Him.

*"Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love? therefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways." (verse 33)*

They sought after false love. Their ways were so sinful that they were teaching the wicked their ways. They were more evil and sinful than the world.

## Guilty of Innocent Blood

*"Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents: I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these." (verse 34)*

They were guilty of innocent blood. This was not something they tried to hide, but it could easily be seen.

Our nation is guilty of innocent blood – from the time of the Salem witch hunts, to many of the slaves, up to the murder of millions of babies by abortion today. The shedding of innocent blood is a serious sin that God will judge. <sup>3</sup>"Surely at the commandment of the LORD came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did; <sup>4</sup>And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon." (II Kings 24:3,4) The shedding of innocent blood is a sin which leaves a blot on a nation that can never be erased.

*"Yet thou sayest, Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me. Behold, I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned." (verse 35)*

Although their sin was not even hidden, still they could not see it. Therefore, God would plead with them because they said, "I have not sinned."

*<sup>36</sup>Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way? thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria. <sup>37</sup>Yea, thou shalt go forth from him, and thine hands upon thine head: for the LORD hath rejected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them." (verses 36,37)*

They depended on their own strength and trusted in Egypt (picture of the world) for their safety. Therefore, God rejected these confidences. They would not prosper but would go into captivity in spite of alliances they had made with those in whom they trusted, **because they had forgotten God.**

## Chapter 3

### Return to Me and Receive Mercy and Healing

*"They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD." (verse 1)*



No matter what Israel had done, God was willing and waiting to take Israel back. "Yet return again to me, saith the LORD."

*"Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and see where thou hast not been lien with. In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness; and thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms and with thy wickedness."* (verse 2)

They polluted the land - not a pollution of the environmental type, but a far worse pollution. They polluted it with whoredoms and wickedness.

*"Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed."* (verse 3)

Therefore, God sent a drought. There was no latter rain, and the harvest was affected. Yet, they were not ashamed.

*"Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth?"* (verse 4)

God was hurting in His heart, pleading with them to cry to Him, to come to Him as their Father and their guide as they had done in their youth.

*"Will he reserve his anger for ever? will he keep it to the end? Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldest."* (verse 5)

They did whatever evil thing they could.

*"The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot."* (verse 6)

Israel played the harlot on **every** high mountain and under **every** green tree. They left no place untouched with their wickedness.

*"And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also."* (verses 7,8)

Though God punished Israel for playing the harlot, Judah paid no heed and went and played the harlot also.

*“And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks.” (verse 9)*

Judah took her whoredoms very lightly and committed wickedness everywhere and with everything she could.

*“And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the LORD.” (verse 10)*

Judah pretended to turn back to God, but they were not sincere. They were only feigning, making an outward show, but their heart had not changed. The land was filled with immorality and pleasure worship. They turned to God with their lips, but not with their heart.

Is this what happened in America after 9/11? Signs were put up everywhere saying to pray. People went back to church. It seemed like people were seeking the Lord. But it did not last very long. Now there is more immorality and pleasure seeking than ever. People have less time for God than ever. People think they are self-sufficient. Did we turn to God only with our lips, instead of with our heart?

*“Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever.” (verse 12)*

Mercy - the remedy for the sickness of sin

In spite of all Israel had done, God still held out His hand, begging them to return to Him and partake of His mercy.

*“Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD.” (verse 13)*

God desired only that they acknowledge their sin and their transgression and their disobedience. What about our sin? Do we acknowledge it, or do we keep trying to hide it, or even excuse it?

*“Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.” (verse 14)*

Turn. Turn again to the LORD, repent, for He is ready to take them back to Him. He is ready to take us back to Him as well. Turn again to the Lord.

*“And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.” (verse 15)*

God urges them, If you turn back to Me, back from your backslidings, I will give you pastors, people after My own heart, to teach you knowledge and understanding. If they would repent and turn to Him, God would raise up the right leaders and teachers to teach them the right things.

*“A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel: for they have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the LORD their God.” (verse 21)*

Sin brings sorrow.

*“Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God.” (verse 22)*

The Remedy

Return  
And God will heal

Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God.

*“We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: for we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God.” (verse 25)*

Lack of success and prosperity -- a result of sin.

## **Chapter 4**

### **If Thou Wilt Return**

*“If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the LORD, return unto me: and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not remove.” (verse 1)*

If you will return

If you will put away your abominations, your sins out of God's sight,

You will not be removed.

*“And thou shalt swear, The LORD liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory.” (verse 2)*

When you return to the LORD, you will swear

The LORD liveth

You will ascribe to Him truth, judgment, and righteousness

Nations will be blessed in Him, not in their own ways. Nations will glory in Him because glory in themselves is false and vain. True glory is found in the Lord.

*“For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.” (verse 3)*

Plow your ground, make it fresh and soft and ready to receive the good seed.

*“Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.” (verse 4)*

Circumcise yourselves to the LORD. Set yourselves apart to Him. Take away anything that defiles. Then God will not bring on His fury and His fire which He is ready to pour out because of the evil of your doings.

### **If Thou Wilt Not Return**

*“Set up the standard toward Zion: retire, stay not: for I will bring evil from the north, and a great destruction.” (verse 6)*

### **If No Repentance, Then Destruction.**

*“The lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way; he is gone forth from his place to make thy land desolate; and thy cities shall be laid waste, without an inhabitant.” (verse 7)*

Destruction is coming, it is on its way.

### **If No Repentance, Then Mourning**

*“For this gird you with sackcloth, lament and howl: for the fierce anger of the LORD is not turned back from us.” (verse 8)*

Therefore, put on sackcloth, humble yourselves and mourn.

### **If No Repentance, Then No Salvation and No Hope**

*“And it shall come to pass at that day, saith the LORD, that the heart of the king shall perish, and the heart of the princes; and the priests shall be astonished, and the prophets shall wonder.” (verse 9)*

There will be no salvation or hope in the rulers or spiritual leaders.

### **If No Repentance, Then Spoiling**

*“Behold, he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots shall be as a whirlwind: his horses are swifter than eagles. Woe unto us! for we are spoiled.” (verse 13)*

Woe unto us! for we are spoiled.

*“O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?” (verse 14)*

In order to be saved, you need a heart washed from wickedness. You need a mind cleansed from vain thoughts.

### **Why Did the Enemies Come?**

*“As keepers of a field, are they against her round about; because she hath been rebellious against me, saith the LORD.” (verse 17)*

Why did Judah's enemies come upon her?  
Because she was rebellious against the LORD

If we are rebellious against the Lord as a nation, should we expect to be delivered from **our** enemies?

*“Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart.”* (verse 18)

Your own sins and the bitter wickedness of your heart have procured your judgment. You have brought your own judgment upon yourselves.

*“My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.”* (verse 19)

Jeremiah was pained in his innermost being for the trouble of his people. We should be pained in our innermost being for the trouble of our people when they rebel against the Lord and suffer His judgment.

*“Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment.”* (verse 20)

Destruction upon destruction comes upon the land in a moment.

*“How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet?”* (verse 21)

He could not bear even to see the standard (like their flag) or to hear the sound of the trumpet (the call to war), because he knew it was the call to their destruction.

*“For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.”* (verse 22)

God was heavy hearted because His people were foolish. They did not know Him; they had no understanding. They were wise to do evil but did not even know how to do good.

*“For thus hath the LORD said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end.” (verse 27)*

The whole land was desolate because of God's fierce anger. Yet, God still waited to show mercy. He would not destroy completely.

### **No Escape**

*“The whole city shall flee for the noise of the horsemen and bowmen; they shall go into thickets, and climb up upon the rocks: every city shall be forsaken, and not a man dwell therein.” (verse 29)*

There is no escape from destruction.

*“And when thou art spoiled, what wilt thou do? Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair; thy lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life.” (verse 30)*

Your riches and beautiful looks and many gifts will not bribe your "lovers," those you thought supported you, to stand up for you. They will instead despise you and seek your life.

*“For I have heard a voice as of a woman in travail, and the anguish as of her that bringeth forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion, that bewaileth herself, that spreadeth her hands, saying, Woe is me now! for my soul is wearied because of murderers.” (verse 31)*

Zion mourned and spread out her hands. Woe is me now! She was wearied because of murderers.

Is America not yet wearied because of murderers? Every few days, it seems like we hear of more shootings. Do we not yet fear God?

## Chapter 5

### See and Know

*“Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it.” (verse 1)*

If anyone could be found in Jerusalem that sought after truth and that would use good discretion and pronounce fair judgment according to the law, God would pardon Jerusalem.

*“And though they say, The LORD liveth; surely they swear falsely.” (verse 2)*

They say, "The LORD liveth," but they do not really believe in the Lord. Those are just words.

*“O LORD, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return.” (verse 3)*

They expressed no sorrow for sin.  
There was no repentance when they were chastised.  
They hardened themselves against the chastening of the Lord.  
They refused to return to the LORD.

*“Therefore I said, Surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the LORD, nor the judgment of their God.” (verse 4)*

Therefore, they are poor. They may have a lot of material goods, but they are poor because they have refused to return to the Lord. They lack spiritual knowledge and understanding.

They do not **know** the way of the LORD.  
They do not **know** the judgment of their God.

*“I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them; for they have known the way of the LORD, and the judgment of their God: but these have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds.” (verse 5)*



The great men that once did know the way of the LORD and the judgment of their God have rebelled and no longer want to be under God's "yoke." Bursting His bonds asunder, they placed themselves under the burdens of disobedience, willfulness, and rebellion.

*"Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, and a wolf of the evenings shall spoil them, a leopard shall watch over their cities: every one that goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces: because their transgressions are many, and their backslidings are increased."* (verse 6)

Terror and harm from wild beasts will increase because their transgressions are many and their backslidings have increased.

### **How Shall I Pardon Thee for This?**

*"How shall I pardon thee for this? thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses."* (verse 7)

How could God pardon their sin?  
Their children have forsaken Him.  
They have sworn by false gods.

God fed them to the full, gave them all they ever needed and more.

Yet, they were not thankful to God for their abundance but filled themselves up with pleasures. Immorality was abundant in the land.

*"They were as fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbour's wife."* (verse 8)

Their heart was full of adultery, lusting after their neighbor's wives.

*"Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"* (verse 9)

God will surely judge. If there is no repentance, there will be no pardoning for such sins.

"Shall I not visit for these *things*? saith the LORD: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" We had better look at ourselves and consider. Are we such a nation as this?

## **No Hope in the Arm of Flesh**

*“Go ye up upon her walls, and destroy; but make not a full end: take away her battlements; for they are not the LORD's.” (verse 10)*

She will have no defense against the enemy because she is trusting in her own defenses. She is not trusting in the Lord but in the arm of flesh, and the arm of flesh will surely fail.

*“For the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against me, saith the LORD.” (verse 11)*

They have been deceitful and unfaithful to God.

*“They have belied the LORD, and said, It is not he; neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword nor famine.” (verse 12)*

They refused to believe that judgment would come from God because of their sins.

*“And the prophets shall become wind, and the word is not in them: thus shall it be done unto them.” (verse 13)*

The prophets will speak their own words instead of God's. Their words will be like the wind.

Become wind - a figure of speech. Today we would say that their words were just a lot of hot air.

## **Enemies Without and Within**

*“Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the LORD: it is a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say.” (verse 15)*

Enemies will come upon them from without.

*“Their quiver is as an open sepulchre, they are all mighty men.” (verse 16)*

A mighty enemy is coming.

*“And they shall eat up thine harvest, and thy bread, which thy sons and thy daughters should eat: they shall eat up thy flocks and thine herds: they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig trees: they shall impoverish thy fenced cities, wherein thou trustedst, with the sword.” (verse 17)*

You have plenty of food, but the enemy will eat it all, and your children will go hungry. Your farms and business they will take for themselves. They will impoverish the cities.

Why? Because Israel trusted in their fenced cities instead of in God. Judgment will come, and the enemy will destroy with the sword.

*“Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not.” (verse 21)*

O foolish people.  
Like the gods that they serve -  
without understanding,  
having eyes they see not,  
having ears they hear not.

*“Fear ye not me? saith the LORD: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?” (verse 22)*

Do you not fear the LORD?  
Do you not tremble at His presence?  
He has ALL power.  
He has placed the sands of the sea and the boundaries of the sea that the sea cannot pass over them. No matter how the seas roar and the waves toss themselves, they cannot pass over the boundaries that God has established for them.

*“But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone.” (verse 23)*

But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart. They roared and tossed themselves against the boundaries God set. They revolted and are gone. Even the seas obey God, but this people does not.

*"Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the LORD our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest." (verse 24)*

They do not say in their heart,

"Let us now fear the LORD our God."

God gives the rain and the harvest, but they do not recognize that God is the Provider.

*"Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you." (verse 25)*

They suffer and lack good things. God would give them these good things, but they do not get them because their sins have withholden good things from them. They have forgotten that "The LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good *thing* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. " (Psalm 84:11) But, if they walk in their iniquity, their sinful ways will withhold these good things from them.

*"For among my people are found wicked men: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men." (verse 26)*

Among "my people." Among God's people,

Extortioners

Kidnappers and Human traffickers

*"As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich." (verse 27)*

They are increased in goods and have become rich. And so, they have forgotten God.

The houses of God's people are full of deceit.

Consider these statistics.

"American evangelicals collectively made \$2.66 trillion in income.

Total Christian income in the United States is \$5.2 trillion annually, nearly half of the world's total Christian income.

- 66% of all adults donated to a church or religious center during 1999.
- 17% of adults claim to tithe, while 3% actually do so.
- 16% of born again Christians gave no money to his or her church in 1999.
- 8% of those making \$20,000 or less gave at least 10% of their income to churches, while 1% of those making \$75,000-\$99,999 gave a similar amount.

The average donation by adults who attend U.S. Protestant churches is about \$17 a week.

Generally, only 3 to 5 percent of Americans who donate money to a church tithe, that is give a tenth of their incomes

Thirty-three percent of U.S. born-again Christians say it is impossible for them to get ahead in life because of the financial debt they have incurred.

**If members of Christian churches in the United States had raised their giving to the Old Testament's minimum standard of giving (10 percent of income) in 2000, an additional \$139,000,000,000 a year would become available."**

Have we robbed God of 139 billion dollars? Are we waxen rich and full so that we do not think we need God anymore?

*"They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked: they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge."* (verse 28)

They are great men, yet their lives are evil.

They say they are God's people, yet their evil deeds have surpassed the deeds of the wicked.

They do not care about the fatherless, though they live comfortably in their own prosperity.

They do not care about the needy, but they enjoy living comfortably themselves.

The condition that others are in does not even bother them.

*"Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"* (verse 29)

Again, God's chilling words, "Shall I not visit for these *things*? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"

*"The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?"* (verse 31)

The prophets prophesy falsely. Today we would say that false teachers abound.

These prophets (preachers and teachers today) bear rule by their means.

And these very sad words, "And my people love to have it so."

And God's heart searching question, "What will ye do in the end thereof?"

These ways lead only to destruction. You are rich now, but what will you do when judgment comes?

“While there are notable exceptions, America's pastors and church leaders do not now seem to understand the historical urgency of their mandate to lead the Church into repentance (Jer 23:22), extraordinary prayer (2 Chr 7:14), and relevant action (Dan 11:32-33; Jas 2:20-26). As a result, the Church in America has not been the "salt" and "light" Jesus said she should be, and is dangerously close to becoming, if she has not already become, "good for nothing but to be cast out and be trodden under the foot of man" (Mt 5:13).”

<http://prayeralert.org/wir/archives/prayforchurch.html>

## **Chapter 6**

*“O ye children of Benjamin, gather yourselves to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem, and blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and set up a sign of fire in Bethhaccerem: for evil appeareth out of the north, and great destruction.” (verse 1)*

### **Destruction is coming.**

*“Prepare ye war against her; arise, and let us go up at noon. Woe unto us! for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out.” (verse 4)*

Woe unto us. War is coming. The day is ending, and the shadows of evening are stretched out. Time is almost up.

*“For thus hath the LORD of hosts said, Hew ye down trees, and cast a mount against Jerusalem: this is the city to be visited; she is wholly oppression in the midst of her.” (verse 6)*

Destruction is coming because of God’s judgment.

*“As a fountain casteth out her waters, so she casteth out her wickedness: violence and spoil is heard in her; before me continually is grief and wounds.” (verse 7)*

She (Jerusalem) was so full of sin that it gushed up out of her like a fountain. Wickedness, violence, and spoil filled the land. She was full of grief and wounds before God.

*“Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited.” (verse 8)*

Time is almost up. Receive instruction now, before I make your land desolate and uninhabited.

*"To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it." (verse 10)*

They have no delight in God's word. They will not and cannot hear.

*"Therefore I am full of the fury of the LORD; I am weary with holding in: I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of young men together: for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with him that is full of days." (verse 11)*

Therefore God is angry and ready to pour out His fury. It will be poured out upon all -- even the women and the elderly.

*"And their houses shall be turned unto others, with their fields and wives together: for I will stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land, saith the LORD." (verse 12)*

When God stretches out His hands, there will be loss of possessions, property, and wives.

*"For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely." (verse 13)*

Everyone is full of covetousness - from the least to the greatest of them.

Everyone deals deceitfully - even the prophet and the priest, even the spiritual leaders.

*"They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace." (verse 14)*

They (the spiritual leaders) falsely proclaim peace to the people even though there is no peace, because they want the people to feel better.

*"Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD." (verse 15)*

They were not ashamed, nor could they blush, when they committed abominations. They were not ashamed of their sin. Therefore they would fall with everyone else.

*“Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.”* (verse 16)

Ask for the  
old paths  
Because that is the good way.  
If you walk in the  
old paths,  
you will find rest for your souls.

"But they said, We will not walk therein."

Will **we** walk therein?

*“Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken.”* (verse 17)

They refused to listen to those whom God had sent to warn them.

*“Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.”* (verse 19)

When God brings judgment, it will be the fruit of their own thoughts.

Why?

Because they refused to listen to God's words and God's law but rejected it.

Punishment is coming because they will be reaping what they have sowed.

*“To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me.”* (verse 20)

Because they rejected God, God rejected their false worship and sacrifices.



*“Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will lay stumblingblocks before this people, and the fathers and the sons together shall fall upon them; the neighbour and his friend shall perish.” (verse 21)*

Therefore, God will allow stumbling blocks in their way, and they shall fall and perish. They will be destroyed from inner turmoil, by their own people. They will be destroyed from within.

*“They shall lay hold on bow and spear; they are cruel, and have no mercy; their voice roareth like the sea; and they ride upon horses, set in array as men for war against thee, O daughter of Zion.” (verse 22)*

And they will be destroyed from without, by an enemy that has no mercy.

*“We have heard the fame thereof: our hands wax feeble: anguish hath taken hold of us, and pain, as of a woman in travail.” (verse 24)*

Because of the rumors of the fierce enemy, the people are discouraged and weak. They are in anguish and afraid.

*“Go not forth into the field, nor walk by the way; for the sword of the enemy and fear is on every side.” (verse 25)*

They are afraid to go out because the enemy could be anywhere, and they do not know where the enemy is hiding. Fear is on every side.

*“They are all grievous revolters, walking with slanders: they are brass and iron; they are all corrupters.” (verse 28)*

God says **All** my people are  
revolters  
slanderers  
corrupters

How is it among God’s people today?

*"Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the LORD hath rejected them."* (verse 30)

Matthew Henry points out, *"Reprobate silver shall they be called, useless and worthless; they glitter as if they had some silver in them, but there is nothing of real virtue or goodness to be found among them; and for this reason the Lord has rejected them."*

They look like silver, but actually they are fake, and the LORD has rejected them. How many in our churches today look like silver, but are really fake? Do we look like Christians on the outside, but on the inside we are really something else?

## **Chapter 7**

### **Amend Your Ways**

*"Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD. <sup>3</sup>Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place."* (verses 2b,3)

"Amend your ways." Change begins in the house of God.

*"Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these."* (verse 4)

Do not trust in lying words.

*"For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour."* (verse 5)

Judge fairly

*"If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt."* (verse 6)

Do not oppress the stranger, fatherless or widows.

Do not shed innocent blood.

Do not walk after other gods.

*"Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever." (verse 7)*

Then I will cause you to dwell in this place.

If you amend your ways and do the things that are right and not do the things that are wrong, then I will cause you to dwell in this place.

*"Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit." (verse 8)*

You do trust in lying words, and they cannot profit.

*"Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not..." (verse 9)*

The very bad things God's people are doing:

Stealing

Murder

Committing adultery

Swearing falsely

Burning incense to Baal

Walking after other gods.

*"And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?" (verse 10)*

Will you do all these things and then stand before Me and say you have been delivered to do them?

Grace is not the freedom to do what we want.

Grace is the freedom to do what is right.

*"Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the LORD." (verse 11)*

This is the house that you say is called by My name, but it is a den of robbers. I have seen it, saith the LORD. God sees our sin, and He knows when we steal from Him.

*"But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel." (verse 12)*

Go to the place that had been set aside for Me in Shiloh, the place where I set My name at the first. See what I did to it because of the wickedness of **My** people. When a society and a nation falls, it is not the fault of the lost. The lost have always been lost, and they have always acted like lost people. It is God's people that must humble themselves and pray and seek God's face and turn from their wicked ways. Revival and restoration depend on God's people getting right, not on changes in the actions of lost people.

*"And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not..." (verse 13)*

I saw all these works you did and tried to correct you; I tried to call to you; but you would not answer Me.

*"Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh." (verse 14)*

You trust in this house because it is called by My name. But this house will fail you. I will do the same thing to it as I did to Shiloh. I gave this house to you, this house that is called by My name, but I will bring judgment on it.

*"And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim." (verse 15)*

As they rejected God, God will reject them.

*"Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee." (verse 16)*

Since God's people would not hear Him, God would not hear intercession for His people. When will God be done hearing intercession for our nation? When will He be done hearing prayers for our people?

*"<sup>17</sup>Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? <sup>18</sup>The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger." (verses 17,18)*

Do you not see what they do in the streets? The parents and children together follow after other gods and sacrifice to them and provoke Me to anger. They do this in the streets. They do not try to hide their abominations.

*"Do they provoke me to anger? saith the LORD: do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces?" (verse 19)*

They provoke Me to anger.

But they bring upon themselves confusion.

*"Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched." (verse 20)*

Because God is angry at the sins of His people, He will judge the land, the whole land. He will not only judge people, but also the animals, the trees, the crops and all. It will all be burned up.

Unstoppable wildfires?

*"<sup>21</sup>Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh. <sup>22</sup>For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices." (verses 21,22)*

God is more concerned about a right heart than He is about sacrifices. Consider this verse, "And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (I Samuel 15:22)

*"But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you." (verse 23)*

Obey God's voice, and He will be your God and you will be His people.

Walk in the ways that He commanded, and it will be well with you.  
These are the things in which God is truly interested.

*"But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward." (verse 24)*

But they would not listen to God. Instead of listening to Him, they leaned unto their own understanding. This took them backward and not forward.

Do we wonder why we are frustrated that we keep going backward as a nation and not forward? It is because God's people are leaning unto their own understanding and trying to find their own way instead of walking in God's way.

*"Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers." (verse 26)*

Refused to listen to those whom God sent to warn them.

*"Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee." (verse 27)*

You go and speak My words to them. They will neither hear nor answer you.

*"But thou shalt say unto them, This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth." (verse 28)*

This is a nation that -  
Obeys not the voice of the LORD their God.  
Will not receive correction.

Truth is perished from among them and it is cut off from their mouths. They cannot even speak truth.

*"For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the LORD: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it." (verse 30)*

They have done evil in the LORD's sight.  
They set up abominations in the house called by God's name and polluted it.

*"<sup>31</sup>And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart. <sup>32</sup>Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place." (verses 31,32)*

As they have shed much innocent blood in sacrifice to other gods, much blood will be shed among them until there is no place to bury the dead.

*"Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride: for the land shall be desolate." (verse 34)*

Because sin abounds, God will cause joy and mirth to cease.

## **Chapter 8**

### **They Refuse to Return**

*"Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding? they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return." (verse 5)*

They hold fast to deceit.

They refuse to return.

Like those who dig up lies about others for political expediency and destroy their reputations, families, and careers because it allows the deceivers to get their own way? This past year, a man was criticized and torn down by some in his own political party because some within the party were afraid they would lose the votes of the younger people and of the women. It did not matter the hurt to the man, just so they got the votes. How wrong and wicked!

*"I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle." (verse 6)*

God listened, but no one repented.

No one spoke right.

No one repented of his sin.

No one said, "What have I done?"

No, they just rushed headlong into their sin like a horse rushes into battle.

*"Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the LORD." (verse 7)*

They have less wisdom than the stork, the turtle (dove), and the crane and the swallow. They do not know the judgment of the LORD. They are unable to discern it.

*"How do ye say, We are wise, and the law of the LORD is with us? Lo, certainly in vain made he it; the pen of the scribes is in vain." (verse 8)*

They say they are wise. They know what the Bible says. But they have rejected its truth. For what reason did God even write it and the scribe transcribe it? Though these people know what God's word says, it means nothing to them.

*"The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom is in them?" (verse 9)*

Their wise men? They are not wise. They have rejected the word of the LORD, so there is no true wisdom in them.

*"Therefore will I give their wives unto others, and their fields to them that shall inherit them: for every one from the least even unto the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely." (verse 10)*

Everyone of them is given to covetousness. even the spiritual leaders.

*"For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace." (verse 11)*

The leaders of the people made them feel better by lying to them and assuring them that there would be peace when there was no peace.

*"Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD." (verse 12)*



They were not at all ashamed of their sin, of their abominations that they had committed against the LORD.

*"I will surely consume them, saith the LORD: there shall be no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree, and the leaf shall fade; and the things that I have given them shall pass away from them." (verse 13)*

Because they will not repent of their sin, the crops will be destroyed, and God will take away all the good things that He had given them.

*"Why do we sit still? assemble yourselves, and let us enter into the defenced cities, and let us be silent there: for the LORD our God hath put us to silence, and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the LORD." (verse 14)*

God has put us to silence and given us gall to drink. He has made our lives bitter because we have sinned against Him.

Gall - bitter, poisonous plant

Gall - Anything extremely bitter

Bitter -

Causing pain or smart; piercing; painful; sharp; severe; as, a *bitter* cold day.

Causing, or fitted to cause, pain or distress to the mind; calamitous; poignant.

*It is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God.*

*Jer. ii. 19.*

Characterized by sharpness, severity, or cruelty; harsh; stern; virulent

Mournful; sad; distressing; painful; pitiable.

~Definitions from Merriam Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, 1913

*"We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble!" (verse 15)*

We looked for peace, but there was none.

We looked for a time of health, but instead we had trouble.

*"The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan: the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones; for they are come, and have devoured the land, and all that is in it; the city, and those that dwell therein." (verse 16)*

The whole land trembled in fear because the enemy came and devoured the land and all that was in it and left the city desolate.

*"When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me."* (verse 18)

Jeremiah's heart ached for his people, and he would not be comforted.

*"Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country: Is not the LORD in Zion? is not her king in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities?"* (verse 19)

His people cry because of the strangers that have come in and dwell in their country.

Does not our country cry because of fear of the terrorists?

God was in the land, but they paid Him no attention. Instead, they provoked God to anger with their graven images and with following strange vanities.

Do we pay God any attention? Is not our nation full of strange vanities? Are we provoking God to anger?

*"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."* (verse 20)

"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."  
There is nothing left. It is too late. We are lost.

*"For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me."* (verse 21)

Jeremiah was hurt and astonished for his people. It was as if blackness had taken over him. There was no hope.

*"Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"* (verse 22)

The Physician was there; the balm was readily available. Yet, the people were not recovered because they refused the Physician and the balm.

## **Chapter 9**

*"Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" (verse 1)*

This verse really needs no commentary. It speaks for itself.

*"Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men." (verse 2)*

Jeremiah wished that he had a place to go away to be alone, to get away from it all. He wanted to get away so that he could not see the evil that was coming upon his people. He wanted to get away because he was weary of their sins. They were all adulterers and treacherous.

*"And they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the LORD." (verse 3)*

He wanted to get away because the people were liars. They did not stand up for truth. They went from evil to evil and they did not know the LORD.

In the book, The Heavens are Weeping, the diaries of George Richard Browder, 1852 - 1886, is the statement "Lying is more fashionable than truth." This statement serves as the introductory part to the diaries from 1862 - 1864. Lies, rumors, and hatred fueled the Civil War. They seem commonplace once again in our day of 2018.

*"Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders." (verse 4)*

No one could be trusted, not even family or neighbors.

*"And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity." (verse 5)*

They taught themselves to speak lies; they weary themselves, or labour until they are tired, to commit iniquity. They are all deceivers.

*"Thine habitation is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the LORD." (verse 6)*

They refuse to know the LORD. They would rather just learn deceit.

*"Their tongue is as an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit: one speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait." (verse 8)*

Their tongues were full of deceit. They spoke peaceably to their neighbors. They spoke kind words and pretended to be their friends and to have their backs. But really, they were only greedy and covetous of what their neighbors owned and lay in wait for a way to get it for themselves.

*"Shall I not visit them for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" (verse 9)*

Again, God's solemn words,

*"Shall I not visit them for these things? saith the LORD: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?"*

*"For the mountains will I take up a weeping and wailing, and for the habitations of the wilderness a lamentation, because they are burned up, so that none can pass through them; neither can men hear the voice of the cattle; both the fowl of the heavens and the beast are fled; they are gone." (verse 10)*

Fire burned the mountains. Cattle were displaced or destroyed in the fires. Birds and beasts were driven from their habitations.

Does this bring to mind California? And maybe some other states?

*"And I will make Jerusalem heaps, and a den of dragons; and I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant." (verse 11)*

The cities of Judah were laid waste and desolate.

What can we expect for our cities?

*"And the LORD saith, Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein;" (verse 13)*

Why did all this come upon them?

They forsook God's law.

They did not obey God's voice.

They did not walk in God's ways.

*"But have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them:" (verse 14)*

They walked, instead, after the imagination of their own heart.

And they walked in the ways of Baalim.

*"Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink." (verse 15)*

Because of their sin, their lives would be filled with poison and bitterness.

*"I will scatter them also among the heathen, whom neither they nor their fathers have known: and I will send a sword after them, till I have consumed them." (verse 16)*

They would be scattered among the heathen, people that neither they nor their fathers had known. And God would send a sword among them to consume them.

The price of sin is very high. Are we prepared to pay it?

*"For a voice of wailing is heard out of Zion, How are we spoiled! we are greatly confounded, because we have forsaken the land, because our dwellings have cast us out." (verse 19)*

The end of all this sin is wailing and destruction of people, land and property.

*"For death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces, to cut off the children from without, and the young men from the streets." (verse 21)*

The result of sin is sorrow and death. Death comes to all, even the children.

*"But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD." (verse 24)*

Nothing is worth glorying in except the LORD.

The LORD exercises lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.

The LORD delights in lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness.

Do we delight in these things?

*"<sup>25</sup>Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will punish all them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised; <sup>26</sup>Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all that are in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness: for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart." (verses 25,26)*

God will judge the circumcised with the uncircumcised.

God would judge Israel with the uncircumcised because the people of Israel were uncircumcised in heart.

How is our heart? Considering many of the comments on Facebook and in other places, we are in big trouble. Our heart is in major need of some help, some open-heart surgery from Almighty God.

## **Chapter 10**

### **Hear the Word of the LORD**

*"Hear ye the word which the LORD speaketh unto you, O house of Israel." (verse 1)*

Hear the word of the LORD; He is speaking to you. Listen to what He has to say.

*"Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them." (verse 2)*

God's instructions:

Do not learn the way of the heathen.

Do not be dismayed at the signs of the heaven. The more Israel forgot God and went after other gods, the more they were afraid at the signs of the heavens. They became like the people in faraway lands, "They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens." (Psalm 86:8a)

Isn't that what is happening in America?

Oh, there is going to be a blood moon! What does this mean? Well, basically, it means the moon will look red. This typically occurs during a lunar eclipse. In many parts of the world, people are very afraid when a lunar eclipse occurs. Are we beginning to follow them in our country? What about the stories terrifying people that when planets line up in a certain way, the end of the world is going to come? Many other such stories have surfaced in recent years, frightening many people. But why are people so frightened? Because they do not know the truth. If people reject God, they will believe a lie. What is the purpose of the signs in heaven? The purpose is to reveal God for who He is and to make known His eternal power and Godhead. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." (Romans 1:20) The signs in the heavens are not omens of evil, they are tokens of the power and Godhead of God.

*"<sup>3</sup>For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. <sup>4</sup>They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not." (verses 3,4)*

The false gods of Israel were made from a tree of the forest, a tree which was cut by a man's hand. They decorated the tree with silver and gold and fastened it in its place so that it would not move. This god could not do anything. It could not even get itself to the place where the people wanted it. It could not keep itself from being cut. It could not cut itself to the right size. It could not decorate itself.

*"They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good." (verse 5)*

The false gods Israel made were straight and tall, but they were helpless. They could not speak; they could not walk; they could not do evil or good. There is no need to be afraid of a false god because it is powerless.

*"Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O LORD; thou art great, and thy name is great in might." (verse 6)*

There is none like unto the LORD  
God is great  
God's name is great  
God is mighty

*"Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee." (verse 7)*

There is none like unto God. He is the King of nations? Who should not fear Him?  
Everyone should fear God.

"Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true *are* thy ways, thou King of saints. <sup>4</sup>Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for *thou* only *art* holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest." (Revelation 15:3b,4)

*"But they are altogether brutish and foolish: the stock is a doctrine of vanities." (verse 8)*

There is none like unto God, but His people have forgotten Him and trust in a doctrine of vanities.

*"But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation. <sup>11</sup>Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. <sup>12</sup>He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion. <sup>13</sup>When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens, and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures." (verses 10-13)*

Who God is and What He is Like:

- a. He is the true God
- b. He is the living God
- c. He is an everlasting king
- d. At His wrath the earth shall tremble
- e. The nations will not be able to stand when He pours out His indignation (wrath and judgment)
- f. False gods have made nothing and will perish. But the true God is the Creator and the Controller of creation.



*"Every man is brutish in his knowledge: every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them. They are vanity, and the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish." (verses 14,15)*

False gods bring confusion and will perish.

*"The portion of Jacob is not like them: for he is the former of all things; and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: The LORD of hosts is his name." (verse 16)*

But the true God formed all things, and He is the Lord of hosts.

*"<sup>20</sup>My tabernacle is spoiled, and all my cords are broken: my children are gone forth of me, and they are not: there is none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains. <sup>21</sup>For the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the LORD: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered." (verses 20,21)*

The sad state God's people and God's house were in.

Heart-breakingly, many churches today are in this same sad state. They have pastors and teachers that have not sought the Lord. They are leading the people away from the Lord, and their flock will be scattered.

*"<sup>23</sup>O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. <sup>24</sup>O LORD, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing." (verses 23,24)*

A prayer for mercy.

## **Chapter 11**

### **Hear and Obey**

*"And say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel; Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the words of this covenant." (verse 3)*

There was a curse for disobedience to God's word.

*"Then the LORD said unto me, Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them." (verse 6)*

Hear God's word and obey.

*"They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers." (verse 10)*

They are turned back  
They are gone after other gods  
They have broken God's covenant.

*"For according to the number of thy cities were thy gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to that shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal." (verse 13)*

Again, the Lord says they worshipped as many false gods as they had cities. Shameful things were done in every street as incense was offered to these false gods.

*"Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble." (verse 14)*

They refused to listen to God. Therefore, God will refuse to listen to them.

*"What hath my beloved to do in mine house, seeing she hath wrought lewdness with many, and the holy flesh is passed from thee? when thou doest evil, then thou rejoicest." (verse 15)*

They rejoiced in evil and filled up with lustfulness and lewd acts. Therefore they had no business to be in the house of God. The things they did were opposite of true love (see I Corinthians 13)

*"<sup>16</sup>The LORD called thy name, A green olive tree, fair, and of goodly fruit: with the noise of a great tumult he hath kindled fire upon it, and the branches of it are broken. <sup>17</sup>For the LORD of hosts, that planted thee, hath pronounced evil against thee, for the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke me to anger in offering incense unto Baal." (verses 16,17)*

The Lord established them and planted them and made them grow. But they did evil and provoked God to anger against them. They have procured their own judgment by provoking God to anger with their evil deeds.

*"<sup>21</sup>Therefore thus saith the LORD of the men of Anathoth, that seek thy life, saying, Prophecy not in the name of the LORD, that thou die not by our hand: <sup>22</sup>Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, I will punish them: the young men shall die by the sword; their sons and their daughters shall die by famine: <sup>23</sup>And there shall be no remnant of them: for I will bring evil upon the men of Anathoth, even the year of their visitation." (verses 21-23)*

Those who persecute and kill the prophets of God will receive the vengeance of God. God will punish them, and there will be no escape.

## **Chapter 12**

### **Spiritual Leaders that Lead the Flock Astray**

*"Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness." (verse 10)*

Pastors destroyed God's vineyard. Those who should have been nourishing and watering it had instead trampled it under foot. Israel was God's portion. But Israel's spiritual leaders made God's portion a desolate wilderness.

Is this not what is happening in churches in America today? Pastors are leaving the old paths and trying new ways. They are using less of God's word and preaching is shortened to be replaced with other things. Some leaders are taught to be "funny" and "entertaining" in order to attract people to church. The people, who are needy spiritually, are not getting enough food for their growth. People in the church who are shut in or in need are often neglected. The state of the church is very sad indeed.

*"They have made it desolate, and being desolate it mourneth unto me; the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart." (verse 11)*

God's people remain desolate because no one lays it to heart. Will anyone see the plight of America and lay it to heart, before it is too late?

### **Sowing and Reaping**

*"They have sown wheat, but shall reap thorns: they have put themselves to pain, but shall not profit: and they shall be ashamed of your revenues because of the fierce anger of the LORD." (verse 13)*

The people will not prosper. They will work hard but lose what they have worked for and be ashamed. Why? Because of the fierce anger of the LORD. God is bringing judgment. Crops and goods and riches are of no worth when the judgment of God comes.

*"<sup>14</sup>Thus saith the LORD against all mine evil neighbours, that touch the inheritance which I have caused my people Israel to inherit; Behold, I will pluck them out of their land, and pluck out the house of Judah from among them. <sup>15</sup>And it shall come to pass, after that I have plucked them out I will return, and have compassion on them, and will bring them again, every man to his heritage, and every man to his land." (verses 14,15)*

It may look like the evil are powerful and prosperous, but God will one day pluck them out of the land. God will have compassion on His people and bring them back to their land and their heritage once again. Those who persecute and hurt God's people will be punished.

*"And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, The LORD liveth; as they taught my people to swear by Baal; then shall they be built in the midst of my people." (verse 16)*

Those who diligently learn God's way and swear by His name and leave their own gods and not follow them, will be built up with God's people. God's salvation is open for all.

*"But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, saith the LORD." (verse 17)*

God will destroy the nations that disobey. *"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and **all** the nations that forget God."* (Psalm 9:17, emphasis added)

Consider these things:

In 2012, [Ishwar Singh](#) became the first Sikh in US History to offer the opening prayer at the Republican National Convention.

In the most recent election, the founder for "Muslims for Trump" offered a benediction at the RNC, and a Sikh woman from California, Harmeet Dhillon, vice chair of the California Republican Party, also offered a prayer to Waheguru at the convention. While she prayed, many in the room bowed their heads and closed their eyes. That is a sign of humility and reverence. They were, by their actions, joining in her prayer to a false god. More information can be found [here](#).

Recently, in Greenville, NC, a councilman invited Shaik Fazailahmed of the Islamic Center of Eastern North Carolina to pray at their meeting. He prayed and recited and chanted

prayers in Arabic. Two people were bold enough to stand up and say something about it. Read more about it [here](#).

Many Americans trust in our government and cry to the government to meet their needs. Judge Andrew Napalitano asks, "What if the government-as-god has set itself up as providing for all secular needs in return for fidelity to it? What if this seductive offer has been accepted by millions in America?... What if Jesus came to set us free from the yoke of government oppression and the chains of personal sin?" Judge Napalitano also [asks many other thought provoking questions](#), to which Americans, especially Christian Americans, would do well to take heed.

Think about it. Have we forgotten God? With prayers to Allah, prayers to a Sikh deity and trust in our own government to provide our needs instead of in God, it looks like we are well on our way to forgetting that we even need God. Are we not we afraid yet?

## **Chapter 13**

### **Pride Brought Down**

*"<sup>9</sup>Thus saith the LORD, After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem. <sup>10</sup>This evil people, which refuse to hear my words, which walk in the imagination of their heart, and walk after other gods, to serve them, and to worship them, shall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing." (verses 9,10)*

God will bring down pride.

What are signs of pride in our lives?

Refusing to hear God's word

Walking in our own ways instead of God's, walking after the imagination of our own heart, leaning unto our own understanding instead of trusting in the Lord with all our heart

Walking after other gods (considering other people or things in our life more important than God)

### **A People for His Name, His Praise, and His Glory**

*"For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith the LORD; that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory: but they would not hear." (verse 11)*

God wanted Israel and Judah to be His own, but they would not hear. God wants His people to cleave to Him. He wants them to be to Him a people for His name, His praise, and His glory. God was sad that Israel and Judah would not hear and His name would not be glorified. What about His people today? Are we cleaving to Him so that we will be a people for His name, a people to bring Him praise and glory? Or have we also closed our ears so that we will not hear?

### **Division and Turmoil**

*"Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings that sit upon David's throne, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with drunkenness. <sup>14</sup>And I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together, saith the LORD: I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them."* (verses 13b and 14)

Civil unrest? Civil war? Turmoil and division and self-destruction.

Look around America today? What do we see? Unrest. Division. Everyone blaming each other for their problems. Prejudice. Fighting, murders, and more. What causes this? Pride. And the result of pride is self-destruction as a people. *"<sup>1</sup>From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? <sup>2</sup>Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. <sup>3</sup>Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. <sup>4</sup>Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."* (James 4:1-4) If God spared not His own people Israel, do we expect He will spare us?

### **Humble Yourselves and Give God the Glory**

*"<sup>15</sup>Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the LORD hath spoken. <sup>16</sup>Give glory to the LORD your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness."* (verses 15,16)

Humble yourselves and give God the glory before it is too late, before all light is taken away and there is no hope.

*"But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD's flock is carried away captive."(verse 17)*

But, if you will not hear, the Lord's flock, the Lord's people will be taken away. God will weep for the hurt of His people, but He will not spare.

*"Say unto the king and to the queen, Humble yourselves, sit down: for your principalities shall come down, even the crown of your glory." (Jeremiah 13:18)*

The plea for the people to humble themselves is even for the king and queen. No one will escape the judgment if he or she continues in their sin.

*"Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock? <sup>21</sup>What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee? for thou hast taught them to be captains, and as chief over thee: shall not sorrows take thee, as a woman in travail?" (verses 20b,21)*

Though the king be great and powerful and teach all those under him to be captains and chiefs, yet none shall escape the judgment of God. The king will see his flock, his beautiful flock that he has nurtured and trained, taken from him and there will be only sorrow and pain.

*"And if thou say in thine heart, Wherefore come these things upon me? For the greatness of thine iniquity are thy skirts discovered, and thy heels made bare." (verse 22)*

And why has this happened? Because of the greatness of the king's and queen's iniquity and the iniquity of all the people.

*"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." (verse 23)*

Just as the Ethiopian cannot change his skin, and the leopards cannot remove their spots, those who are accustomed to doing evil cannot do good. They cannot change themselves because it is only in them to do evil. No change will come without humbling and repentance and a change of heart that comes from God alone.

*"<sup>24</sup>Therefore will I scatter them as the stubble that passeth away by the wind of the wilderness. <sup>25</sup>This is thy lot, the portion of thy measures from me, saith the LORD; because thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood." (verses 24,25)*

If we trust in falsehood, we will surely come to trouble. No matter how powerful our king or ruler of our nation is, no matter how good our military, police, response teams, and emergency personnel may be, they have no power to help without the power of God. Once we have forgotten God, we have no true strength to depend upon. The things wherein we trust, and our own power and organization and wisdom will but fail. And we will receive the portion due us because of our sin.

*"I have seen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, and thine abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?" (verse 27)*

God has seen.

God saw the adulteries, the flirting and going after other men's wives, the lewdness and the abominations.

Yet, He called to Jerusalem to be made clean.

Today, His patient hand and heart are stretched out still, calling to America to be made clean.

## **Chapter 14**

### **The Price of Sin**

*"The ground is chapt, for there was no rain in the earth, the plowmen were ashamed, they covered their heads." (verse 4; See also verses 1-3)*

God had sent a drought because of the sin of His people. There was mourning and thirst. Crops were destroyed. Crops would not even grow, and the plowmen could not plow the ground because it was all dry and cracked.

*"<sup>5</sup>Yea, the hind also calved in the field, and forsook it, because there was no grass. <sup>6</sup>And the wild asses did stand in the high places, they snuffed up the wind like dragons; their eyes did fail, because there was no grass." (verses 5,6)*

The animals languished. Even the wild beasts suffered because there was no grass.

*"O LORD, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake: for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee." (verse 7)*



Oh, the price of sin! What grief and loss it brings! Israel's backslidings were many and they had sinned against God. Now, they were suffering loss.

*"<sup>8</sup>O the hope of Israel, the saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night? <sup>9</sup>Why shouldest thou be as a man astonished, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet thou, O LORD, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not." (verses 8,9)*

God was Israel's hope and savior, but He seemed strange to them and far away. The trouble was that they had forsaken God and gone from Him. The LORD was still in their midst. They were still called by His name, still known as God's people; but He was as a stranger to them because they had turned aside to their own way and were reaping the consequences of their own actions.

*"Thus saith the LORD unto this people, Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the LORD doth not accept them; he will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins." (verse 10)*

If there is no repentance, there will be judgment for sin.

*"When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence." (verse 12)*

When His people prayed to Him, God would not hear. Neither would He accept their sacrifices, offerings, or fasts because their worship and sacrifices and offerings did not come from a true heart. They were only for outward show.

### **The Prophets Lied and the People Believed the Lies**

*"<sup>13</sup>Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, the prophets say unto them, Ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine; but I will give you assured peace in this place. <sup>14</sup>Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart." (verses 13,14)*

The prophets told the people that they would not be judged for their sins. They lied to the people and told them the deceit of their heart rather than the truth of God's word.

Take a quick look at youtube. Try to find some videos of preaching and spiritual things. How many do you see of people claiming to have visions and revelations from God and deceiving the people with their own dreams and imaginations? There is very little of real truth even though the opportunity to present it is there. Why? Because many spiritual leaders do not know God, and they can only teach the imaginations of their own hearts. They can only teach lies, and people gladly believe them.

*"Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land; By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed." (verse 15)*

The prophets that prophesy lies will be consumed by the very judgments they say will not come upon the people.

*"And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; and they shall have none to bury them, them, their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters: for I will pour their wickedness upon them." (verse 16)*

And the people to whom the prophets prophesied will suffer and be destroyed as well because they have chosen to believe the lies taught by their false prophets.

### **God and Jeremiah Weep**

*"Therefore thou shalt say this word unto them; Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease: for the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow." (verse 17)*

Therefore, the heart of God and the heart of Jeremiah were filled with grief because of the great trouble of God's people.

*"If I go forth into the field, then behold the slain with the sword! and if I enter into the city, then behold them that are sick with famine! yea, both the prophet and the priest go about into a land that they know not." (verse 18)*

Both in the country and in the city there was great destruction among God's people, and their spiritual leaders were taken into captivity.

*"Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? hath thy soul loathed Zion? why hast thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us? we looked for peace, and there is no good; and for the time of healing, and behold trouble!" (verse 19)*

There was no healing, no peace, and no good; only trouble. That is often the case when we decide to do our own thing and go our own way. In one of the Rescue 911 videos, a teenage boy and some friends went and bought some Butane. They inhaled this gas, replacing the oxygen in their lungs, and this gas made them "high." One boy inhaled too much. He had chosen his own way, he had done something foolish. This boy did get medical care but it did not help. His actions had already done the damage; his choice had already brought about the consequences, and he died. There was no healing for him, only trouble. He died due to the consequences of his own actions. There was no peace for his parents, only trouble and loss and heartache.

### **The Remedy**

Thankfully, there is a remedy for sin, even if we **are** in very bad condition and about to die.

*"<sup>20</sup>We acknowledge, O LORD, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers: for we have sinned against thee. <sup>21</sup>Do not abhor us, for thy name's sake, do not disgrace the throne of thy glory: remember, break not thy covenant with us. <sup>22</sup>Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? art not thou he, O LORD our God? therefore we will wait upon thee: for thou hast made all these things." (verses 20-22)*

The only remedy:

Acknowledging they had sinned

Repentance

Imploring God's mercy

Desiring glory for God's name and not their own

Acknowledging that there is no other god and that God only has power over nature and can give rain and preserve His people

### **Chapter 15**

#### **Loss from Sin and the Judgment of God**

*"<sup>6</sup>Thou hast forsaken me, saith the LORD, thou art gone backward: therefore will I stretch out my hand against thee, and destroy thee; I am weary with repenting. <sup>7</sup>And I will fan them with a fan in the gates of the land; I will bereave them of children, I will destroy my people, since they return not from their ways." (verses 6,7)*

God had mercy over and over again on His people. Yet, they continued to forsake Him and go backward. Finally, there came a day when God's hand of judgment would no longer be stayed because God's people would not return from their wicked ways.

Should this not make us fear because of our sins and also fear God? He has had mercy on America over and over and over again. But there will come a day when God will no longer stay His hand of judgment, and God's judgment will fall.

*"<sup>8</sup>Their widows are increased to me above the sand of the seas: I have brought upon them against the mother of the young men a spoiler at noonday: I have caused him to fall upon it suddenly, and terrors upon the city. <sup>9</sup>She that hath borne seven languisheth: she hath given up the ghost; her sun is gone down while it was yet day: she hath been ashamed and confounded: and the residue of them will I deliver to the sword before their enemies, saith the LORD." (verses 8,9)*

As a result of the sin of the people, the LORD allowed the enemy to come in and cause terror throughout the city. Women were left bereaved of their husbands and children and were ashamed and confused and frightened. Even so, the end of punishment was not yet, for many more were to be delivered into the hands of the enemy.

*"<sup>13</sup>Thy substance and thy treasures will I give to the spoil without price, and that for all thy sins, even in all thy borders. <sup>14</sup>And I will make thee to pass with thine enemies into a land which thou knowest not: for a fire is kindled in mine anger, which shall burn upon you." (verses 13,14)*

How great and how devastating is the price of sin! It results in the loss of substance, riches, land, country, and things which are familiar. It results in constant toil and fear.

Let us take warning and consider. Is this a price we want to pay for a few fleeting moments of pleasure?

## **Jeremiah Stands Alone**

*"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts." (verse 16)*

While others closed their ears to God's words and refused to hear or heed them, Jeremiah rejoiced in them. They were like food for his longing soul and joy to his aching heart. Jeremiah was encouraged because He was called by God's name, by the name of the LORD God of hosts. What a treasure!

And we who know Christ have this same treasure. God's words should be food for us, satisfaction for our longing soul, and joy for our hearts. Let us read and heed and love and eat of God's word while we have the opportunity. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom." (Colossians 3:16a)

*"I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand: for thou hast filled me with indignation." (verse 17)*

Jeremiah stood for the truth, and he stood alone. This caused him pain and rejection, but he stood anyway.

## **Jeremiah Feels Like God Has Deceived Him and Forsaken Him; but God Assures Jeremiah that He is Always with Him and Will Defend Him**

*"<sup>18</sup>Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed? wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail? <sup>19</sup>Therefore thus saith the LORD, If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them. <sup>20</sup>And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brasen wall: and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the LORD. <sup>21</sup>And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible." (verses 18-21)*

Jeremiah felt like the Lord had lied to him and abandoned him; but God reassured Jeremiah that He was with him and would protect him and would fight for him and save him. Though Jeremiah felt alone, the Lord would never leave him.

## **Chapter 16**

### **God Withdraws His Peace, Lovingkindness, and Mercy**

*"For thus saith the LORD, Enter not into the house of mourning, neither go to lament nor bemoan them: for I have taken away my peace from this people, saith the LORD, even lovingkindness and mercies." (verse 5)*

Because of the sin of the people, God had taken away His peace, His lovingkindness, and His mercies.

*"<sup>8</sup>Thou shalt not also go into the house of feasting, to sit with them to eat and to drink. <sup>9</sup>For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will cause to cease out of this place in your eyes, and in your days, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride." (verses 8,9)*

Because of the sin of the people, God would take away mirth, gladness, and the voice of the bridegroom and bride. There would be no more rejoicing.

### **Why Had All This Evil Come?**

*"<sup>10</sup>And it shall come to pass, when thou shalt shew this people all these words, and they shall say unto thee, Wherefore hath the LORD pronounced all this great evil against us? or what is our iniquity? or what is our sin that we have committed against the LORD our God? <sup>11</sup>Then shalt thou say unto them, Because your fathers have forsaken me, saith the LORD, and have walked after other gods, and have served them, and have worshipped them, and have forsaken me, and have not kept my law; <sup>12</sup>And ye have done worse than your fathers; for, behold, ye walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto me:" (verses 10-12)*

Why had all this evil come upon God's people? Because their fathers had forsaken the LORD and walked after other gods and worshipped them. Their fathers had forsaken God and not kept His law. Now the people had done worse than their fathers and were walking in the evil imaginations of their own heart. They were willfully going their own way so that they would not hearken unto the LORD.

We would do well to examine our own hearts. Is our worship and spiritual activity really out of a heart of love and service for the Lord? Or do we do it just as something to do each day and week? Are we serving God with our mouth but following after our own evil imaginations with our heart?

## **Sin Cannot Be Hidden from God**

*"<sup>16</sup>Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the LORD, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks. <sup>17</sup>For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes." (verses 16,17)*

Sin cannot be hidden from God.

*"And first I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double; because they have defiled my land, they have filled mine inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable and abominable things." (verse 18)*

The land was defiled and God's inheritance was filled with detestable and abominable things. Therefore, God would punish their sin and they would reap double for the iniquity and sin that they had sown.

## **A Hiding Place in the Time of Trouble**

*"O LORD, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction...." (verse 19a)*

In the midst of all this turmoil and punishment for sins and the evil that had come upon the land, Jeremiah found the LORD to be his strength, fortress, and refuge. For God's faithful children, there is always a hiding place and refuge.

## **God is the True God and His Name is The LORD**

*"The Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit. <sup>20</sup>Shall a man make gods unto himself, and they are no gods? <sup>21</sup>Therefore, behold, I will this once cause them to know, I will cause them to know mine hand and my might; and they shall know that my name is The LORD." (verses 19b-21)*

God would do mighty works that would cause people to wonder. Even the Gentiles would come and see. And they would know that God is the true God and that His name is The LORD.

## **Chapter 17**

### **God's Heart Broken Because His Holy Places Were Defiled**

*"<sup>1</sup>The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars; <sup>2</sup>Whilst their children remember their altars and their groves by the green trees upon the high hills." (verses 1,2)*

The sin of Judah was not hidden but was evident everywhere -- in their heart, on their altars (places of worship and sacrifice). Their children remembered the altars and groves in the high hills -- the places of the worship of false gods. Sin was everywhere!

*"<sup>3</sup>O my mountain in the field, I will give thy substance and all thy treasures to the spoil, and thy high places for sin, throughout all thy borders. <sup>4</sup>And thou, even thyself, shalt discontinue from thine heritage that I gave thee; and I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in the land which thou knowest not: for ye have kindled a fire in mine anger, which shall burn for ever. " (verses 3,4)*

How broken God's heart was that His holy places were defiled, that the high places were dedicated to sin! Therefore He would punish. They had kindled the fire of God's anger, a fire that could not be put out.

### **Trust in Man is Futile: The LORD is Our Hope**

*"<sup>5</sup>Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. <sup>6</sup>For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited." (verses 5,6)*

Trust in man is futile. It brings only a curse. There is no power in the arm of man, and the person who trusts in man will not see when good comes.

*"<sup>7</sup>Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. <sup>8</sup>For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." (verses 7,8)*

On the other hand, the person who trusts in the LORD will be blessed. The LORD is his hope. He will be like a tree planted by the waters, a tree that spreads its roots by the



ivers. The person who trusts in man will not see when good comes. On the other hand, the person who trusts in the LORD will not see when heat comes. Instead of withering in the heat, that person will be like a tree with green leaves, a well-watered tree in the time of drought. And, that person will not cease from yielding fruit.

### **Who Can Know the Heart of Man?**

*"<sup>9</sup>The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? <sup>10</sup>I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." (verses 9,10)*

The heart is so deceitful and desperately wicked, we cannot even know our own hearts. There is One who does know our hearts - the LORD Himself. He searches the heart. He tries the motives of our inmost being. He sees what is inside and deals with us according to our ways and according to the fruit of our doings, that is, according to what we do because of what is in our heart.

*"<sup>23</sup>Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: <sup>24</sup>And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." (Psalm 139:23,24)*

### **Wealth Gotten the Wrong Way**

*"As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool." (verse 12)*

Gambling, get rich quick schemes, money making scams -- these may seem to produce riches and a fun time, but it will only last for a while. In the end, these riches will leave them and fly away and the one who got his wealth not by right will look like a fool instead. This is very sad. It is much more important to fear God and seek the true riches with an honest heart.

### **No Refreshment for Those Who Forsake God**

*"<sup>13</sup>O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters." (verse 13)*

There will be loss of hope to those who forsake the LORD and no refreshment of the weary soul for those who forsake the fountain of living waters.

### **Healing and Hope for Those Who Trust in the LORD and Follow Him**

*"<sup>14</sup>Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise. <sup>15</sup>Behold, they say unto me, Where is the word of the LORD? let it come now. <sup>16</sup>As for me, I have not hastened from being a pastor to follow thee: neither have I desired the woeful day; thou knowest: that which came out of my lips was right before thee. <sup>17</sup>Be not a terror unto me: thou art my hope in the day of evil." (verses 14-17)*

Jeremiah was a faithful spiritual leader to the people of Judah. The LORD was his Healer and his hope, even while the people mocked him and evil was at every hand. Jeremiah knew he had spoken right, and therefore he could be sure that God was his hope.

The LORD will be the hope for all those who follow Him faithfully and speak right and trust in Him.

*"Let them be confounded that persecute me, but let not me be confounded: let them be dismayed, but let not me be dismayed: bring upon them the day of evil, and destroy them with double destruction." (verse 18)*

Those who persecute the servants of God will be ashamed, dismayed, and destroyed.

### **Take Time for Rest, Holiness, and Worship**

*"<sup>21</sup>Thus saith the LORD; Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; <sup>22</sup>Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers. <sup>23</sup>But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction." (verses 21-23)*

God had set aside time for rest, holiness, and worship. He commanded the people to keep and observe this time, but they would not obey. Rest, holiness, and worship are very important to God and we should be sure to keep the time set aside for those things.

*"<sup>24</sup>And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the LORD, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein; <sup>25</sup>Then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and*

*princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and this city shall remain for ever. <sup>26</sup>And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south, bringing burnt offerings, and sacrifices, and meat offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise, unto the house of the LORD." (verses 24-26)*

God promised blessing if the time of rest, holiness, and worship was kept and observed. The nation would prosper and sacrifices, burnt offerings, and sacrifices of praise and incense (picture of prayers and communion with God) would be in God's house.

*"But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched." (verse 27)*

But, if the people would not keep the time of rest, holiness, and worship; then the fire of God's anger would be kindled and it would destroy in Jerusalem and it would not be quenched.

## **Chapter 18**

### **A Vessel Molded by God**

*"<sup>1</sup>The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, <sup>2</sup>Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. <sup>3</sup>Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. <sup>4</sup>And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. <sup>5</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, <sup>6</sup>O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel." (verses 1-6)*

God wanted to take the house of Israel and make them over anew into a good vessel. And He longs to do the same for each of us. Shall we not let him have His way with us?

### **God's Compassion and Mercy on the Nations**

*"<sup>7</sup>At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; <sup>8</sup>If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. <sup>9</sup>And at what*

*instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; <sup>10</sup>If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them."* (verses 7-10)

God's compassions and judgments extend not only to Israel, but to all nations. If God pronounces judgment on a nation, and that nation repents and turns from their evil ways, God will withdraw His hand of judgment.

If God pronounces good upon a nation, and they continue to do evil in His sight and will not obey His voice, then He will not do the good He had planned to do for them but will bring judgment on them instead.

*"Now therefore go to, speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good."* (verse 11)

Considering that God would judge those nations that do not repent and have mercy on those nations that do repent, God called out to the people of Judah and Jerusalem and urged them to repent and put away their evil deeds and make their ways and doings good.

### **Refusing to Repent**

*"<sup>12</sup>And they said, There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart. <sup>13</sup>Therefore thus saith the LORD; Ask ye now among the heathen, who hath heard such things: the virgin of Israel hath done a very horrible thing."* (verses 12,13)

But the people of Judah and Jerusalem and Israel refused to repent. Though they knew there was no hope, they determined to walk after the way that they devised and after the imaginations of their own heart. The heathen do not change their gods or walk contrary to what their religion tells them to do. Israel became worse than the heathen and turned its back on God and went on in their own way.

*"<sup>14</sup>Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon which cometh from the rock of the field? or shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken? <sup>15</sup>Because my people hath forgotten me, they have burned incense to vanity, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths, in a way not cast*

*up; <sup>16</sup>To make their land desolate, and a perpetual hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished, and wag his head."* (verses 14-16)

People would not reject the refreshment of cold water when they were weary. But God's people forsook Him, their fountain of living waters, their spiritual refreshment from the weary way. They forsook the ancient paths and said, "We need a new and different way." They went along a way not tried before. But this way is not God's way, and it leads only to trouble. The land would become desolate so that all who went by and saw it would be astonished.

Are our churches doing the same thing? Are we leaving the old paths and trying new things because we think that is what people will like? Are we saying that maybe the old ways will not work anymore, so we should try new ways? Look at our churches. Are they getting stronger and more faithful and truer to the word of God? Why or why not?

*"I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy; I will shew them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity."* (verse 17)

Because God's people forsook Him and forsook the old paths and made their own way, God would withdraw His hand of protection from them, and they would have no strength against the enemy. When the day of their calamity would come, God would turn His back to them because they had turned their back to Him. What about our churches? Are they strong? Can they resist the enemy (the devil) and the forces of evil? Do we still have the power we used to have? Why or why not?

*"Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words."* (verse 18)

The people refused to believe Jeremiah's word. They did not want to believe that the prophets would prophesy false things and that the word of God would no more be with them or the law with the priest. Because the people did not want to believe Jeremiah, God's servant, they devised ways to persecute him.

It is the same today. People often do not want to believe the man of God. They refuse to hear. Because they will not believe, they persecute him. However, persecuting God's man will not keep God's judgment from coming.

## **Chapter 19**

### **Offering Children to Other Gods**

*"Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle. <sup>4</sup>Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents; <sup>5</sup>They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind: <sup>6</sup>Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but The valley of slaughter." (verses 3a-6)*

- God would bring evil on Judah and Jerusalem because
- They had forsaken Him
- They had gone after Baal and burned incense to him
- They had offered their children in the fire to other gods, something that God had never commanded, neither did it come into His mind.

America, what about our children? Oh, we don't literally throw them in the fire; but do we not leave them to "educators" that teach wrong things; or to be "babysat" by the TV and movies and the morals and ethics of Hollywood? Do we let them fill their minds and time with things that are for pleasure only and things that are of no profit, with things of the world? It is OK to do fun things, but pleasure should not be the goal in life. It should not be what fills the mind. The word of God should be what fills the mind and heart. The world is going to hell, and we do not want our children to go there with it. <sup>15</sup>Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup>For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. <sup>17</sup>And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (I John 2:15-17) Let us help our children give themselves to eternal things rather than setting their minds on temporary things.

### **God Will Make Void the Counsel of Those Who Reject Him**

*"<sup>7</sup>And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place; and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hands of them that seek their lives: and their carcasses will I give to be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth. <sup>8</sup>And I will make this city desolate, and an hissing; every one that*

*passeth thereby shall be astonished and hiss because of all the plagues thereof."* (verses 7,8)

All the wonderful counsel the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem would take to keep the people safe would fail. God would make their counsel void. No earthly counsel or might or wisdom can overcome the judgment of God.

*"<sup>14</sup>Then came Jeremiah from Tophet, whither the LORD had sent him to prophesy; and he stood in the court of the LORD's house; and said to all the people, <sup>15</sup>Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon this city and upon all her towns all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words."* (verses 14,15)

God would bring evil upon the city and all its towns. Why?  
Because they had hardened their necks  
They refused to hear God's words.

They chose the wrong way, and now they must reap the consequences of their choice.

## **Chapter 20**

### **Punishment of the False Prophet**

*"<sup>2</sup>Then Pashur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the high gate of Benjamin, which was by the house of the LORD. <sup>3</sup>And it came to pass on the morrow, that Pashur brought forth Jeremiah out of the stocks. Then said Jeremiah unto him, The LORD hath not called thy name Pashur, but Magormissabib. <sup>4</sup>For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends: and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and thine eyes shall behold it: and I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive into Babylon, and shall slay them with the sword. <sup>5</sup>Moreover I will deliver all the strength of this city, and all the labours thereof, and all the precious things thereof, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah will I give into the hand of their enemies, which shall spoil them, and take them, and carry them to Babylon. <sup>6</sup>And thou, Pashur, and all that dwell in thine house shall go into captivity: and thou shalt come to Babylon, and there thou shalt die, and shalt be buried there, thou, and all thy friends, to whom thou hast prophesied lies."* (verses 2-6)

Pashur, the false prophet, put Jeremiah in stocks (imprisoned him). When he brought Jeremiah out again, Jeremiah told him that God would bring judgment upon him.

Pashur would become a terror to himself and all his friends.  
His friends would die by the sword, and Pashur would see it.  
Judah would be given into the hand of Babylon and carried away captive by Babylon and many of the people would be slain with the sword.  
All the riches and precious things of the city would be given into the hands of their enemies and carried away to Babylon.  
Pashur and all his house would go into captivity in Babylon.  
Pashur would die in Babylon and all his friends, his followers, to whom Pashur had prophesied lies, would die there as well.

### **Jeremiah Feels that God Let Him Down and Deceived Him**

*"<sup>7</sup>O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me. <sup>8</sup>For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. <sup>9</sup>Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." (verses 7-9)*

Once more Jeremiah felt that the LORD had let him down, that God had deceived him. Jeremiah served the LORD faithfully and pronounced judgment against the people just as God had told him to do. However, nobody repented. All they did was to make Jeremiah a reproach and mock him, and now he was even in prison. He felt that the Lord had not really protected him, like God had promised. But God was with him, even in prison.

Because Jeremiah was upset at God and upset that no one responded to God's word, he decided he would not speak God's word anymore. But he could not keep quiet because God's word was like a fire shut up in his bones. As he tried to keep quiet, he became weary. He could not keep from speaking God's word.

*"<sup>10</sup>For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report, say they, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, saying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him. <sup>11</sup>But the LORD is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten. <sup>12</sup>But, O LORD of hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them: for unto*



*thee have I opened my cause. <sup>13</sup>Sing unto the LORD, praise ye the LORD: for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hand of evildoers."* (Jeremiah 20:10-13)

Jeremiah was defamed by the people. They would watch him very closely to see if he fell or failed in any way. They tried to entice him and prevail against him. If they could cause him to fall, they would take revenge. Jeremiah was afraid at every turn.

However, the LORD was with Jeremiah. Those who persecuted him may have the upper hand now, but they were sure to stumble and fall and be ashamed. They would be confused (or ashamed, dishonored, and reproached), and that confusion would never pass away.

Sing unto the LORD, Jeremiah said, for the LORD had delivered the poor (Jeremiah) from the hand of the evildoers (those that persecuted Jeremiah).

## **Chapter 21**

### **God Will Not Hear the Prayer of Those That Reject Him.**

*"<sup>4</sup>Thus saith the LORD God of Israel; Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands, wherewith ye fight against the king of Babylon, and against the Chaldeans, which besiege you without the walls, and I will assemble them into the midst of this city. <sup>5</sup>And I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath. <sup>6</sup>And I will smite the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast: they shall die of a great pestilence. <sup>7</sup>And afterward, saith the LORD, I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, and his servants, and the people, and such as are left in this city from the pestilence, from the sword, and from the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those that seek their life: and he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy."* (verses 4-7)

King Zedekiah wanted Jeremiah to pray for the LORD to have mercy and turn back the enemies of Judah and Jerusalem and cause Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, to go away from them. However, God would not do so. Instead, God said that He would turn back the weapons of war that the people of Judah and Jerusalem were using to fight against Babylon and against the Chaldeans. God said, "I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in fury and in great wrath." God would smite the inhabitants of the city -- both man and beast, with a great pestilence, and they would die. And those that were left alive would be delivered into

the hand of Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, and would be killed with the sword. He would not spare or have pity or have mercy.

There is no pity or mercy for those who have refused God.

### **The Way of Life and The Way of Death: Choose Life**

*"<sup>8</sup>And unto this people thou shalt say, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death. <sup>9</sup>He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey. <sup>10</sup>For I have set my face against this city for evil, and not for good, saith the LORD: it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire." (verses 8-10)*

God set before the people of Judah and Jerusalem the way of life and the way of death. They could accept the chastisement of the LORD and go into Babylon and live there, and God would preserve them alive. Or they could remain in the city and die because the king of Babylon was going to destroy the city with fire. If the people continued to walk in their own willful way and refuse to obey God, then God would not keep them alive. This is the same as if they had chosen death.

In the same way, God calls us today to listen to the way of wisdom. We have the opportunity to hear wise instruction and obey it or to refuse the wise instruction and suffer for it. When we choose to walk in our own way, it always ends in destruction.

*"<sup>32</sup>Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed *are they that* keep my ways. <sup>33</sup>Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. <sup>34</sup>Blessed *is* the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. <sup>35</sup>For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD. <sup>36</sup>But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death." (Proverbs 8:32-35)*

*"<sup>11</sup>And touching the house of the king of Judah, say, Hear ye the word of the LORD; <sup>12</sup>O house of David, thus saith the LORD; Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings." (verses 11,12)*

God gave the king of Judah one more chance to get things right and to execute just judgment and deliver those who were oppressed. If these were not delivered from those who would oppress them, then God would pour out His fury like a fire that could not be quenched because of the evil of the king and his household.

*"<sup>13</sup>Behold, I am against thee, O inhabitant of the valley, and rock of the plain, saith the LORD; which say, Who shall come down against us? or who shall enter into our habitations? <sup>14</sup>But I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings, saith the LORD: and I will kindle a fire in the forest thereof, and it shall devour all things round about it."* (verses 13,14)

God would punish according to the fruit of their doings. It may have seemed like they had gone on in their prosperity for quite a time, but their sin was not hidden from God. The wages of sin is death, always; and our sin always finds us out.

## **Chapter 22**

### **The Opportunity to Repent and Do Right**

*"<sup>3</sup>Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place. <sup>4</sup>For if ye do this thing indeed, then shall there enter in by the gates of this house kings sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, he, and his servants, and his people."* (verses 3,4)

As God was talking to the king of Judah and giving the king another opportunity to make things right, God told the king several things he needed to do:

#### **1. Execute judgment and righteousness**

There were some people who had done wrong that needed to be judged.

There were some people who had done right that needed help and needed righteous action on their behalf.

#### **2. Do no wrong**

#### **3. Do no violence to the stranger**

God had given Israel special commands about the stranger before the Israelites even entered the promised land.

*"<sup>33</sup>And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. <sup>34</sup>But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God."* (Leviticus 33,34) The children of Israel were to (a.) not vex the stranger, that is not maltreat or be proud against him or destroy him, and (b.) do no violence against the

stranger, and (c.) They were to love the stranger **as themselves**. Why? Because they had once been strangers in the land of Egypt. They knew what it was like to be oppressed, to have others be proud rulers over them, to have violence done against them, and to have someone trying to destroy them. They were not to do this to the stranger.

When our forefathers came to America, it was to seek freedom. They faced many hardships, but in one place they were helped by Native Americans, helped to plant gardens properly and so forth. There was a good relationship between them for a while. Then came difficulty and famine, and the good relationship fell apart. The fault was on both sides. However, the strangers, those who had come into this new world from another country, eventually gained the upper hand. Then we oppressed the people of this land because now we were stronger.

Since that time, we have offered refuge to millions of people from other lands. But sometimes we have oppressed them too. There were times when we allowed many people from Mexico to come in, usually times when we needed some extra labor. But when they started doing well and we were afraid they would take jobs from our own people, or we simply no longer needed them, we tried to send them back.

As a country, we have also oppressed some others who tried to get in. I once knew of (and met) a woman who had come to this country. Things were better here and she did not want to go back to her own country. Her visa had run out, so she was trying very hard to find a way to stay here. She had friends who were helping her, but they could not find a legal way for her to stay here. She was told she would have to get married. An interesting thing this woman told us was that some others from her country had come in as well. They also did not want to go back home. However, they had a lot of money. They were able to pay some money to get paperwork to stay legally here in America. But those who did not have a lot of money were not able to stay. Officials also told this woman that she could stay as long as she was a productive member of society. However, she was not permitted to get a job, not even as a worker in someone's house. If anyone paid her to do housework for them, those people could get in trouble too. She could stay if she was a productive member of society, but she was not permitted to be a productive member of society.

I know of others who have attempted to stay here legally and have gone through the right channels. But they have only been frustrated. Others who have high positions or lots of money have been granted their papers. What happened to "give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free"? What happened to being a refuge for the homeless and tempest tossed? When these people had demonstrated that they were willing to work hard to be here, they were still denied. It was easier to

take money and serve those they thought would "benefit" them, but did we look at character or at dollar signs? America also needs to take heed as to how we treat the stranger. Of course we need to make sure they have clean backgrounds and they really need to be here for a good reason. Sadly, even in this area, there is much corruption, and money speaks louder than need. The children of Israel were to have the same laws for the stranger as for themselves. The strangers were not to be oppressed or to be given special privileges or to be let off if they did not obey the law.

Not only is the stranger sometimes oppressed here in America, but there have been terrible name callings and unfounded accusations and many other such things against strangers by those who claim the name of Christ. Perhaps some of these strangers should not be here, but their presence gives us an opportunity to reach them with the gospel; and we cannot reach them if we mistreat them. There are pockets in the US where thousands of people of particular ethnic backgrounds live in one place. Many of these groups of people are completely unreached, completely unengaged with the gospel or ministry work. We have the world at our doorstep and an opportunity to reach people from all over the globe with the gospel. That opportunity is right out our back door. Why have we not done anything with it?

Our forefathers came here as strangers to have the opportunity to freely worship God without oppression. Why are we allowing thousands, perhaps millions of strangers to be here without trying to reach them with the wonderful news of how they can come to worship this God in whom we trust? Shouldn't we be ashamed? We can show them the God who can deliver them from oppression, but do we? Will we? Who will begin the work?

4. Do no violence to the fatherless or widow. Use just and righteous judgment for their help.

There are many fatherless and widows in this country. Yet, they are often ignored and neglected. They are often pushed to the background or even taken advantage of because they do not have much money and are not always able to take care of and defend themselves. We really should be finding ways that they can be taken care of, and we should be coming to their defense. How have we done this as a nation?

5. Do not shed innocent blood

How guilty America is of that -- even if we only counted the millions of babies slaughtered in the name of abortion each year.

Like the king of Judah, we have the opportunity to repent and to stop doing all these wrong things and to do right. Will we take advantage of that opportunity?

*"<sup>5</sup>But if ye will not hear these words, I swear by myself, saith the LORD, that this house shall become a desolation. <sup>6</sup>For thus saith the LORD unto the king's house of Judah; Thou art Gilead unto me, and the head of Lebanon: yet surely I will make thee a wilderness, and cities which are not inhabited. <sup>7</sup>And I will prepare destroyers against thee, every one with his weapons: and they shall cut down thy choice cedars, and cast them into the fire." (verses 5-7)*

While there would be blessings for doing right, there would be judgment and destruction for doing wrong. God would take the king's house and also rich and prosperous Judah and Jerusalem and make it a desolation, a wilderness, uninhabited, and they would have no power against the enemy. The enemy would come in against them and destroy their beautiful trees with fire.

If this was the judgment against God's chosen people, what can we expect for ourselves if we do not do right?

*"<sup>8</sup>And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every man to his neighbour, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this great city? <sup>9</sup>Then they shall answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God, and worshipped other gods, and served them." (verses 8,9)*

When other nations would go by and see the destruction of Jerusalem, they would know that God had destroyed it because the people had forsaken the LORD and had gone after other gods and worshipped and served those other gods.

If America is destroyed, will people remember our history. Will they go by and look and say, "What happened to this land?" And then answer, "They forsook the Lord their God and followed other gods, so God destroyed them."?

*"Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him: but weep sore for him that goeth away: for he shall return no more, nor see his native country." (verse 10)*

There were some that were killed. God said, Weep not for them. But there were some that would go away into captivity and return no more to their native country. Weep for them. They would never see their homeland again.

There are many in this country who disgrace our flag, despise our leadership, rebel against authority, and have swallowed the lie that they are oppressed and troubled in this country and that things would be better elsewhere. They may find themselves one day in another country. Things will not be better. There they will truly be oppressed and troubled, and they will not be able to speak out about it. There will be no speaking against authority. They will long to return home but will never see their own country again.

If you see trouble and problems in the country, you may not be able to change others or change leadership; but, with God's help, you can start with you. Allow God to change you and make a new you. Instead of rebelling and fighting against something you cannot change, begin to be the change you want to see in this country. Instead of tearing down what is left, begin to build up what remains so that it is good and useful again. You may be amazed what God will do with the things over which you have no control.

### **The High Cost of Building Homes (and nations) by Unrighteousness**

*"<sup>13</sup>Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work; <sup>14</sup>That saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and it is cieled with cedar, and painted with vermilion.<sup>15</sup>Shalt thou reign, because thou closest thyself in cedar?" (verses 13-15a)*

Shallum, the son of king Josiah, built his house by unrighteousness. He was ruler over the people, but he did not do right. He made the people serve him without wages and work hard while he stayed in a wide house with large rooms and lots of windows. The house was brightly painted and ceiled with cedar. The people served without wages, while he lived in luxury. God says, "Woe unto him."

We do not need to worry about those who rule over us and take advantage of us by their means. God sees what they are doing. He is not impressed with their riches or their greatness, and He says "Woe" unto them. "Woe" means "grief, sorrow, misery, and heavy calamity." (Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, 1913) They may live in luxury and quietness now, but their day of reckoning is coming.

*"Did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him? <sup>16</sup>He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me? saith the LORD." (verses 15a,16)*

King Josiah, Shallum's father, was a righteous king. He was not so much concerned with dwelling in luxury but only took the trouble to make sure he had sufficient food and drink for his needs.

King Josiah was just in judgment and stood up for the cause of the poor and needy. Then it was well with him. Josiah cared first for others, and then God cared for him and he learned to know God. We need righteous rulers like this in our nation. Let us all pray that God will raise up those rulers.

*"<sup>17</sup>But thine eyes and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it. <sup>18</sup>Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! they shall not lament for him, saying, Ah lord! or, Ah his glory! <sup>19</sup>He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem." (verses 17-19)*

Unlike his father Josiah, king Jehoiakim (or king Shallum), did not care first for others. Jehoiakim's eyes were only for covetousness. He did not want to help others but rather shed innocent blood instead. He oppressed people and was violent. Because of this, when he died, no one would miss him. No one would lament for him. He would be buried like a donkey -- just dragged out of the city and cast out beyond the gates of Jerusalem. He lived in glory but would die in shame.

*"<sup>21</sup>I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; but thou saidst, I will not hear. This hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my voice. <sup>22</sup>The wind shall eat up all thy pastors, and thy lovers shall go into captivity: surely then shalt thou be ashamed and confounded for all thy wickedness." (verses 21,22)*

God spoke to Jehoiakim, but he was so full of his riches and would not hear God's voice. He had been rebellious against God since his youth and would not obey God's voice. Jehoiakim thought that he had agreements with other nations and they were standing by him and for him; but these would go into captivity and none would stand up for him, and he would find himself ashamed and confounded. This would come upon him because of all his iniquity.

*"<sup>24</sup>As I live, saith the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence; <sup>25</sup>And I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand of them whose face thou fearest, even into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans. <sup>26</sup>And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another*



*country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die. <sup>27</sup>But to the land whereunto they desire to return, thither shall they not return."* (verses 24-27)

Coniah, the king's son, was apparently a popular man. However, even if Coniah had been the signet on God's right hand, this would not save Jehoiakim. God would pluck him even from there. And God would give him into the hands of those he feared -- Neubuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, and the Chaldeans. Jehoiakim and his mother that bear him would be cast out thence. How they would desire to return home! but they would never return to their native country again.

*"<sup>28</sup>Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not? <sup>29</sup>O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD. <sup>30</sup>Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah."* (verses 28-30)

Coniah may have been popular, but he would be a broken idol. He may have been looked up to, but now he would be like the vessel no one wanted to use. Instead of living in luxury and finery, he would be cast out into a land he did not know. He would also be childless, with no heir to sit upon the throne of David. He would have no heir to rule in Judah.

## **Chapter 23**

### **Woe to the Spiritual Leaders that Destroy the Flock**

*"Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD."* (verse 1)

Woe - grief, sorrow, misery, and heavy calamity to the pastors, the spiritual leaders, that destroy the LORD's sheep. These should be the ones protecting the flock, and yet they are the ones destroying it. Great trouble will come upon them. This was a solemn warning for spiritual leaders in Jeremiah's day. James echoes that warning for spiritual leaders today, "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation." (James 3:1)

Spiritual leaders have the solemn responsibility to lead, feed, and visit the flock. If they lead the flock astray, or fail to provide proper spiritual help and nourishment, they risk a great condemnation. Doing God's work by being the spiritual leaders of God's people is a solemn responsibility.

*"Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD." (verse 2)*

What was it that these pastors, these spiritual leaders, had done that was so bad?

1. They scattered the flock. Instead of drawing them to the LORD, they drove them away.
2. They did not visit them. They neglected the sheep and just let them wander and fend for themselves.
3. They were responsible to feed the sheep. If they did not draw the sheep to the LORD and neglected the sheep and let them wander, then they likely were not making sure the sheep (God's people) were properly fed, or nourished up in the things of the Lord.

This second thing listed here is a common problem in churches today. The preaching and teaching may be good, but sometimes some of the sheep are neglected. There are sheep that cannot come often to church or are sickly or weak (either physically or spiritually), but they are often neglected or left to fend for themselves. Their needs (physical and spiritual) are not met. Thus, an important part of the flock lacks proper tending and care. Oh, how we must take care, lest the next step be that these sheep are scattered and driven away! Then the pastors, the spiritual leaders, will be responsible and this would be very sad. How can we better reach those sheep who are most needy?

*"<sup>3</sup>And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. <sup>4</sup>And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD." (verses 3,4)*

God will punish those shepherds who drive the sheep away. He will go find the sheep and gather them back to Himself, back to their folds. He will cause them to be fruitful and increase. The LORD will set up over them shepherds that feed them, that protect them so they will not be afraid or dismayed, that provide for them so that they will not be lacking. God cares for His sheep.

### **A Wonderful Day is Coming**

*"<sup>5</sup>Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the*

*earth. <sup>6</sup>In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." (verses 5,6)*

A wonderful day is coming in which God will raise up a King for the throne of David. In his days, all Judah and Israel will be saved and dwell in safety. This is the day when THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS will reign.

*"<sup>7</sup>Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; <sup>8</sup>But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land." (verses 7,8)*

The day is coming in which the LORD will gather all of His chosen people, the children of Israel, out of every country and bring them back to live in their own land.

### **A Broken Heart**

*"Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the LORD, and because of the words of his holiness." (verse 9)*

Jeremiah's heart was broken because the prophets of his day despised God's word. They did not follow it or teach it. Jeremiah was very afraid because the LORD is holy; God's words are holy.

In the same way, when we see those who should be ministers of the gospel despising God's word and teaching falsely, our heart should be broken and we should be afraid because God is holy and He will not stand for His holy word to be rejected and abused.

### **Adultery Abounded, Even Among God's People**

*"For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force is not right." (verse 10)*

Look around today. What is happening. People, especially men in leadership, are accused of adultery on every hand. Some of these accusations are false; but people would not believe so many of the false accusations if the accusations against many

others were not true. What kind of example is our Christian leadership setting for the world? What kind of testimony does our Christian leadership bear for Jesus Christ?

*"For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD." (verse 11)*

Even the spiritual leadership was profane, and they brought their uncleanness into God's house. They lived ungodly and unrighteous life styles and brought those lifestyles right into their work of ministry. Right in God's house their wickedness was found.

*"Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil upon them, even the year of their visitation, saith the LORD." (verse 12)*

As the spiritual leaders led the people astray, so will they fall. As they drove God's sheep away, so will they be driven away. As they caused God's sheep to fall and be scattered, they would also fall. God would bring evil upon them and visit them for their sin. It is a fearful thing to be a spiritual leader of God's people and to fall away from God and lead the people away from God. It is a fearful thing, for God will surely judge and punish for it.

*"<sup>13</sup>And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to err. <sup>14</sup>I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah." (verses 13,14)*

The sins of the prophets:

1. They prophesied for other gods
2. They caused Israel to err
3. They committed adultery
4. They walked in lies.
5. Instead of speaking out against evil, they strengthened the hands of those that do evil. Therefore, no one was convicted of sin, and no one repented and turned to God.
6. The prophets became as Sodom and Gomorrah.

Is this not true of our churches in America too? One particular story comes to mind. This is of a pastor who molested a teenage girl. Yes, it was twenty years ago, and he was not a pastor at the time. He was a college student and a youth minister at a church. When the girl complained to another pastor, that pastor told her to keep quiet. During the

incident, the man became remorseful, jumped out of the truck, fell to his knees and cried out to God in shame. However, he also asked the girl not to tell anyone. According to [the post](#), the man's sin was dealt with in a Biblical manner. However, herein lies the problem.

1. He later became a pastor. Although he could still be very much useful for the Lord, it is questionable whether or not he still qualified for the office of pastor.
2. After the incident became public knowledge (20 years later), he confessed it before his church. This was proper. However, instead of dealing with it through mourning over sin and taking time to consider the seriousness of the situation, those who were listening gave him a standing ovation because he admitted his sin.

No! If he was repentant, they should have wept with him and pleaded for God's mercy and help. His sin, nor the confession of it, were matters for clapping and praising him. True, he should not have been treated unkindly, because it takes humility to confess wrongdoing and take responsibility for it. But this also should have been dealt with as a serious matter that affects the purity of the church and of the pastoral office. Who knows how much more of this has taken place in churches, and the profane has not been separated from the holy. Impurity has been allowed in a pure place and a pure office. How very sad!

*"Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets; Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall: for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land." (verse 15)*

Because of the sin and wickedness in the lives of the prophets, God was going to judge them and bring to them bitterness and woe. God saw that the prophets were profane, and that profanity had spread throughout the land.

Today we think of profanity as swearing, taking the Lord's name in vain. However, much more is involved in profanity. It can include acts of unrighteousness and bold, defiant wickedness. It can also mean want or lack of reverence for God, any speech or conduct that is irreverent. Also, it can refer to the secular, that is "common" things being combined with holy things in the service of the Lord -- things of the world, or worldly methods to accomplish a spiritual task. All these things are unacceptable to a holy God.

### **The Prophets Prophesied Deceit, the Thoughts of Their Own Heart, and Lies**

*"<sup>16</sup>Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Harken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not*

*out of the mouth of the LORD. <sup>17</sup>They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you."* (verses 16,17)

Another thing that the prophets did wrong is that they spoke the vision of their own hearts. They did not get their message from the word of the LORD but from their own heart or from visions they had. Look how prevalent this is today. Just scroll through youtube a little bit. See how many say, "Oh, the LORD revealed such and such a thing to me in a dream or vision," but the thing revealed does not line up with the word of God. The vision or dream did not come from God. It either came from the devil or was simply the imagination of their own heart.

Other prophets told the people that judgment would not come. Israel was God's people, so surely they would have peace, and God would not judge them. But that is not what God said. God said He would judge them because they had rejected Him.

*"<sup>18</sup>For who hath stood in the counsel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word, and heard it? <sup>19</sup>Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked. <sup>20</sup>The anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly."* (verses 18-20)

Sadly, because God's people refused to repent and hear God's word, judgment would come. God would pour out grievous judgment in his fury. Then, everyone would know, God had spoken truly, and the prophets had spoken lies.

*"<sup>21</sup>I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. <sup>22</sup>But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings."* (verses 21,22)

The prophets that prophesied these lies were false prophets. God had not sent them, yet they went and prophesied anyway. They convinced people of lies and drew away many people to destruction. God said that if these prophets had stood in His counsel and had caused His people to hear His word, the people would have repented and turned from the evil of their doings. However, the prophets prophesied falsely, and God's people listened to them. They chose to believe lies, and now they would not repent. How very sad!

*"<sup>23</sup>Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off? <sup>24</sup>Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD. <sup>25</sup>I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed." (verses 23-25)*

There is no place where God is not, no place where a person can hide from God. The lies of the prophets were not hidden from God. God heard what they said.

*"<sup>26</sup>How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart; <sup>27</sup>Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal." (verses 26,27)*

The prophets did not prophesy God's word but rather the deceit of their own hearts. They caused people to forget God's name by telling them the dreams they had dreamed and holding up their dreams as equal to God's word. They drew people after their own words and the imagination of their own hearts and away from God.

*"<sup>28</sup>The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD. <sup>29</sup>Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? <sup>30</sup>Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour. <sup>31</sup>Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. <sup>32</sup>Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD." (verses 28-32)*

The spiritual leaders did not profit the people at all. Oh, so very sad! God says, "If they want to tell a dream, let them tell a dream." But God did not want them to say that the dream came from Him, that the dream was God's word, God's revelation. These were false dreams, and the prophets were causing God's people to err by telling them these false dreams. They knew the dreams were not of God, but they treated the matter very lightly. To them it mattered not nor made any difference, as long as the people believed and followed them. Oh, so very sad!

*"<sup>33</sup>And when this people, or the prophet, or a priest, shall ask thee, saying, What is the burden of the LORD? thou shalt then say unto them, What burden? I will even forsake you, saith the LORD. <sup>34</sup>And as for the prophet, and the priest, and the people, that shall say, The burden of the LORD, I will even punish that man and his house. <sup>35</sup>Thus shall ye*

*say every one to his neighbour, and every one to his brother, What hath the LORD answered? and, What hath the LORD spoken? <sup>36</sup>And the burden of the LORD shall ye mention no more: for every man's word shall be his burden; for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the LORD of hosts our God."* (verses 33-36)

People would come to Jeremiah and ask, "What does God say?" But they did not really want to know what God said. When God told them something, they perverted the words of God and tried to make it fit what they wanted it to mean instead. They pretended they were following God's word, but really they were following the devising of their own imaginations. Therefore, their word became a burden to them.

Is not this what many Christians do today? Consider the following scenarios.

1. "We are no longer under the law." Well, yes that is true; but the law is still God's standard and still our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. Christ did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it. God has not changed His mind about what is right and wrong or about His standard of righteousness and holiness. We are not bound by the law but we are set free to live righteously, not set free to use our freedom as a cloak of maliciousness or as an excuse to do our own thing. God's standard and God's holiness has not changed.

(Look at Matthew 5:17-20)

2. "That is what it says, but it really means..."

No. It really means just what it says. Deciding it means something different is simply our excuse to sin.

3. "That was written a long time ago and for a different culture; it does not really mean the same thing now, or it should be applied a different way now."

There are a few cases in which certain commands or ordinances or practices were given specifically for Israel or specifically to a certain group of people. However, God has not changed His mind on what is right or wrong. Neither has He changed His mind on the order of things. He has not changed His mind on the way the church or homes are to operate. He says, "I *am* the LORD, I change not." (Malachi 3:6a) James 1:17 says that God is "the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." With God is no variableness (changeableness). With Him is not even a shadow of turning.

If there is a pattern for things (such as in nature or God's design in nature), if there is an order for things (such as the church or the home), or if there are principles or direct descriptions of right and wrong and godly or ungodly living; these things all reflect God's



character and they do not change because God does not change. When we say, "Oh, that was written for that culture and does not apply to us," it is only our excuse for doing our own thing. We have seen already in this book of Jeremiah what God says about those who do their own thing, and this should cause us to fear God. We should yearn after God and follow His word and His way. That is the way to blessing and life.

Would it not be a sad thing if our own hardness of heart and our attitude toward God's word would be the reason our country would not experience true revival?

## **Chapter 25**

### **Take Heed to God's Messengers**

*"<sup>3</sup>From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day, that is the three and twentieth year, the word of the LORD hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened. <sup>4</sup>And the LORD hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear." (verses 3,4)*

God sent His prophets to the people of Judah and Jerusalem, but they would not hear.

We had better take heed when God sends His messengers to us that we do not harden our hearts as did the people of Judah and Jerusalem. We had better hear and heed.

*"<sup>5</sup>They said, Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that the LORD hath given unto you and to your fathers for ever and ever: <sup>6</sup>And go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke me not to anger with the works of your hands; and I will do you no hurt." (verses 5,6)*

Turn ye, repent. Go not after other gods. Do not provoke God to anger with the works of your hands. Then God will do you no hurt.

True repentance results in the turning away of God's judgment.

*"Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, saith the LORD; that ye might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt." (verse 7)*

Sadly, the people of Jerusalem and Judah paid no heed to God's warning to repent. They went their own way and did the works of their own hands, and they did this to their own hurt.

When we refuse to repent and choose to go our own way, we do so to our own hurt.

*"<sup>8</sup>Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Because ye have not heard my words, <sup>9</sup>Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations." (verses 8,9)*

Because they refused to hear God's words, they would receive judgment. Their enemies would come upon them and would prevail over them. They would, as a nation, have no power against their enemies.

God has blessed America and kept us safe and protected from our enemies. Had we not better listen to God's call of repentance? If God did not withhold judgment from His chosen people, why would He withhold it from us? We had better watch out, or the day may come when we will no longer have any power over our enemies.

*"<sup>10</sup>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 candle. <sup>11</sup>And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years." (verses 10,11)*

Judah and Jerusalem were places of mirth and gladness, of joy and marrying, of light and prosperity. But these things would all be gone when God poured forth His judgment upon them. The consequences of sin are always sorrow and destruction.

America is a place of mirth and gladness, a place of light and prosperity. But all we have could be gone in a moment as well. It was all given to us by God, and He can take it all away. If we continue in our sin, our joy and prosperity could be turned into sorrow and destruction.

*"<sup>12</sup>And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations. <sup>13</sup>And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which*

*Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations... <sup>26</sup>And all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another, and **all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the earth**: and the king of Sheshach shall drink after them. <sup>27</sup>Therefore thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Drink ye, and be drunken, and spue, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you. <sup>28</sup>And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ye shall certainly drink. <sup>29</sup>For, lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the LORD of hosts." (verses 12,13 and 26-29)*

Not only will Judah and Jerusalem be judged, but all nations will be judged for their iniquity. Psalm 9:17 makes it plain, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, **and all the nations that forget God.**"

*"<sup>31</sup>A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the LORD. <sup>32</sup>Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. <sup>33</sup>And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground." (verses 31-33)*

God will plead with all the nations; but sadly, they will reject God and God will give them to the sword and the slain of the Lord will fill the land from one end of the earth to the other. The slain will neither be mourned nor buried.

*"<sup>35</sup>And the shepherds shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to escape. <sup>36</sup>A voice of the cry of the shepherds, and an howling of the principal of the flock, shall be heard: for the LORD hath spoiled their pasture. <sup>37</sup>And the peaceable habitations are cut down because of the fierce anger of the LORD. <sup>38</sup>He hath forsaken his covert, as the lion: for their land is desolate because of the fierceness of the oppressor, and because of his fierce anger." (verses 35-38)*

One day God will judge in fierce anger, and there will be no place to escape. The shepherds, or leaders of the people, will have no place to take their flock (the people of the land) for safety. God will spoil them, even the peaceable places, because of their sin, and there will be no escape.

## **Chapter 26**

### **Speak to the Cities**

*"<sup>2</sup>Thus saith the LORD; Stand in the court of the LORD's house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the LORD's house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word: <sup>3</sup>If so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil, which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings." (verses 2,3)*

Speak to the cities.

Tell them to hearken unto the LORD.

Tell them to turn every man from his evil way. Repentance is individual. Every person must choose for himself to either repent or refuse to hearken unto the LORD.

*"<sup>4</sup>And thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD; If ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you, <sup>5</sup>To hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early, and sending them, but ye have not hearkened; <sup>6</sup>Then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth." (verses 4-6)*

If ye will not hearken --

Disobedient to God's word

Rejecting the prophets

Refusing to hear from the true prophets

Then God would make the house where people came to worship Him and the city a curse.

Blessings come with repentance.

Cursings come with closing the ears and refusing to obey.

*"<sup>7</sup>So the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD. <sup>8</sup>Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded him to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people took him, saying, Thou shalt surely die. <sup>9</sup>Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD. <sup>10</sup>When the princes of Judah heard these things, then they came up from the king's house unto the house of the LORD, and sat*

*down in the entry of the new gate of the LORD's house. <sup>11</sup>Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man is worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears."* (verses 7-11)

The people did not hearken to God's prophet.

The people did not hearken to God's word.

The people persecuted God's prophet and threatened to kill him.

*"<sup>12</sup>Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard. <sup>13</sup>Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you."* (verses 12,13)

Amend your way and obey.

Although the people had closed their ears to God's prophet and to God's word and refused to hear the word of God, God was still holding out His hand to them, beckoning them to repent and return to Him and He would withdraw His hand of judgment. He gave them yet another chance.

*"<sup>14</sup>As for me, behold, I am in your hand: do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you. <sup>15</sup>But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the LORD hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears."* (verses 14,15)

Jeremiah made no resistance to the persecution of the people and spiritual leaders. However, he did warn them that, if they put him to death, they would bring innocent blood upon themselves, upon the city, and upon the people that lived in the city. They wanted to treat Jeremiah as a false prophet, but Jeremiah was speaking to them the true words of God.

*"Then said the princes and all the people unto the priests and to the prophets; This man is not worthy to die: for he hath spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God."* (verse 16)

Jeremiah spoke in the name of the LORD God.

*"<sup>17</sup>Then rose up certain of the elders of the land, and spake to all the assembly of the people, saying, <sup>18</sup>Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest. <sup>19</sup>Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the LORD, and besought the LORD, and the LORD repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? Thus might we procure great evil against our souls." (verses 17-19)*

Some of the elders of the land would not put Jeremiah to death. They remembered that a prophet had come to Hezekiah and warned Hezekiah of coming judgment. What was Hezekiah's response? He did not put the prophet to death. No, instead he feared the Lord and besought Him. Then the Lord withdrew His hand of judgment. God was waiting for the people to fear Him and seek Him again.

Will we, in America, fear God and seek Him again?

*"<sup>20</sup>And there was also a man that prophesied in the name of the LORD, Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjathjearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah: <sup>21</sup>And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men, and all the princes, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death: but when Urijah heard it, he was afraid, and fled, and went into Egypt; <sup>22</sup>And Jehoiakim the king sent men into Egypt, namely, Elnathan the son of Achbor, and certain men with him into Egypt. <sup>23</sup>And they fetched forth Urijah out of Egypt, and brought him unto Jehoiakim the king; who slew him with the sword, and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people." (verses 20-23)*

Urijah the prophet also prophesied against Jerusalem as did Jeremiah. Then king Jehoiakim and the mighty men and princes with him sought Urijah to put him to death. Urijah fled to Egypt, but king Jehoiakim sent men there and fetched him back and put him to death. They did not even give him the burial of a prophet. He was simply cast into the graves of the common people.

*"Nevertheless the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death." (verse 24)*

However, God raised up a man to stand up for Jeremiah, and God preserved Jeremiah and protected him just as God had promised.

## Chapter 29

### **An Expected End**

*"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." (verse 11)*

For the people Judah and Jerusalem, the "expected end" was that, at the end of seventy years, they would return from captivity and go back to their own land.

God is the same gracious God to all those who trust in Him today. He still thinks thoughts of peace toward them and not thoughts of evil. He will bring them to their expected end; that is, He will bring them to the good things He has planned for them.

### **I Will Be Found of You**

*"<sup>12</sup>Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. <sup>13</sup>And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. <sup>14</sup>And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive." (verses 12-14)*

At the end of seventy years of captivity, the people of Judah and Jerusalem would turn again to the Lord and would seek Him. God promised that they would find Him when they would seek for Him with all their hearts. When God was found of them, God would turn away their captivity and gather them out of the nations where they had been taken captive and would bring them back into their own land.

Today, if we will turn to the Lord and seek Him with all our heart, God will be found of us. Today, God is still taking people out of the captivity of their sins and bringing them into the right way when they seek for Him with all their heart.

Isaiah 55:6,7 give this wonderful promise, "<sup>6</sup>Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: <sup>7</sup>Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

God is waiting, waiting for the wicked and the unrighteous to return to Him. God has promised that, when they return to Him and forsake their way, He **will** have mercy upon them. He will grant them pardon, **abundant** pardon. No matter how vile the sinner or

how wicked and evil the sin; there is mercy available and pardon to the one who repents and turns unto the Lord. And God will bring that person out of the captivity of sin and into God's marvelous light and the freedom of His forgiveness.

### **Because They Refused to Hearken**

*"<sup>15</sup>**Because ye have said**, The LORD hath raised us up prophets in Babylon; <sup>16</sup>Know that thus saith the LORD of the king that sitteth upon the throne of David, and of all the people that dwelleth in this city, and of your brethren that are not gone forth with you into captivity; <sup>17</sup>Thus saith the LORD of hosts; **Behold, I will** send upon them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and **will** make them like vile figs, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil. <sup>18</sup>And **I will** persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence, and **will** deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and an hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven them: <sup>19</sup>**Because they have not hearkened to my words**, saith the LORD, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them; but ye would not hear, saith the LORD." (verses 15-19)*

Because they refused to hearken to the words of the LORD, there were several things the LORD said He would do. He said,

**I will** send upon them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence

**[I] will** make them like vile figs, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.

**I will** persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence

**[I] will** deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and an hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven them.

It is a serious and fearful thing not to listen when God speaks. Should we not then fear God and be both hearers and doers of the word of God?

### **Because of the Sins of the Leaders of the People**

*"<sup>20</sup>Hear ye therefore the word of the LORD, all ye of the captivity, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon: <sup>21</sup>Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, of Ahab the son of Kolaiah, and of Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, which prophesy a lie unto you in my name; Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall slay them before your eyes; <sup>22</sup>And of them shall be taken up a curse by all the captivity of Judah which are in Babylon, saying, The LORD make thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire." (verses 20-22)*



Because the leaders of Israel prophesied lies to them, God said, "**I will** deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar." God would deliver them into captivity for prophesying lies in His name and for other sins that they had committed.

*"Because they have committed villany in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives, and have spoken lying words in my name, which I have not commanded them; even I know, and am a witness, saith the LORD."* (verse 23)

Here God lists the terrible sins that the leaders of Israel had committed:

Villany – foolishness, a crime, folly, vileness

Adultery with their neighbors' wives

Lying words spoken in God's name. God had not commanded them to speak those words.

God saw and was a witness to the lies and the sins that had come from the leaders of the people.

Look at the leaders in America today. How many of them have committed villany? How many are guilty of crimes? Some are being caught. What about those who are not.

How many have committed adultery or other sexual sins? That seems to be a serious problem among our leaders. God sees and is a witness to the sins that our leaders have committed. Will He not judge for these things?

*"<sup>30</sup>Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying, <sup>31</sup>Send to all them of the captivity, saying, Thus saith the LORD concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite; Because that Shemaiah hath prophesied unto you, and I sent him not, and he caused you to trust in a lie: <sup>32</sup>Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite, and his seed: he shall not have a man to dwell among this people; neither shall he behold the good that I will do for my people, saith the LORD; because he hath taught rebellion against the LORD."* (verses 30-32)

The LORD said

**Because Shemaiah had prophesied** to the people of Judah and Jerusalem **and God had not sent him**

**Because Shemaiah had caused the people to trust in a lie**

**Because Shemaiah taught rebellion against the LORD**

The LORD said

**I will punish Shemaiah.** He would have no seed to dwell among the people. He would not live to see the people return from their captivity and go back into their own land. He would not see the good that God would do for His people.

## **Chapter 30**

### **Sin Has Terrible Consequences**

*"<sup>12</sup>For thus saith the LORD, Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous. <sup>13</sup>There is none to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up: thou hast no healing medicines. <sup>14</sup>All thy lovers have forgotten thee; they seek thee not; for I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one, for the multitude of thine iniquity; because thy sins were increased. <sup>15</sup>Why criest thou for thine affliction? thy sorrow is incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity: because thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee." (verses 12-15)*

Because of iniquity there was wounding, sickness, sorrow and affliction. God had wounded them because of their iniquity. Sin has terrible consequences.

### **But One Day – Healing**

*"For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the LORD; because they called thee an Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeketh after." (verse 17)*

But one day, God would heal them and restore them. God would take them back to Himself even though no one else wanted them.

*"And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry: and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small." (verse 19)*

Thanksgiving and joy are the result of restoration of God's people to Himself.

*"<sup>20</sup>Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them. <sup>21</sup>And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the LORD. <sup>22</sup>And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God." (verses 20-22)*

When they would engage their heart to approach the LORD and would seek to draw near to Him, He would increase them and establish them and raise up rulers from among their own people. They would be His people, and God would be their God.

*"<sup>23</sup>Behold, the whirlwind of the LORD goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind: it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked. <sup>24</sup>The fierce anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have done it, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it." (verses 23,24)*

God would heal and restore those who turned again and sought Him. But those who continued in their wickedness would experience the fierce anger and judgment of God.

## **Chapter 31**

### **Returning to the Lord Results in Rejoicing, Music, and Merry Hearts**

*"<sup>1</sup>At the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people. <sup>2</sup>Thus saith the LORD, The people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest. <sup>3</sup>The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. <sup>4</sup>Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry." (verses 1-4)*

When Israel returns to the LORD, He will again be their God, and they will be His people. There were those who had not been slain by the sword. They found grace in the wilderness because God gave them rest.

Though Israel had strayed from God, God did not stop loving them. He loved Israel with an everlasting love, and with lovingkindness He drew Israel back to Himself again. When Israel returns to the LORD, the LORD will build Israel again, and she will be beautifully adorned. There will be rejoicing and music and dancing and merry hearts.

What a picture of the character and grace and love of God!

Though God's people stray from Him, He will always love His people.

Though God punish His people, those who trust in Him will find grace and rest, even in their times of trouble.

Though we may wander far away from God, God always loves us. He loves us with an everlasting love, and with lovingkindness draws us back to Himself again.

Returning to the LORD and having a renewed relationship with Him results in rejoicing, music, and merry hearts.

### **A Wonderful Day is Coming for Israel and Joy, Goodness, Satisfaction, Righteousness, and Robes of Righteousness**

*"<sup>10</sup>Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. <sup>11</sup>For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he. <sup>12</sup>Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the LORD, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all." (verses 10-12)*

There is a wonderful day coming for Israel. God will ransom Israel from the hand of him who is stronger than he. Then there will be singing and the goodness of God will be poured out upon Israel. The crops will be good and food abundant. The flocks and herds will flourish. People's souls will be refreshed, and they will sorrow no more at all.

One day, all the wrongs will be made right, and there will be no more sorrow at all. What a wonderful day that is going to be!

These verses do picture something else as well. Jesus will have all men to be saved, and He gave His life a ransom for all. (See I Timothy 2:4-6) "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) All are caught in "the snare of the devil," and "taken captive by him at his will." (See II Timothy 2:26). Yet, Jesus paid the price of the ransom for all. This price was His blood poured out on Calvary. Jesus gave His very life as the ransom to save us out of the snare of the devil.

When we take God at His word and accept the freedom granted us through Jesus' payment of our ransom, then the goodness of God will flow in. God will refresh our soul and make it like a well watered garden. God will take away the sorrow that sin has caused in our heart, and He will fill our heart with His joy. This happens because Jesus puts His righteousness upon us, "Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference." (Romans 3:22)

"I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." (Isaiah 61:10a)

*"<sup>13</sup>Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow. <sup>14</sup>And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the LORD." (verses 13,14)*

Sorrow will be turned into joy, and God's people will be satisfied with God's goodness.

### **Repentance and God's Love for Us in Spite of Our Sin**

*"<sup>18</sup>I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God. <sup>19</sup>Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth." (verses 18,19)*

Repentance is turning to God from the worldliness and sin in our lives. But we have no power to turn to Him on our own. In this picture of repentance, Ephraim cries out to God, "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God." After God had turned him, Ephraim repented. After Ephraim was instructed, he was ashamed and confounded and bore his reproach because he understood that his sin was very grievous. Ephraim understood that his sin had broken God's heart and that God had judged him and that is why Ephraim was suffering so much. This suffering was a result of God's chastisement for his sin.

What about our lives? Do we need to ask God to turn us? Are we ready to have His help to turn to Him from the worldliness and sin in our lives? He is the LORD our God, and He is waiting for us.

*"Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD." (verse 20)*

God loves us in spite of our sin. In this picture of repentance, God chastens Ephraim as a father would chasten a child. God did not rejoice in chastening Ephraim; His innermost being was troubled for Ephraim. He was sad because Ephraim was hurting and suffering. The LORD decided to have mercy on Ephraim.

What a good picture for us! God loves us in spite of our sin. Even while He chastens us, He loves us and yearns over us, and His heart desires to pour out His mercy instead of His judgment. Oh, let us return unto the LORD! He is waiting for us.

### **The Blessings of Revival**

*"<sup>23</sup>Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; The LORD bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness. <sup>24</sup>And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they that go forth with flocks. <sup>25</sup>For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul." (verses 23-25)*

When Israel and Judah are brought out of captivity, there will be blessing from the LORD. Justice and holiness will be prominent in the land. There will be husbandmen to tend the crops and shepherds to care for the sheep. The weary soul will be satisfied and the sorrowful soul will be comforted and filled instead of hurt and empty. God will restore His people.

The same thing happens when there is revival among God's people. Blessing comes down from the LORD. If revival sweeps across the land, justice and holiness become prominent. There will be someone to care for souls -- lost and saved. There will be true shepherds to lead the people. The weary will be satisfied and the sorrowful will be lifted and given comfort and their heart will be full. Revival restores relationship with God and brings blessing to God's people. Our nation is in an emergency. We are very sick spiritually and about to die. But it is not too late. There is still hope if we will just wake up and see how desperate the situation really is. If we return unto the Lord, He is ready to rescue us and exchange our spiritual sickness for His saving health.

### **Chapter 32**

#### **No One Can Fight Against God's Judgment for Sin.**

*"<sup>1</sup>The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. <sup>2</sup>For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem: and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which was in the king of Judah's house. <sup>3</sup>For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, Wherefore dost thou prophesy, and say, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it; <sup>4</sup>And Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape out of the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be*

*delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him mouth to mouth, and his eyes shall behold his eyes; <sup>5</sup>And he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there shall he be until I visit him, saith the LORD: though ye fight with the Chaldeans, ye shall not prosper."* (verses 1-5)

King Zedekiah was angry at Jeremiah because Jeremiah had prophesied against him and against Judah and said that they would not escape out of the hand of the Chaldeans but would be taken captive. King Zedekiah would see the king of Babylon face to face, and God would bring judgment upon him there.

King Zedekiah did not want to believe these things. He was angry with Jeremiah, God's messenger, and threw Jeremiah into prison. But throwing Jeremiah into prison did not stop God's judgment from coming. Before long, Babylon's army had indeed besieged Jerusalem. It would only be a matter of time before Jerusalem was taken.

The same is true today. People do not want to believe that God will bring judgment for sin. Our nation has endured hurricanes and fires and storms. Respect for authority is diminishing. Child abuse, kidnappings, missing children, and school shootings are on the rise. Yet, in all these tragedies, no one turns to God to seek His mercy. Some blame God because He didn't stop this from happening. Yet, very few realize the one behind all these terrible things is Satan, the one who would steal and kill and destroy. People refuse to look to God but go round and round trying to find their own remedies and answers. This does not work, as can be seen by the fact that these terrible things are becoming more and more common. Time is running out for our nation, but no one wants to believe that it is God's judgment for sin. Who will be a Jeremiah and tell them? Who will try to warn them before it is too late?

### **There Is No Excuse for Not Believing in God**

*"<sup>17</sup>Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee: <sup>18</sup>Thou shewest lovingkindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them: the Great, the Mighty God, the LORD of hosts, is his name, <sup>19</sup>Great in counsel, and mighty in work: for thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings: <sup>20</sup>Which hast set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, even unto this day, and in Israel, and among other men; and hast made thee a name, as at this day."* (verses 17-20)

- GOD is the Lord
- "Ah Lord GOD!... the Great, the Mighty God, the LORD of hosts." All names for God
- God is great in counsel and mighty in work
- There is nothing too hard for God
- God is full of lovingkindness
- God will also judge and recompense iniquity
- God made the heaven and earth by His great power and stretched out arm.
- God set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, in the land of Israel, and among other men.
- God has made Himself a name in the earth.

There is no excuse for not believing in God. He has left evidence of Himself everywhere.

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. <sup>2</sup>Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. <sup>3</sup>*There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.* <sup>4</sup>Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." (Psalm 19:1-4a)

"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." (Romans 1:20)

Those who reject God do so by their own choice. What is your choice today?  
Why Did Judgment Come?

*"<sup>21</sup>And hast brought forth thy people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs, and with wonders, and with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with great terror; <sup>22</sup>And hast given them this land, which thou didst swear to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey; <sup>23</sup>And they came in, and possessed it; but they obeyed not thy voice, neither walked in thy law; they have done nothing of all that thou commandedst them to do: therefore thou hast caused all this evil to come upon them."* (verses 21-23)

God delivered the people from Egypt. He did signs and wonders and showed Himself mighty among them. He gave them their promised land, a land flowing with milk and honey. He provided all they needed and much more.

Now Israel and Judah were hurting. They were being judged by God. Why?



Because they had done nothing of all that God had commanded them to do. They refused to hear and obey God.

God did a similar thing for America. He brought us out of bondage in England. He brought us to a land where we could live freely and worship God. Although things were difficult in the beginning, He provided all that we needed.

What did we do? Did we not soon forget how good God was to us? Did we not soon become self-sufficient and think we could do OK on our own? Did we not choose our own way to solve problems? These things left us with shame for the way we treated the native inhabitants of the land, division among ourselves, Civil War, and much more. With each distress, we cried to God, and He heard us and delivered us out of our trouble. How many times will it take before we end up like Israel, before God will no longer hear our prayer and deliver us from the hand of our enemy? How much longer can it be before God pours out His wrath upon us for our iniquity?

One thing that comes to mind is the recent school shooting in Parkland, Florida. With this and other school shootings, one might pause to ask, "Why are they doing this? What is driving young people to such lengths of hurt, hatred, and emptiness? Why are they so angry and full of revenge? How come there are so many young people without purpose and without hope in life?"

Last night I had a couple of dreams. In one dream, we were talking to people who were about to die and urging them to get saved before they went out into a Christless eternity, before they dropped to their death and hell. But they would not listen.

In another dream, or perhaps another part of the same dream, we went to a different area and tried to stop something that was going on. It was demonic and was destroying lives. It had not been stopped before I awakened. Why not? When we know that greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world, why can't we stop it? We couldn't stop people from going to hell, and we couldn't stop devilish activity. Why not? Have we lost the power of the Holy Spirit in our Christian lives and in many of our churches, and we don't even know it?

What is it that should do? What can Christians do? Have we been an example – loving our neighbor as ourselves? Loving our enemy and doing good to those who hate us? Overcoming evil with good rather than trying to return evil? Showing love and kindness to those we think least deserve it?

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. He spared not His own Son so that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. May God fill us with His love so that we can show it to others. God loves everyone, even Nikolas Cruz who just murdered seventeen people in a school in Parkland, Florida. If Nikolas were to repent and receive Christ as Savior, could we rejoice in this, and could we rejoice with him in His new found freedom in Christ and receive Him as a brother in Christ? If not, why not? We are no better than he. We are simply saved by grace. If it were not for the grace of God, we might well be in his place. If we did not have the forgiveness of God, who knows what our heart might be filled with.

*"Behold the mounts, they are come unto the city to take it; and the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans, that fight against it, because of the sword, and of the famine, and of the pestilence: and what thou hast spoken is come to pass; and, behold, thou seest it." (verse 24)*

Peace was gone. God gave the city into the hands of the enemy. The sword, famine, and pestilence were taking the lives of many people. They were being judged just as God had warned. And God saw it.

*"<sup>26</sup>Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah, saying, <sup>27</sup>Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?" (verses 26,27)*

God is the one who created all flesh. There is nothing too hard for God.

### **They Provoked God to Anger**

*"<sup>28</sup>Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it: <sup>29</sup>And the Chaldeans, that fight against this city, shall come and set fire on this city, and burn it with the houses, upon whose roofs they have offered incense unto Baal, and poured out drink offerings unto other gods, to provoke me to anger. <sup>30</sup>For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil before me from their youth: for the children of Israel have only provoked me to anger with the work of their hands, saith the LORD. <sup>31</sup>For this city hath been to me as a provocation of mine anger and of my fury from the day that they built it even unto this day; that I should remove it from before my face, <sup>32</sup>Because of all the evil of the children of Israel and of the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke me to anger, they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. <sup>33</sup>And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face: though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction." (verses 28-33)*

- They provoked God to anger by worshiping false gods.
- They provoked God to anger by the work of their own hands, by doing things their own way instead of God's way.
- They provoked God to anger because they turned their back to Him instead of their face.
- They provoked God to anger because they would not listen when God taught them. They rejected instruction.

### **Abominations in God's House**

*"But they set their abominations in the house, which is called by my name, to defile it."*  
(verse 34)

Instead of keeping God's house holy and set apart from the world, they set their abominations in God's house and defiled it.

Have we done the same in God's house today? Have we failed to separate the holy from the profane? That is a solemn question to ponder.

### **They Sacrificed their Children to Molech**

*"And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin."* (verse 35)

Instead of training up their children in the fear of the Lord, they sacrificed their children to Molech, something which God never commanded, nor did it come into His mind. In fact, it was an abomination to Him.

Today we sacrifice our children to Hollywood and to the god of public education. There is much complaint about the moral corruption of Hollywood, yet we justify allowing our children to watch what they produce and to defile their mind with the scenes and words from what they produce. There is much complaint about the things that are being taught to our children in the public schools. Yet, we continue to send our children there. Then we wonder why they reject God, rebel against authority, turn against their families and their country, and walk in the way of evil.

We allow our children to be infiltrated by Hollywood and instructed in the things that lead them astray when God has clearly said, "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction *that causeth* to err from the words of knowledge." (Proverbs 19:27) Should we be surprised when our children choose to walk in their own ways instead of seeking after God?

### **Repentance, Revival, Renewal, and Rejoicing**

*"<sup>36</sup>And now therefore thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city, whereof ye say, It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence; <sup>37</sup>Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: <sup>38</sup>And they shall be my people, and I will be their God." (verses 36-38)*

Though God had delivered His people into captivity and many had been slain with the sword and with famine and with pestilence; though God had driven them out in His anger and fury; God will bring His people back again to dwell in their own land, and they will dwell in safety. At that time, they will be God's people, and He will be their God.

Though God chastens His people for sin and judges them in His anger, He never forsakes them. He will draw them back to Himself, and they will again be His people and He will be their God. The purpose of chastisement is to bring repentance. Repentance brings revival. Revival brings restoration.

*"And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them." (verse 39)*

God will give them  
One heart and  
One way.

Why? So that they will fear Him for ever. This is for their good and for the good of their children after them.

Repentance and revival not only bring good to those who turn to God but also to their children after them. Proverbs 2:5-9 explains the wonderful benefits of walking in the fear of the Lord, "<sup>5</sup>Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. <sup>6</sup>For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth *cometh* knowledge and understanding. <sup>7</sup>He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: *he is* a buckler to them that walk uprightly. <sup>8</sup>He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of

his saints. <sup>9</sup>Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path."

And, if we understand what is right and know which paths are good, we can teach these things to our children, and the fear of the Lord and His blessings will be passed on to them.

*"<sup>40</sup>And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. <sup>41</sup>Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul." (verses 40,41)*

God will make a covenant with His people after they return to Him. He will not turn away from His people but will do them good. He will put His fear into their hearts so that they will not depart from Him. As they walk with Him, He will rejoice over them, do them good, and plant them in their land. This will make God so happy that He will do this with His whole heart and soul.

*"<sup>43</sup>And fields shall be bought in this land, whereof ye say, It is desolate without man or beast; it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans. <sup>44</sup>Men shall buy fields for money, and subscribe evidences, and seal them, and take witnesses in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the mountains, and in the cities of the valley, and in the cities of the south: for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the LORD." (verses 43,44)*

People will once again have their possessions and buy and sell land. The land will be inhabited and people will have property. The mountains and the valleys and the cities will have inhabitants. Why? Because God will cause them to return from their captivity.

When a people repents and revival occurs, God will bring people out of the captivity of their sin and the snare of the devil, and will take away curses from among them and pour out His blessings instead of the curses.

Will we not return unto the Lord today? He waits for us to come, and blessings await us upon our return.

## **Chapter 34**

### Liberty and Judgment

*"<sup>1</sup>The word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and all his army, and all the kingdoms of the earth of his dominion, and all the people, fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities thereof, saying, <sup>2</sup>Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Go and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah, and tell him, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire: <sup>3</sup>And thou shalt not escape out of his hand, but shalt surely be taken, and delivered into his hand; and thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, and he shall speak with thee mouth to mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon... This is the word that came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, after that the king Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people which were at Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty unto them." (verses 1-3 and 8)*

Liberty cannot come to a nation that is under the judgment of God.

*"This is the word that came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, after that the king Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people which were at Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty unto them; <sup>9</sup>That every man should let his manservant, and every man his maidservant, being an Hebrew or an Hebrewess, go free; that none should serve himself of them, to wit, of a Jew his brother. <sup>10</sup>Now when all the princes, and all the people, which had entered into the covenant, heard that every one should let his manservant, and every one his maidservant, go free, that none should serve themselves of them any more, then they obeyed, and let them go. <sup>11</sup>But afterward they turned, and caused the servants and the handmaids, whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into subjection for servants and for handmaids." (verses 8-11)*

The people made a covenant not to make slaves of their own, but they broke that covenant.

*"<sup>12</sup>Therefore the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, <sup>13</sup>Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondmen, saying, <sup>14</sup>At the end of seven years let ye go every man his brother an Hebrew, which hath been sold unto thee; and when he hath served thee six years, thou shalt let him go free from thee: but your fathers hearkened not unto me, neither inclined their ear. <sup>15</sup>And ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight, in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbour; and ye had made a covenant before me in the house which is called by my*

name: <sup>16</sup>*But ye turned and polluted my name, and caused every man his servant, and every man his handmaid, whom ye had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and brought them into subjection, to be unto you for servants and for handmaids."* (verses 12-16)

God had brought Israel up out of bondage in Egypt. Israel should have remembered what it was like to be slaves. Under certain circumstances, one Hebrew (Israelite) could be sold to another Hebrew as an indentured servant. This servant was to serve for six years. After that, the one he /she was serving was supposed to forgive the servant's debt and let that servant go free. They were to be set at liberty. That was the covenant God had made with Israel when they were brought up out of bondage in Egypt. However, the children of Israel did not listen, and they did not keep that covenant.

Now King Zedekiah and the people under him had done right and let their servants go as the covenant demanded. However, they then brought the servants back and made them serve again. This displeased the LORD.

*"Therefore thus saith the LORD; Ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour: behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the LORD, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine; and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth."* (verse 17)

Because the people did not listen to God's word and refused to obey, God would proclaim a "liberty" to them. They would be delivered to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine. Those who survived the sword, the pestilence, and the famine would be removed from their land and scattered among the nations of the earth.

<sup>18</sup>*And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof, <sup>19</sup>The princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, and the priests, and all the people of the land, which passed between the parts of the calf; <sup>20</sup>I will even give them into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life: and their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the fowls of the heaven, and to the beasts of the earth. <sup>21</sup>And Zedekiah king of Judah and his princes will I give into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life, and into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which are gone up from you."* (verses 18-21)

To those men who had transgressed the covenant they had made with the LORD, the LORD would deliver them into the hands of their enemies. The princes of Judah and

Jerusalem, the eunuchs, the priests, and all the people of the land that had made a covenant and broken it, would be delivered into the hands of their enemies and their dead bodies would be left as meat for the birds and the beasts.

The wages of sin is death, always. And it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

*"Behold, I will command, saith the LORD, and cause them to return to this city; and they shall fight against it, and take it, and burn it with fire: and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without an inhabitant."* (verse 22)

God would judge sin with fire.

## **Chapter 35**

### **The Example of the Rechabites**

*"<sup>6</sup>But they said, We will drink no wine: for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever... <sup>8</sup>Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab our father in all that he hath charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, nor our daughters."* (verses 6 and 8)

Jeremiah chapter thirty-five tells the very fascinating story of the Rechabites. Several generations before, Jonadab the son of Rechab had commanded them never to drink wine. Jeremiah took the descendants of Rechab into a chamber in the house of the LORD and set wine before them and told them to drink wine. However, they refused because of the commandment of their "father" Jonadab. They were obedient and refused to break that command.

*"<sup>13</sup>Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words? saith the LORD. <sup>14</sup>The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed; for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment: notwithstanding I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto me. <sup>15</sup>I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me."* (verses 13-15)



God pleaded with the people of Judah and Jerusalem to learn a lesson from the Rechabites. The Rechabites had obeyed their father and would not drink wine, even several generations later. Why would the people of Judah and Jerusalem not listen? God wanted to know "will ye not receive instruction to hearken my words?"

God had been patient. He sent all His servants the prophets. Early had He sent them to plead with the people to return from their evil way, to amend their doings, to stop following after other gods to serve them. He promised that that they would remain in their land and dwell there if they would obey Him. This was the beautiful promised land God had given to their fathers. But they would neither listen nor obey.

*"<sup>16</sup>Because the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them; but this people hath not hearkened unto me: <sup>17</sup>Therefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them: because I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard; and I have called unto them, but they have not answered." (verses 16,17)*

The Rechabites had obeyed the commandment of their father and continued to keep it. They had hearkened to their earthly father. But the people of Judah and Jerusalem would not hearken to God. God spoke to them, but they did not hear. God called to them, but they did not answer. Therefore, God would bring upon them all the judgement that He had pronounced against them.

*"<sup>18</sup>And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you: <sup>19</sup>Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever." (verses 18,19)*

Because the Rechabites had obeyed their father, God blessed them. They had done all that their father had commanded them, therefore their father Jonadab would never lack a descendant to stand before God.

Disobedience brings judgment, but  
Obedience brings blessing.

## **Chapter 36**

### **Warning and Pleading by the Written Word**

*"<sup>2</sup>Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day. <sup>3</sup>It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin. <sup>4</sup>Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah: and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the LORD, which he had spoken unto him, upon a roll of a book." (verses 2-4)*

God told Jeremiah to take a roll of a book (a scroll) and write down all the words that God had spoken to Him against Israel and against Judah and against all the nations. Maybe the people of Judah would see these words and fear God and return to Him from their evil ways. If they did, then God would forgive their iniquity and their sin. So Jeremiah did just as the LORD commanded him.

*"<sup>5</sup>And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I am shut up; I cannot go into the house of the LORD: <sup>6</sup>Therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the LORD in the ears of the people in the LORD's house upon the fasting day: and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities." (verses 5,6)*

Jeremiah was shut up in prison, so he sent Baruch to read the words of God that Baruch had written in a roll. He was to read them to the people in the LORD's house on the fasting day, and he was to read them to all the people of Judah that came out of their cities.

Everyone was to hear the words of God.

*"And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading in the book the words of the LORD in the LORD's house." (verse 8)*

Baruch did all that Jeremiah commanded him, and he read the words of the LORD in the LORD's house.

*"<sup>11</sup>When Michaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, had heard out of the book all the words of the LORD, <sup>12</sup>Then he went down into the king's house, into the scribe's*

*chamber: and, lo, all the princes sat there, even Elishama the scribe, and Delaiah the son of Shemaiah, and Elnathan the son of Achbor, and Gemariah the son of Shaphan, and Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the princes. <sup>13</sup>Then Michaiah declared unto them all the words that he had heard, when Baruch read the book in the ears of the people. <sup>14</sup>Therefore all the princes sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi, unto Baruch, saying, Take in thine hand the roll wherein thou hast read in the ears of the people, and come. So Baruch the son of Neriah took the roll in his hand, and came unto them. <sup>15</sup>And they said unto him, Sit down now, and read it in our ears. So Baruch read it in their ears." (verses 11-15)*

After Micaiah heard the words of the LORD, he went to the king's house where all the princes were gathered together and told them all the words that he had heard. Then the princes sent for Baruch and had him come and read God's words to them. All the princes also heard God's words.

*"Now it came to pass, when they had heard all the words, they were afraid both one and other, and said unto Baruch, We will surely tell the king of all these words." (verse 16)*

When the princes heard these words they were afraid, as they should have been. They said that they would tell all these words to the king.

*"Then said the princes unto Baruch, Go, hide thee, thou and Jeremiah; and let no man know where ye be." (verse 19)*

The princes prepared to tell the king God's words, but they told Baruch that he and Jeremiah should hide and not to tell anyone where they were.

*"And they went in to the king into the court, but they laid up the roll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe, and told all the words in the ears of the king." (verse 20)*

First the princes safely stored the roll in the scribe's room, and then they went and told the king all the words of the LORD.

*"So the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll: and he took it out of Elishama the scribe's chamber. And Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes which stood beside the king." (verse 21)*

The king apparently was not satisfied and had the roll brought to him. Then he had it read to him and to all the princes that stood before him. They all heard the words of the LORD.

*"<sup>22</sup>Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month: and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him. <sup>23</sup>And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth. <sup>24</sup>Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words." (verses 22-24)*

The king and his servants were not afraid to despise or destroy God's word.

*"Nevertheless Elnathan and Delaiah and Gemariah had made intercession to the king that he would not burn the roll: but he would not hear them." (verse 25)*

Some of the princes did fear and pleaded with the king not to destroy God's word; but the king would not hear them.

*"But the king commanded Jerahmeel the son of Hammelech, and Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to take Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet: but the LORD hid them." (verse 26)*

Not only did the king destroy God's word, he also tried to take Baruch and Jeremiah to either punish or destroy them. But the LORD hid them. The LORD protected those who spoke for Him.

Destroying or silencing the messenger does not change God's word nor make it of none effect.

*"<sup>27</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, after that the king had burned the roll, and the words which Baruch wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah, saying, <sup>28</sup>Take thee again another roll, and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned." (verses 27,28)*

The king sought to destroy the roll so that there would be no written record of God's words to Judah and Jerusalem. But, God did not forget His words. He knew what He had said. He had Jeremiah take another roll and write all the same words in it again. The king, nor anyone else, could destroy the word of God or make it go away. And no one can destroy the word of God or make it go away today.

*"<sup>29</sup>And thou shalt say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, Thus saith the LORD; Thou hast burned this roll, saying, Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall*

*certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast? <sup>30</sup>Therefore thus saith the LORD of Jehoiakim king of Judah; He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David: and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost. <sup>31</sup>And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them; but they hearkened not." (verses 29-31)*

Not only did God have His words re-written, He also had Jeremiah confront the king for the king's actions. God punished the king and all those who heard His words because they would not hear. The king would have no descendants to sit on the throne, and he would not have a proper burial. He would simply be cast out and his body would rot in the heat of the day and the frost of the night. Even so, neither he nor the people would hearken to the words of the LORD.

*"Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire: and there were added besides unto them many like words." (verse 32)*

Jeremiah and Baruch did as the LORD commanded them and took another roll and wrote all the words that were in the first book that Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned with fire. God also added many other words to the new book. All Jehoiakim's efforts to destroy God's word were in vain. God preserves His word.

As I read these words in Jeremiah chapter thirty-six, I am very afraid for America. So many times people have blasphemed the LORD. He has been blamed for the hurt, the hate, and the violence. Christians have been mocked or verbally maligned for declaring the word of God. Sometimes the word of God is simply not considered and God Himself is either left out of the picture or His very existence is denied. People see that there are problems, and they try every solution they can come up with. However, these are man's solutions, and they can never work. Problems get worse and worse.

Consider the latest school shootings and other such violence. People are gathered together to try to find a solution. Some blame the Republicans and conservatives. Some blame the Democrats. Some blame the guns. Everyone blames everyone else. Leaders and the people meet together to try to find a solution; but the harder they try, the worse the problems become. Why? Because they reject the only true solution – to hear and hearken to the word of God. They do not want to see that they have sinned. They do not want to admit that Satan and sin are at the root of the problems. They do not

want to believe that they are wrong and God is right. They do not want to seek after God and turn to Him from their wicked ways. In many circles, people are not even afraid to speak ill of and despise the word of God and His messengers.

As long as we continue to reject God and His word and follow our own ways and try to find our own solutions, there will never be a remedy, and terror and destruction will continue. What will it take for us to fall down before God and seek His face and His mercy?

## **Chapter 37**

### **Seek the Lord While There Is Still Time**

*"<sup>1</sup>And king Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah. <sup>2</sup>But neither he, nor his servants, nor the people of the land, did hearken unto the words of the LORD, which he spake by the prophet Jeremiah." (verses 1,2)*

When Israel entered into the promised land, they slew great kings through God's power. These were kings that did not know God or follow His way or do right. The king of Judah must have forgotten about the kings God cast out of the land of Canaan before Israel came in to possess it, because neither Zedekiah nor the people of Judah would hear the words of the LORD which He spoke by His prophet Jeremiah. They did not consider that God might cast them out too.

*"And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, Pray now unto the LORD our God for us." (verse 3)*

Although Zedekiah refused to hear and obey God's word, he asked Jeremiah to pray for him and for the people of Judah. Even though Zedekiah did not want anything to do with God, he expected God to get him out of trouble.

King Zedekiah is no different from many people today. Many do not want anything to do with God, and they certainly do not want to hear and obey His word. However, when they get into trouble, they want God's people to cry out to God and ask God to deliver them.

God makes no promise to hear and deliver those who reject Him and His word. He gave this warning many years ago through King Solomon, "<sup>24</sup>Because I have called, and ye

refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; <sup>25</sup>But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: <sup>26</sup>I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; <sup>27</sup>When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. <sup>28</sup>Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: <sup>29</sup>For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: <sup>30</sup>They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. <sup>31</sup>Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices."  
(Proverbs 1:24-31)

We cannot despise God and His word and then expect God to help us when we are in trouble. If we did not want anything to do with Him when things were going well, we cannot expect Him to come to our aid when things have gone wrong. We need to humble ourselves before God and call on His mercy now, we need to seek Him while there is still time.

"Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." (Isaiah 55:6) Do not wait until it is too late.

### **They Shall Not Depart -- No Escape from Judgment**

*"<sup>5</sup>Then Pharaoh's army was come forth out of Egypt: and when the Chaldeans that besieged Jerusalem heard tidings of them, they departed from Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup>Then came the word of the LORD unto the prophet Jeremiah, saying, <sup>7</sup>Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Thus shall ye say to the king of Judah, that sent you unto me to enquire of me; Behold, Pharaoh's army, which is come forth to help you, shall return to Egypt into their own land. <sup>8</sup>And the Chaldeans shall come again, and fight against this city, and take it, and burn it with fire. <sup>9</sup>Thus saith the LORD; Deceive not yourselves, saying, The Chaldeans shall surely depart from us: for they shall not depart." (verses 5-9)*

When Pharaoh's army came up out of Egypt, the Chaldeans were afraid and departed from their siege of Jerusalem. This gave the people and the king false hope. However, God told Jeremiah to tell them not to be deceived. Pharaoh's army would not prevent the Chaldeans from coming to take the city. The time would come that Pharaoh's army would return to Egypt, and the Chaldeans would come take the city and burn it with fire. Judgment would come. The Chaldeans would not depart.

*"For though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and there remained but wounded men among them, yet should they rise up every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire." (verse 10)*

Even if the people of Judah and Jerusalem were able to smite the army of the Chaldeans and only wounded men were left, even these wounded men would rise up and burn the city with fire. The judgment of God could not be stopped. There was no escape from judgment.

*"<sup>15</sup>Wherefore the princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe: for they had made that the prison. <sup>16</sup>When Jeremiah was entered into the dungeon, and into the cabins, and Jeremiah had remained there many days; <sup>17</sup>Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took him out: and the king asked him secretly in his house, and said, Is there any word from the LORD? And Jeremiah said, There is: for, said he, thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon. <sup>18</sup>Moreover Jeremiah said unto king Zedekiah, What have I offended against thee, or against thy servants, or against this people, that ye have put me in prison? <sup>19</sup>Where are now your prophets which prophesied unto you, saying, The king of Babylon shall not come against you, nor against this land?" (verses 15 - 19)*

The king and the princes would rather listen to the false prophets who told them lies that made them feel good than to listen to Jeremiah and take warning from the Lord. They were angry with Jeremiah and put him in prison. But this did not change the truth.

*"<sup>20</sup>Therefore hear now, I pray thee, O my lord the king: let my supplication, I pray thee, be accepted before thee; that thou cause me not to return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there. <sup>21</sup>Then Zedekiah the king commanded that they should commit Jeremiah into the court of the prison, and that they should give him daily a piece of bread out of the bakers' street, until all the bread in the city were spent. Thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison." (verses 20,21)*

Although things were not easy for Jeremiah, God protected Jeremiah just as God had promised.

## **Chapter 38**

### **The Fear of God and the Fear of Man**

In this chapter we see the stories of Ebedmelech the Ethiopian who feared God and king Zedekiah who feared man.



## **Ebedmelech the Ethiopian Eunuch**

*"<sup>1</sup>Then Shephatiah the son of Mattan, and Gedaliah the son of Pashur, and Jucal the son of Shelemiah, and Pashur the son of Malchiah, heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people, saying, <sup>2</sup>Thus saith the LORD, He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live. <sup>3</sup>Thus saith the LORD, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it. <sup>4</sup>Therefore the princes said unto the king, We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt." (verses 1-4)*

After Jeremiah spoke to the people about God's judgment that was coming upon Judah and Jerusalem, the princes became angry and brought Jeremiah before Zedekiah demanding that he be put to death. They said he weakened the hands of all the people and of the men of war. They thought that by silencing the messenger, they could avoid the judgment of God. But they could not.

God's word is true. No matter how much people hate the messenger and want the message to be silenced, the word of God never changes. Ignoring God's word does not mean it will not come to pass.

*"Then Zedekiah the king said, Behold, he is in your hand: for the king is not he that can do any thing against you." (verse 5)*

Zedekiah was the king, but it seemed he had no power. He was afraid to do something to Jeremiah. He was also afraid of the princes, so he was going to let them do whatever they wanted. Although he was the king, he seemed to have no control over the people. He was afraid for himself, and he let himself be swayed whichever way the wind was blowing.

*"Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that was in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire." (verse 6)*

It seems that the princes were cowards as well. They did not take Jeremiah and put him to death themselves. They cast him into the dungeon, which was full of mire, so that he would sink in the mire and die that way.

*"<sup>7</sup>Now when Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs which was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon; the king then sitting in the gate of Benjamin; <sup>8</sup>Ebedmelech went forth out of the king's house, and spake to the king, saying, <sup>9</sup>My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is like to die for hunger in the place where he is: for there is no more bread in the city." (verses 7-9)*

When Ebedmelech, the eunuch who served in the king's house, heard that Jeremiah had been cast into the dungeon, he immediately took action. Off to the king he went to plead for Jeremiah's life. He was not afraid to say that the princes had done evil to Jeremiah the prophet. Ebedmelech was an Ethiopian, but he had more fear of God's man than the king and the people of Judah and Jerusalem. Ebedmelech did what was right.

*"Then the king commanded Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Take from hence thirty men with thee, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he die." (verse 10)*

Again, we see king Zedekiah's instability. First, when the princes ask to kill Jeremiah, he tells them to do what they want. Now when Ebedmelech wants to save Jeremiah's life, he tells him to go ahead and save it. The king even offers the aid of thirty men. The king cannot make up his mind what he should do.

*"<sup>11</sup>So Ebedmelech took the men with him, and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took thence old cast clouts and old rotten rags, and let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah. <sup>12</sup>And Ebedmelech the Ethiopian said unto Jeremiah, Put now these old cast clouts and rotten rags under thine armholes under the cords. And Jeremiah did so. <sup>13</sup>So they drew up Jeremiah with cords, and took him up out of the dungeon: and Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison." (verses 11-13)*

Ebedmelech was a wise and honest man. Times were hard, and resources were not abundant. Although Ebedmelech had access to the king's treasury, he took old rags and made a rope from them to pull Jeremiah up out of the dungeon. Although Ebedmelech knew that putting Jeremiah in the dungeon was wrong, he still spoke respectfully to the king and did his job with care and thoughtfulness. He did not take advantage of his position; nor did he waste any materials. He showed wisdom and uprightness in his actions.

We can learn a lesson from Ebedmelech. Sometimes today we see our leaders do wrong. This wrong hurts other people. Perhaps it is our President, our representatives,

our police, or someone else in authority. Ebedmelech was not ashamed to say the princes had done wrong, and we should not be ashamed to point out when those over us are doing wrong. However, Ebedmelech spoke and acted with respect. If we think someone over us is wrong or the police are bad, we can point that out. We can point out when they fail. In the American system of government, it is the people's responsibility to hold the leaders accountable when they do wrong. But speaking evil of the leaders, threatening them, saying they should not get pay and protection due them, or wishing that they were hurt or dead, is not right. Doing these things just makes us as evil as they are. We should speak up about evil, but we should do so with respect to those in positions over us and we should carry out our responsibilities with care, thoughtfulness, wisdom, and uprightness. If we mistreat, disrespect, and rebel against our authorities, we have no right to expect them to be of help to us or to give us aid or protection.

### **Zedekiah the King**

*"<sup>14</sup>Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took Jeremiah the prophet unto him into the third entry that is in the house of the LORD: and the king said unto Jeremiah, I will ask thee a thing; hide nothing from me. <sup>15</sup>Then Jeremiah said unto Zedekiah, If I declare it unto thee, wilt thou not surely put me to death? and if I give thee counsel, wilt thou not hearken unto me? <sup>16</sup>So Zedekiah the king sware secretly unto Jeremiah, saying, As the LORD liveth, that made us this soul, I will not put thee to death, neither will I give thee into the hand of these men that seek thy life." (verses 14-16)*

King Zedekiah could not seem to make up his mind about Jeremiah. He sent for Jeremiah and asked him to tell him the truth. But Jeremiah was afraid. "If I tell you the truth, will you not put me to death?" King Zedekiah promised he would not put Jeremiah to death or give him into the hands of the ones who wanted to put him to death.

*"<sup>17</sup>Then said Jeremiah unto Zedekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be burned with fire; and thou shalt live, and thine house: <sup>18</sup>But if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand. <sup>19</sup>And Zedekiah the king said unto Jeremiah, I am afraid of the Jews that are fallen to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they mock me. <sup>20</sup>But Jeremiah said, They shall not deliver thee. Obey, I beseech thee, the voice of the LORD, which I speak unto thee: so it shall be well unto thee, and thy soul shall live. <sup>21</sup>But if thou refuse to go forth, this is the word that the LORD hath shewed me." (verses 17-21)*

At king Zedekiah's promise that he would not kill Jeremiah, Jeremiah told him what God had said. God would send the princes of the king of Babylon against Judah and Jerusalem. If king Zedekiah would go with them, his life would be spared, and the city would not be burned with fire. If he would not go with him, then the Chaldeans would burn the city with fire, and king Zedekiah would not escape.

Verse nineteen shows why Zedekiah was so afraid and changeable. Some of the Jews had fallen away to the Chaldeans, and he was afraid they would betray him and deliver him into their hands and he would be mocked by his own people. Jeremiah assured him this would not happen if he would only obey the LORD.

If king Zedekiah did not obey the LORD...

Jeremiah went on to explain in detail the judgment that would come upon him and his household if he did not obey the LORD. (See verses 22 and 23)

### **Chapter 39**

*"<sup>5</sup>But the Chaldeans' army pursued after them, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho: and when they had taken him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he gave judgment upon him. <sup>6</sup>Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah before his eyes: also the king of Babylon slew all the nobles of Judah. <sup>7</sup>Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with chains, to carry him to Babylon. <sup>8</sup>And the Chaldeans burned the king's house, and the houses of the people, with fire, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem."* (verses 5-8)

King Zedekiah feared man rather than God, and the judgment God had pronounced came upon him. His sons were killed. His eyes were put out. His house was burned.

This should be a lesson for us. Even if it does not look like things will turn out right; even if it seems scary, we should fear God. He is greater than man.

Ebedmelech, the Ethiopian, feared God rather than man. When judgment came on Judah and Jerusalem, God protected Ebedmelech. God told Jeremiah, *"<sup>16</sup>Go and speak to Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring my words upon this city for evil, and not for good; and they shall be accomplished in that day before thee. <sup>17</sup>But I will deliver thee in that day, saith the LORD: and thou shalt not be given into the hand of the men of whom thou art afraid. <sup>18</sup>For I will*

*surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee: because thou hast put thy trust in me, saith the LORD."* (verses 16-18)

God promised Ebedmelech that when he brought His judgment on the city of Jerusalem, God would deliver him and not give him into the hands of the Chaldeans, of whom Ebedmelech was afraid. God would surely deliver him. He would not be killed with the sword. God would preserve his life because he had put his trust in the LORD. Ebedmelech did fear the Chaldeans, but he trusted in the LORD and he feared God more than he feared man.

Zedekiah feared man more than God, and he received God's judgment. Ebedmelech feared God more than man, and he received God's deliverance.

### **Rewards of Faithfulness**

*"<sup>10</sup>But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left of the poor of the people, which had nothing, in the land of Judah, and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time.*

*<sup>11</sup>Now Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, saying, <sup>12</sup>Take him, and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee."* (verses 10-12)

Jeremiah faithfully proclaimed God's word, even if it meant danger or prison. God honored that faithfulness and protected him. When judgment fell on Judah and Jerusalem and the king and many others were taken, God protected Jeremiah, and the Chaldeans showed mercy on him. He was allowed to stay in the land if he wished and dwell among those that were not taken captive.

### **Chapter 40**

*"<sup>2</sup>And the captain of the guard took Jeremiah, and said unto him, The LORD thy God hath pronounced this evil upon this place. <sup>3</sup>Now the LORD hath brought it, and done according as he hath said: because ye have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed his voice, therefore this thing is come upon you."* (verses 2,3)

Even the enemy recognized that Judah and Jerusalem were taken because God was judging them for their sin.

*"And now, behold, I loose thee this day from the chains which were upon thine hand. If it seem good unto thee to come with me into Babylon, come; and I will look well unto thee:*

*but if it seem ill unto thee to come with me into Babylon, forbear: behold, all the land is before thee: whither it seemeth good and convenient for thee to go, thither go."* (verse 4)

While many others were taken captive, Jeremiah was permitted to go wherever he would. God was taking care of Jeremiah just as He had promised. God takes care of those who are faithful to Him.

*"<sup>5</sup>Now while he was not yet gone back, he said, Go back also to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon hath made governor over the cities of Judah, and dwell with him among the people: or go wheresoever it seemeth convenient unto thee to go. So the captain of the guard gave him victuals and a reward, and let him go. <sup>6</sup>Then went Jeremiah unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah; and dwelt with him among the people that were left in the land."* (verses 5,6)

Not only did God protect Jeremiah, God provided for him -- food, and whatever finances he needed, and freedom as well. God blessed him because he feared and obeyed God.

### **Submit to Chastisement**

*"<sup>9</sup>And Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan sware unto them and to their men, saying, Fear not to serve the Chaldeans: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you. <sup>10</sup>As for me, behold, I will dwell at Mizpah to serve the Chaldeans, which will come unto us: but ye, gather ye wine, and summer fruits, and oil, and put them in your vessels, and dwell in your cities that ye have taken. <sup>11</sup>Likewise when all the Jews that were in Moab, and among the Ammonites, and in Edom, and that were in all the countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant of Judah, and that he had set over them Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan; <sup>12</sup>Even all the Jews returned out of all places whither they were driven, and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah, unto Mizpah, and gathered wine and summer fruits very much."* (verses 9-12)

If the people of Judah and Jerusalem would submit to the chastening of the LORD and to the rule of the Chaldeans, it would be well with them. God would take care of those who submitted to the chastisement. They had places to live and sufficient to eat.

## **Chapter 42**

*"<sup>1</sup>Then all the captains of the forces, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiah, and all the people from the least even unto the greatest, came near, <sup>2</sup>And said unto Jeremiah the prophet, Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the LORD thy God, even for all this remnant; (for we are left but a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us:) <sup>3</sup>That the LORD thy God may shew us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do." (verses 1-3)*

The king of Babylon had set Gedaliah up as governor over the land of Judah to take care of the remnant that were left there. However, Ishmael killed Gedaliah and took many Jews captive. Johanan, the son of Kareah and the captains of the forces that were with him went and recovered all the captives from Ishmael. This incident frightened Johanan and the rest of the people and they came to Jeremiah and asked him to pray for them and ask God what they should do. The sad thing is (as we will see later), Johanan and the people had already made up their minds what they would do. They only wanted God's approval on it.

*"Then Jeremiah the prophet said unto them, I have heard you; behold, I will pray unto the LORD your God according to your words; and it shall come to pass, that whatsoever thing the LORD shall answer you, I will declare it unto you; I will keep nothing back from you." (verse 4)*

Jeremiah agreed to pray for them and to tell them all that God said to him.

*"<sup>5</sup>Then they said to Jeremiah, The LORD be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all things for the which the LORD thy God shall send thee to us. <sup>6</sup>Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the LORD our God, to whom we send thee; that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the LORD our God." (verses 5,6)*

The people promised to obey whatever God said to them, whether it was something they wanted to do or not. But would they keep this promise?

When we are in trouble, do we beg God for help and promise to do things for Him that we do not really intend to do? Do we make promises to God when we are in difficulty, only to break those promises later?

*"<sup>7</sup>And it came to pass after ten days, that the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah. <sup>8</sup>Then called he Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces which were*

*with him, and all the people from the least even to the greatest, <sup>9</sup>And said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, unto whom ye sent me to present your supplication before him; <sup>10</sup>If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull you down, and I will plant you, and not pluck you up: for I repent me of the evil that I have done unto you. <sup>11</sup>Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are afraid; be not afraid of him, saith the LORD: for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand. <sup>12</sup>And I will shew mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land."* (verses 7-12)

Jeremiah presented the people's cause before the LORD. After ten days, the LORD answered him and gave instructions to the people. He assured them that if they would continue to stay in the land, He would protect them and build them up and provide for them. The king of Babylon would not harm them, and God would show them mercies and allow them to return to their own land. Even after the Chaldeans had taken the land and taken captives, God still gave the people a chance to repent and return to Him and do what is right. Would they take advantage of that opportunity?

How about America? Is God holding out opportunity after opportunity to us that we are rejecting? Perhaps He is extending His hand of mercy and His opportunities for our repentance, even at this late hour.

*"<sup>13</sup>But if ye say, We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the LORD your God, <sup>14</sup>Saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell: <sup>15</sup>And now therefore hear the word of the LORD, ye remnant of Judah; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; If ye wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt, and go to sojourn there; <sup>16</sup>Then it shall come to pass, that the sword, which ye feared, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine, whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there ye shall die. <sup>17</sup>So shall it be with all the men that set their faces to go into Egypt to sojourn there; they shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: and none of them shall remain or escape from the evil that I will bring upon them. <sup>18</sup>For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As mine anger and my fury hath been poured forth upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem; so shall my fury be poured forth upon you, when ye shall enter into Egypt: and ye shall be an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach; and ye shall see this place no more. <sup>19</sup>The LORD hath said concerning you, O ye remnant of Judah; Go ye not into Egypt: know certainly that I have admonished you this day."* (verses 13-19)

God returned His answer to the people. Stay in the land. Do not be afraid. Do not go into Egypt.



If the people would stay in the land and submit to chastisement, God would take care of them and protect them. If they looked to Egypt for help because they thought that they would find peace and plenty there, they would be disappointed. War and famine would follow them there, and there they would die. God admonished them, warned them, not to go into Egypt.

*"For ye dissembled in your hearts, when ye sent me unto the LORD your God, saying, Pray for us unto the LORD our God; and according unto all that the LORD our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do it." (verse 20)*

God knew and Jeremiah knew that the people had no plans to obey God. They had already decided what they were going to do before they asked Jeremiah to pray for them. They only wanted God to agree with their plans. But God did not agree. He had His own way, and it was different from their way.

*"<sup>21</sup>And now I have this day declared it to you; but ye have not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God, nor any thing for the which he hath sent me unto you. <sup>22</sup>Now therefore know certainly that ye shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, in the place whither ye desire to go and to sojourn." (verses 21,22)*

As he had promised, Jeremiah declared all the words of the LORD to the people. But he knew that they would not obey the LORD or do anything that God had told Jeremiah to tell them to do. Therefore, they were to know that they would die by the sword, the famine, and the pestilence. They could not escape trouble by running away; but they could have had God's protection if they had chosen to obey.

### **Chapter 43**

*"<sup>1</sup>And it came to pass, that when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking unto all the people all the words of the LORD their God, for which the LORD their God had sent him to them, even all these words, <sup>2</sup>Then spake Azariah the son of Hoshaiiah, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the proud men, saying unto Jeremiah, Thou speakest falsely: the LORD our God hath not sent thee to say, Go not into Egypt to sojourn there:" (verses 1,2)*

The men were too proud to listen to God and obey. They even told Jeremiah that he was not telling them the truth, that God had not sent him to tell them not to go into Egypt to sojourn there. They had already made up their minds that they were going to Egypt. When Jeremiah said that God told them not to go to Egypt, they decided that

Jeremiah was telling them a lie. The sad thing is that they were the ones believing the lie. Because they had convinced themselves of this lie, they refused to believe and obey the truth.

*"<sup>3</sup>But Baruch the son of Neriah setteth thee on against us, for to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they might put us to death, and carry us away captives into Babylon. <sup>4</sup>So Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, and all the people, obeyed not the voice of the LORD, to dwell in the land of Judah." (verses 3,4)*

The proud men decided that Jeremiah had brought them Baruch's word and not God's word. Baruch had set him against them so that they would be delivered into the hand of the Chaldeans to be put to death or carried away captive into Babylon. Jeremiah's word had always been the truth before, but they had not learned this yet. They could not see it because they could only see what they chose to see. They refused to see the truth. The proud men would not obey, the captains of the forces would not obey, all the people would not obey. All the ones who had come to Jeremiah and asked them to speak to the Lord for them would not obey.

### **Disobedience!**

*"<sup>5</sup>But Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, took all the remnant of Judah, that were returned from all nations, whither they had been driven, to dwell in the land of Judah; <sup>6</sup>Even men, and women, and children, and the king's daughters, and every person that Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch the son of Neriah. <sup>7</sup>So they came into the land of Egypt: for they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: thus came they even to Tahpanhes." (verses 5-7)*

Johanan and all the captains of the forces took everyone, even Jeremiah and Baruch, to the land of Egypt. They thought they could run away from trouble there. They deliberately disobeyed the word of the Lord.

### **Pronouncement of Judgment**

*"<sup>8</sup>Then came the word of the LORD unto Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying, <sup>9</sup>Take great stones in thine hand, and hide them in the clay in the brickkiln, which is at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah; <sup>10</sup>And say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid; and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them. <sup>11</sup>And when he*

*cometh, he shall smite the land of Egypt, and deliver such as are for death to death; and such as are for captivity to captivity; and such as are for the sword to the sword. <sup>12</sup>And I will kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt; and he shall burn them, and carry them away captives: and he shall array himself with the land of Egypt, as a shepherd putteth on his garment; and he shall go forth from thence in peace. <sup>13</sup>He shall break also the images of Bethshemesh, that is in the land of Egypt; and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians shall he burn with fire." (verses 8-13)*

Why did Johanan and the captains of the forces take Jeremiah and Baruch with them to Egypt? If they thought Baruch and Jeremiah were trying to get them to be killed or taken captive by the Chaldeans, why did they not just leave Baruch and Jeremiah there for the Chaldeans to take? Did they think that Jeremiah, God's man, would not speak to them in Egypt? Did they think that they could leave God behind by running away from where God told them to be?

The people could not run away from God or His word. Even in Egypt, God spoke to them through Jeremiah. In verse ten, God told them that Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon would come down into Egypt and set his throne where the stones were hidden in Pharaoh's brickkiln. The entry of Pharaoh's house was there, but the throne of Nebuchadrezzar would soon be there instead. When he came, he would smite the land of Egypt. Some would be killed. Others would be taken into captivity. The people of Judah were trying to run away from the Chaldeans; but the very people they feared would come to Egypt and overtake them there. When Nebuchadrezzar was finished with the land of Egypt, he would array himself with all that he wanted out of the land and break down the images of the gods of Egypt and burn the houses of the gods of Egypt with fire. The gods of Egypt would not save anyone. The gods of Egypt could not save anyone.

In Scripture, Egypt represents the world. We never can be protected by running to the world for help. The god of this world (Satan) seeks only to destroy. The many gods of this world have no power and cannot protect or save anyone. Fleeing to the world for help never helps. Therefore, let us flee to God!

## **Chapter 44**

### **Desolate Because of Their Wickedness**

*"<sup>1</sup>The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews which dwell in the land of Egypt, which dwell at Migdol, and at Tahpanhes, and at Noph, and in the country of Pathros, saying, <sup>2</sup>Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Ye have seen all the evil*

*that I have brought upon Jerusalem, and upon all the cities of Judah; and, behold, this day they are a desolation, and no man dwelleth therein, <sup>3</sup>Because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke me to anger, in that they went to burn incense, and to serve other gods, whom they knew not, neither they, ye, nor your fathers."*  
(verses 1-3)

God reminded the people who had fled to Egypt -- You saw what I did to Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah. Their wickedness provoked me to anger. They served other gods, gods that they knew not. Now these cities are left desolate and no man dwells in them.

God takes wickedness seriously and does not tolerate the worship of other gods. He will judge the cities and the people who forsake Him to serve other gods.

*"<sup>4</sup>Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate. <sup>5</sup>But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense unto other gods."*  
(verses 4,5)

How God pleaded with His people, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate"! God warned them. He sent His prophets. Early He arose and sent them so they could be warned before it was too late. But they would not listen to God's prophets. They would not be warned. They would not turn to God from their wickedness and would not stop serving other gods.

How many times has America been warned? How many times have we heard the truth of God's word? How many times? Will we hearken before it is too late?

### **God Asks "Why?"**

*"<sup>6</sup>Wherefore my fury and mine anger was poured forth, and was kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; and they are wasted and desolate, as at this day. <sup>7</sup>Therefore now thus saith the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; Wherefore commit ye this great evil against your souls, to cut off from you man and woman, child and suckling, out of Judah, to leave you none to remain..."* (verses 6,7)

"Wherefore?" God wanted to know. Why would you continue in your sin? Why would you provoke Me to pour out My wrath so that your cities are wasted and desolate? Why would you commit this great evil against your soul? Why would you bring judgment upon yourselves and your own people so that they are cut off before Me? Why?

*"<sup>8</sup>In that ye provoke me unto wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense unto other gods in the land of Egypt, whither ye be gone to dwell, that ye might cut yourselves off, and that ye might be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth?*

*<sup>9</sup>Have ye forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, and the wickedness of the kings of Judah, and the wickedness of their wives, and your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which they have committed in the land of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem?" (verses 8,9)*

What things did they do to provoke God to anger?

- They did the work of their own hands instead of God's work.
- They burned incense to other gods, even after they had fled to Egypt.
- They ran away to Egypt in disobedience to God's word.

These actions procured God's wrath to themselves and made them a curse and a reproach among the nations instead of the blessing God intended them to be.

*"They are not humbled even unto this day, neither have they feared, nor walked in my law, nor in my statutes, that I set before you and before your fathers." (verse 10)*

Even in the face of God's judgment, they would not humble themselves.

*"Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will set my face against you for evil, and to cut off all Judah." (verse 11)*

Because they would not humble themselves, God would set His face against them.

## **The Wages of Sin is Death**

*"<sup>12</sup>And I will take the remnant of Judah, that have set their faces to go into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, and they shall all be consumed, and fall in the land of Egypt; they shall even be consumed by the sword and by the famine: they shall die, from the least even unto the greatest, by the sword and by the famine: and they shall be an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach. <sup>13</sup>For I will punish them that dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: <sup>14</sup>So that none of the remnant of Judah, which are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall escape or remain, that they should return into the land of Judah, to the which they have a desire to return to dwell there: for none shall return but such as shall escape." (verses 12-14)*

All that rebel against God will die. They would all receive God's punishment. No one would get away from God's judgment. The wages of sin is death -- always.

## **Willful Disobedience**

*"<sup>15</sup>Then all the men which knew that their wives had burned incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying, <sup>16</sup>As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee." (verses 15,16)*

The people answered Jeremiah, "We will not hearken..." They willfully refused to hear and obey God's word.

*"But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil." (verse 17)*

We will do what we say and not what God says. That is what the people were telling Jeremiah. They said things were better when they did them their own way. Really? Did they forget about the Chaldeans besieging Jerusalem? Did they forget about the people who were killed and taken captive? Did they forget about Gedaliah being murdered and that they had to flee for their lives? When people choose to believe a lie, they will not believe the truth even if the evidence clearly points to the truth. These people had chosen to believe that their own way was better. They would not believe God, the One who spoke the truth.

*"<sup>20</sup>Then Jeremiah said unto all the people, to the men, and to the women, and to all the people which had given him that answer, saying, <sup>21</sup>The incense that ye burned in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, ye, and your fathers, your kings, and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the LORD remember them, and came it not into his mind? <sup>22</sup>So that the LORD could no longer bear, because of the evil of your doings, and because of the abominations which ye have committed; therefore is your land a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day." (verses 20-22)*

The LORD could no longer bear their evil doings, and He made the land desolate.

What will happen to our land if we continue in our evil doings?

*"Because ye have burned incense, and because ye have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD, nor walked in his law, nor in his statutes, nor in his testimonies; therefore this evil is happened unto you, as at this day." (verse 23)*

They would not listen to God's word, they would not obey; therefore, evil came upon them.

*"Yet a small number that escape the sword shall return out of the land of Egypt into the land of Judah, and all the remnant of Judah, that are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall know whose words shall stand, mine, or theirs." (verse 28)*

God would preserve a small remnant, and this remnant would know that His word stands and not theirs.

*"And this shall be a sign unto you, saith the LORD, that I will punish you in this place, that ye may know that my words shall surely stand against you for evil:" (verse 29)*

The punishment that God would bring upon the people of Judah would be a sign to them that His word shall stand against theirs.

Man's word can fail but God's word stands.

*"Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will give Pharaohhophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies, and into the hand of them that seek his life; as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, his enemy, and that sought his life." (verse 30)*

Pharaoh would not escape; so the people of Judah would not escape either. Judgment would sure come. God had given His word, and His word stands.

Willful disobedience to God brings judgment, and God's word will stand.

## **Chapter 45**

### **God's Promise to Baruch**

*"<sup>1</sup>The word that Jeremiah the prophet spake unto Baruch the son of Neriah, when he had written these words in a book at the mouth of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying, <sup>2</sup>Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, unto*

*thee, O Baruch; <sup>3</sup>Thou didst say, Woe is me now! for the LORD hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest. <sup>4</sup>Thus shalt thou say unto him, The LORD saith thus; Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land. <sup>5</sup>And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest." (verses 1-5)*

Baruch served Jeremiah, God's man, by writing in a book the words Jeremiah told him to write. When the Chaldeans took Judah and Jerusalem, Baruch was afraid and sad. He had already been afraid, now he knew that the Lord would take away the things he had. God encouraged him not to worry about things. His position and property and possessions may fade away. Baruch might be taken out of his land and into another land. But God would take care of him. God would preserve his life. God would protect him in every place that Baruch would go.

When we serve the Lord faithfully, God goes with us and takes care of us and protects us. No one can hurt us unless that would bring glory to God's name. Our life and breath and very being are in God's hands. We may be afraid, but no one can do anything to us unless God permits it. The Psalmist said, "The LORD *is* on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?" (Psalm 118:6) Trust in the Lord and do good. Obey God always. He will be with you and care for you wherever you go.

## **Chapter 46**

### **Pride Goes Before Destruction and a Fall**

*<sup>1</sup>The word of the LORD which came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Gentiles; <sup>2</sup>Against Egypt, against the army of Pharaohnecho king of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates in Carchemish, which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon smote in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah. <sup>3</sup>Order ye the buckler and shield, and draw near to battle. <sup>4</sup>Harness the horses; and get up, ye horsemen, and stand forth with your helmets; furbish the spears, and put on the brigandines. <sup>5</sup>Wherefore have I seen them dismayed and turned away back? and their mighty ones are beaten down, and are fled apace, and look not back: for fear was round about, saith the LORD. <sup>6</sup>Let not the swift flee away, nor the mighty man escape; they shall stumble, and fall toward the north by the river Euphrates. <sup>7</sup>Who is this that cometh up as a flood, whose waters are moved as the rivers? <sup>8</sup>Egypt riseth up like a flood, and his waters are moved like the rivers; and he saith, I will go up, and will cover the earth; I will destroy the city and the inhabitants thereof. <sup>9</sup>Come up, ye horses; and rage, ye chariots; and let the mighty men*



*come forth; the Ethiopians and the Libyans, that handle the shield; and the Lydians, that handle and bend the bow."* (verses 1-9)

Egypt was proud because of its greatness. The mighty men of war from Ethiopia and Libya would come to help them, and the Lydians too. Surely, they would not fall.

*"<sup>10</sup>For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates. <sup>11</sup>Go up into Gilead, and take balm, O virgin, the daughter of Egypt: in vain shalt thou use many medicines; for thou shalt not be cured. <sup>12</sup>The nations have heard of thy shame, and thy cry hath filled the land: for the mighty man hath stumbled against the mighty, and they are fallen both together."* (verses 10-12)

In spite of Egypt's great army and military skill; and in spite of all the mighty men of war that would come to help Egypt, it would surely fall. Egypt would fall because the day of vengeance from God would come upon it. The Lord GOD would avenge Himself of His adversaries. Though Egypt was great and powerful, Egypt was no match for God. None can lift themselves up against God and stand.

*"<sup>13</sup>The word that the LORD spake to Jeremiah the prophet, how Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon should come and smite the land of Egypt. <sup>14</sup>Declare ye in Egypt, and publish in Migdol, and publish in Noph and in Tahpanhes: say ye, Stand fast, and prepare thee; for the sword shall devour round about thee. <sup>15</sup>Why are thy valiant men swept away? they stood not, because the LORD did drive them. <sup>16</sup>He made many to fall, yea, one fell upon another: and they said, Arise, and let us go again to our own people, and to the land of our nativity, from the oppressing sword."* (verses 13-16)

Stand fast, Egypt, prepare yourself for battle; but you will not stand. Why were the valiant man swept away? Because the LORD did drive them. The LORD made many to fall, even to fall one upon another. Egypt was very great, but after God's judgment the nations heard of their shame. Egypt fell because the Lord brought them down.

### **Destruction Cometh**

*"<sup>17</sup>They did cry there, Pharaoh king of Egypt is but a noise; he hath passed the time appointed. <sup>18</sup>As I live, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts, Surely as Tabor is among the mountains, and as Carmel by the sea, so shall he come. <sup>19</sup>O thou daughter dwelling in Egypt, furnish thyself to go into captivity: for Noph shall be waste and*

*desolate without an inhabitant. <sup>20</sup>Egypt is like a very fair heifer, but destruction cometh; it cometh out of the north."* (verses 17-20)

Pharaoh, once great, was now nothing but a noise, a tale of history. His time had come and gone. Egyptians, prepare yourself to go into captivity. You are fair now, but that will not last. Destruction is coming!

*"Also her hired men are in the midst of her like fatted bullocks; for they also are turned back, and are fled away together: they did not stand, because the day of their calamity was come upon them, and the time of their visitation."* (verse 21)

The hired men fled because calamity had come. There was captivity, waste, and desolation.

*"<sup>22</sup>The voice thereof shall go like a serpent; for they shall march with an army, and come against her with axes, as hewers of wood. <sup>23</sup>They shall cut down her forest, saith the LORD, though it cannot be searched; because they are more than the grasshoppers, and are innumerable."* (verses 22,23)

Though the forest was great with trees that could not be counted, it would all be cut down.

*"The daughter of Egypt shall be confounded; she shall be delivered into the hand of the people of the north."* (verse 24)

Egypt, though once great, would surely fall.

*"The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saith; Behold, I will punish the multitude of No, and Pharaoh, and Egypt, with their gods, and their kings; even Pharaoh, and all them that trust in him:"* (verse 25)

Even the Gentile nations would be punished, along with their gods and all those that trusted in the earthly leaders. The kings of the nations are but men, and the gods of the nations have no power. None can stand against God.

### **God's Promise and Protection of Israel**

*"But fear not thou, O my servant Jacob, and be not dismayed, O Israel: for, behold, I will save thee from afar off, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and be in rest and at ease, and none shall make him afraid."* (verse 27)

One day Israel would return from captivity and be at rest, at ease, and free from fear.

*"Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the LORD: for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished."* (verse 28)

Though God would destroy other nations, He would not make a full end of Israel. God would punish and correct Israel, but He would not destroy them and He would protect them as He had promised.

No matter what His people may do, God always keeps His promises. Though we fail Him, He will never fail us.

## **Chapter 48**

### **Moab Cursed for Trusting in Their Own Works and in Their Treasures**

*"<sup>1</sup>Against Moab thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Woe unto Nebo! for it is spoiled: Kiriathaim is confounded and taken: Misgab is confounded and dismayed.*

*<sup>2</sup>There shall be no more praise of Moab: in Heshbon they have devised evil against it; come, and let us cut it off from being a nation. Also thou shalt be cut down, O Madmen; the sword shall pursue thee. <sup>3</sup>A voice of crying shall be from Horonaim, spoiling and great destruction. <sup>4</sup>Moab is destroyed; her little ones have caused a cry to be heard. <sup>5</sup>For in the going up of Luhith continual weeping shall go up; for in the going down of Horonaim the enemies have heard a cry of destruction. <sup>6</sup>Flee, save your lives, and be like the heath in the wilderness. <sup>7</sup>For because thou hast trusted in thy works and in thy treasures, thou shalt also be taken: and Chemosh shall go forth into captivity with his priests and his princes together. <sup>8</sup>And the spoiler shall come upon every city, and no city shall escape: the valley also shall perish, and the plain shall be destroyed, as the LORD hath spoken. <sup>9</sup>Give wings unto Moab, that it may flee and get away: for the cities thereof shall be desolate, without any to dwell therein."* (verses 1-9)

No amount of hard work or treasures of riches can save a nation. The nation that depends upon its own works and its treasures instead of trusting in God will be destroyed. That is what happened to Moab. The result was weeping, spoiling, and great destruction. People were fleeing, even the priests and the princes (rulers). No city would escape. There is no escaping God's judgment.

America, let us consider our ways as a nation. Are we trusting in our own works, our military might, or perhaps even our President? Do we think we are powerful enough and rich enough to take care of our problems? We must watch out! The nation that depends upon its own works and its treasures instead of trusting in God will be destroyed. We should trust in God. Let us examine ourselves.

In what or in whom do we trust?

*"Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood." (verse 10)*

God had appointed the destruction of Moab and a curse would be upon the one who did not carry out God's appointment completely but kept back His sword to spare those he wanted to spare. We cringe at this thought today, but God is righteous; and God knows how He wants His judgment to be carried out. It is not up to us to determine how we think God should be or what He should do or what He should ordain.

However, it is the first part of the verse I want to think on, "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully." Any work that appears to be done for the LORD but is really done for personal gain or for elevation of self in others' eyes, is done deceitfully. God says that one who does His work this way is cursed.

Has God given us a job to do? How are we doing it -- for God's glory or for self? If we do not do it for God's glory, it will only bring a curse and not a blessing.

### **Sin Brings God's Judgment**

*"<sup>13</sup>And Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel their confidence. <sup>14</sup>How say ye, We are mighty and strong men for the war? <sup>15</sup>Moab is spoiled, and gone up out of her cities, and his chosen young men are gone down to the slaughter, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts. <sup>16</sup>The calamity of Moab is near to come, and his affliction hasteth fast. <sup>17</sup>All ye that are about him, bemoan him; and all ye that know his name, say, How is the strong staff broken, and the beautiful rod!" (verses 13-17)*

Moab was judged just like Israel. Sin in both Israel and the Gentile nations is judged. Just as God is not a respecter of persons in regards to whom He will save or not save; God is also not a respecter of persons in regards to whom He will judge or not judge. Sin is sin, and God will judge sin.

## Moab Judged Because He Magnified Himself Against the LORD

*"<sup>26</sup>Make ye him drunken: for he magnified himself against the LORD... <sup>29</sup>We have heard the pride of Moab, (he is exceeding proud) his loftiness, and his arrogancy, and his pride, and the haughtiness of his heart. <sup>30</sup>I know his wrath, saith the LORD; but it shall not be so; his lies shall not so effect it." (verses 26a, 29, and 30)*

The reason that Moab was judged as a nation was that they were proud and arrogant and haughty. They were full of lies, and they magnified themselves against the LORD. They lifted themselves up, but God would bring them down.

## Weep When God's Enemies Are Judged

*"<sup>31</sup>Therefore will I howl for Moab, and I will cry out for all Moab; mine heart shall mourn for the men of Kirheres. <sup>32</sup>O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer: thy plants are gone over the sea, they reach even to the sea of Jazer: the spoiler is fallen upon thy summer fruits and upon thy vintage. <sup>33</sup>And joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field, and from the land of Moab; and I have caused wine to fail from the winepresses: none shall tread with shouting; their shouting shall be no shouting. <sup>34</sup>From the cry of Heshbon even unto Elealeh, and even unto Jahaz, have they uttered their voice, from Zoar even unto Horonaim, as an heifer of three years old: for the waters also of Nimrim shall be desolate." (verses 31-34)*

Judging Moab did not bring joy to God. God wept because of the punishment that had to be carried out upon Moab. Moab was a place at ease. They were full of commerce. Their fruit and wine were shipped to other countries over the sea. The land was fruitful and brought forth plentifully. All this would be gone. The spoiler would come and take it. The land, the food, the wine, and the water would be spoiled because of Moab's sin.

God weeps when His enemies are punished. God weeps when He punishes those who are proud against Him. We should weep too. We should not say, "Good, it's about time they got what was coming to them!" Some who call themselves Christians have said such awful things as, "Hell has a big place just for them," or "I hope they rot in hell." What a terrible thing to say, and what a terrible way to think!

Proverbs 24:17,18 warns, "<sup>17</sup>Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth: <sup>18</sup>Lest the LORD see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him." If we rejoice at our enemy's punishment or take joy in his fall, this displeases the Lord.

It does not make the Lord happy to punish people for their sins. Lamentations 3:32,33 says, "<sup>32</sup>But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. <sup>33</sup>For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men." God is grieved when He sees people hurt, even if their hurt is the result of their own sin. His heart is heavy and saddened. Ours should be too. Each soul lives somewhere for eternity. When that soul rebels against God and dies in its sins, that soul is lost forever. God cares. Do we?

### **The Consequences of Sin are Destruction, Pain, Shame and Sorrow**

*"<sup>36</sup>Therefore mine heart shall sound for Moab like pipes, and mine heart shall sound like pipes for the men of Kirheres: because the riches that he hath gotten are perished. <sup>37</sup>For every head shall be bald, and every beard clipped: upon all the hands shall be cuttings, and upon the loins sackcloth. <sup>38</sup>There shall be lamentation generally upon all the housetops of Moab, and in the streets thereof: for I have broken Moab like a vessel wherein is no pleasure, saith the LORD. <sup>39</sup>They shall howl, saying, How is it broken down! how hath Moab turned the back with shame! so shall Moab be a derision and a dismaying to all them about him. <sup>40</sup>For thus saith the LORD; Behold, he shall fly as an eagle, and shall spread his wings over Moab. <sup>41</sup>Kerioth is taken, and the strong holds are surprised, and the mighty men's hearts in Moab at that day shall be as the heart of a woman in her pangs. <sup>42</sup>And Moab shall be destroyed from being a people, because he hath magnified himself against the LORD." (verses 36-42)*

A formerly prosperous and beautiful Moab would be full of weeping, destruction, and desolation. The Lord said His own heart would sound for Moab like pipes. God's heart ached because of their pain and destruction.

Why was Moab being destroyed from being a people?

Because Moab had magnified himself against the LORD. No one can magnify themselves against the LORD and win. God says, "I *am* the LORD: that *is* my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." (Isaiah 42:8) Moab served false gods and they magnified themselves. They got glory to themselves and did not give God the glory. God punished them because His glory cannot go to another.

God would not put up with a nation serving other gods and giving other gods glory. He said, "*Moreover I will cause to cease in Moab, saith the LORD, him that offereth in the high places, and him that burneth incense to his gods.*" (Jeremiah 48:35) There would be no more sacrifice to other gods in Moab. God would cut off all those who sacrificed and burned incense to false gods. The worship of false gods in Moab would cease.

These things should cause us to examine our hearts and confess our sins and the sins of our nation. What other gods might we be serving? What other gods does our nation serve. When God cut off those who served false gods in Moab, Moab was destroyed as a nation. If God would do the same in America and cut off those who serve false gods, would we have a nation left?

### **Woe to Those Nations that Give Glory to Themselves Instead of God**

*"<sup>43</sup>Fear, and the pit, and the snare, shall be upon thee, O inhabitant of Moab, saith the LORD. <sup>44</sup>He that fleeth from the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that getteth up out of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for I will bring upon it, even upon Moab, the year of their visitation, saith the LORD. <sup>45</sup>They that fled stood under the shadow of Heshbon because of the force: but a fire shall come forth out of Heshbon, and a flame from the midst of Sihon, and shall devour the corner of Moab, and the crown of the head of the tumultuous ones. <sup>46</sup>Woe be unto thee, O Moab! the people of Chemosh perisheth: for thy sons are taken captives, and thy daughters captives." (verses 43-46)*

Because Moab magnified themselves against the Lord, they would have fear. Some would run from fear and fall in the pit. Those who escaped the pit would be caught in the snare. If some escaped the snare and fled to Heshbon, even there they would experience God's judgment. There is no escaping the judgment of God. Heartache would come as people would see their sons and their daughters taken captive. How much sorrow there would be as people perished! Sin has such a high price. Do we really want to pay it?

### **A Remnant for Moab**

*"Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days, saith the LORD. Thus far is the judgment of Moab." (verse 47)*

Even among the people of Moab there would be a small remnant and God would bring them back from their captivity. Could it be that a few of the people feared God as a result of the testimony of Naomi who had lived there generations before? Our stand for the Lord now could affect a whole nation generations later.

God, help us do right always so that there will be a remnant of people who fear God even in the days of spiritual famine and judgment for sin.

## **Chapter 49**

### **Beautiful Lands and Great Treasures Cannot Save**

*"<sup>4</sup>Wherefore gloriest thou in the valleys, thy flowing valley, O backsliding daughter? that trusted in her treasures, saying, Who shall come unto me? <sup>5</sup>Behold, I will bring a fear upon thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts, from all those that be about thee; and ye shall be driven out every man right forth; and none shall gather up him that wandereth."  
(verses 4,5)*

Ammon had taken over Israel and inherited her lands. God pronounced great punishment on Ammon for their treatment of Israel. The king and the priests and the princes would go into captivity. Even more horrifying -- the city of Rabbah would be a heap and her daughters would be burnt with fire.

Ammon trusted in their lands. They were in a valley, a beautiful valley, and thought that they were safe there. Perhaps they were safe from a human standpoint, but their trust was in the wrong thing. They would not escape the judgment of God. God would bring fear upon them and upon all that were round about them. They would be driven out. If some wandered or lagged behind, no one would go help them and bring them out. The judgment of God is frightening.

### **A Remnant for Ammon**

*"And afterward I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon, saith the LORD." (verse 6)*

Even among the Ammonites there would be a remnant. Perhaps God was continuing to show His mercy because of Lot, many generations later. God had mercy on Lot when Lot fled Sodom and Gomorrah. Although Lot had not walked with the Lord as he should have, God still called him "just Lot." (See II Peter 2:7-9) The people of Ammon were Lot's descendants by his daughter who seduced him when he was drunk. Yet, God still had mercy on him. Often God's mercy extends for many generations to come.

### **Earthly Wisdom Cannot Preserve a Nation**

*"<sup>7</sup>Concerning Edom, thus saith the LORD of hosts; Is wisdom no more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? is their wisdom vanished? <sup>8</sup>Flee ye, turn back, dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan; for I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, the time that I will visit him... <sup>10</sup>But I have made Esau bare, I have uncovered his secret places,*



*and he shall not be able to hide himself: his seed is spoiled, and his brethren, and his neighbours, and he is not... <sup>13</sup>For I have sworn by myself, saith the LORD, that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse; and all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes... <sup>15</sup>For, lo, I will make thee small among the heathen, and despised among men." (verses 7,8,10,13, and 15)*

Edom was known for its wisdom. The men of Edom were great men in the sight of others. They had secret places where they hid from trouble. They knew how to get along and take care of themselves and defend themselves. But earthly wisdom is not enough. God would uncover their hiding places. None would be able to hide himself, and Edom would be spoiled, because no one can hide from God or escape His judgment. Whereas once they were esteemed and great among the nations, now God would bring them down and make them despised. Surely, it is vain to trust in earthly wisdom.

### **National Pride and Strength is not Enough to Make a Nation Stand**

*"Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the LORD.<sup>17</sup> Also Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. <sup>18</sup>As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the LORD, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it." (verses 16-18)*

Edom was great and powerful and a terror to those around them. This made them seem invincible, and they trusted in their power and their own wisdom. They were proud of their strength and their military might and abilities, but this could not save them.

Matthew Henry explains in his commentary, "They had been a terror to all their neighbours; every body feared them and truckled\*to them, and this made them proud and conceited of themselves and their own strength, and very secure; because no neighbouring nation durst meddle with them, they thought no nation in the world durst. Their country was much of it mountainous, having many passes which they thought themselves able to make good against any invader; but this terribleness of theirs deceived them, and so did their imaginary inaccessibleness; they did not prove so strong as they were formidable, nor so safe as they were secure. High as they are, God will bring them down; for, as *there is no wisdom*, so there is no might *against the Lord*."

\*Truckle -- behave in a weak or servile way; that is, everyone gave in to them and everyone was subservient to them because of fear.

Obadiah 1:3,4 and 8-10 describe more of God's judgment on Edom, "<sup>3</sup>The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? <sup>4</sup>Though thou exalt *thyself* as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD... <sup>8</sup>Shall I not in that day, saith the LORD, even destroy the wise *men* out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau? <sup>9</sup>And thy mighty *men*, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter. <sup>10</sup>For *thy* violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever."

People cannot hide from God. No nation is secure from God's wrath. Judgment for sin and destruction will be complete.

Jeremiah also gives more description of how complete the destruction will be.

*"<sup>29</sup>Their tents and their flocks shall they take away: they shall take to themselves their curtains, and all their vessels, and their camels; and they shall cry unto them, Fear is on every side. <sup>30</sup>Flee, get you far off, dwell deep, O ye inhabitants of Hazor, saith the LORD; for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath taken counsel against you, and hath conceived a purpose against you. <sup>31</sup>Arise, get you up unto the wealthy nation, that dwelleth without care, saith the LORD, which have neither gates nor bars, which dwell alone. <sup>32</sup>And their camels shall be a booty, and the multitude of their cattle a spoil: and I will scatter into all winds them that are in the utmost corners; and I will bring their calamity from all sides thereof, saith the LORD. <sup>33</sup>And Hazor shall be a dwelling for dragons, and a desolation for ever: there shall no man abide there, nor any son of man dwell in it."*  
(Jeremiah 49:29-32)

### **The Judgment of Elam**

*"<sup>34</sup>The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against Elam in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, saying, <sup>35</sup>Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will break the bow of Elam, the chief of their might. <sup>36</sup>And upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and will scatter them toward all those winds; and there shall be no nation whither the outcasts of Elam shall not come. <sup>37</sup>For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies, and before them that seek their life: and I will bring evil upon them, even my fierce anger, saith the LORD; and I will send the sword after them, till I have consumed them: <sup>38</sup>And I will set my throne in Elam, and will destroy from thence the king and the princes, saith the LORD."* (verses 34-38)

After the Lord pronounces His judgment on Edom, He lists a number of cities and describes the judgment that will come upon each city. Elam is different from the other cities in some ways.

Elam may refer to a province in Persia, but it may also refer to Elymias, a city near Judea, which helped Nebuchadnezzar against Judea. Because the context of these chapters is the Babylonian captivity and also covers the countries and cities that treated Israel and Judah harshly during this time of siege and captivity, it is likely that it refers to the Elymias that was near Judea. All the other places mentioned after the judgment of Edom were cities, so it seems that Elam is likely a city as well. This city was still part of Persia.

Elam was a powerful city, famous for its bowmen and also having chariots and horsemen. However, all this might would not do Elam any good. God would send judgment on Elam from all directions under heaven. There would be no nation to which the Elamites would not be scattered. God would cause the Elamites to be dismayed before their enemies. Their might would no longer help them. Those who sought their life would overtake them. All this would happen because the LORD would pour out His fierce anger upon them and consume them until they were no more a distinct nation.

Instead of Elam having its king to reign over it, God would set up His throne there. He would show that He Himself is King. This verse likely has some prophetic significance, but I am not sure as to what that is. That would be a separate study. However, we know that Elam would no longer be great. They would no longer be a nation. They would no longer have their own king. The LORD would set Himself up King instead.

*(Some help from Jamieson Fausset Brown Bible Commentary)*

### **A Remnant for Elam**

*"But it shall come to pass in the latter days, that I will bring again the captivity of Elam, saith the LORD." (verse 39)*

One way in which Elam was different from other cities mentioned in this chapter is that there would be a remnant for Elam and the LORD would bring again their captivity. Full restoration began in gospel times. The Elamites were among the first people to receive the gospel and are mentioned by name in Acts chapter two. <sup>8</sup>"And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? <sup>9</sup>Parthians, and Medes, and **Elamites**, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia..." (Acts 2:8,9) The Elamites were not only among the first ones to receive the Gospel, but they received it in their own language.

There must have been somebody in the history of the Elamites who feared God, and God extended mercy to this city for that person's sake. That was the pattern seen for other nations in this book of Jeremiah.

Let us learn a lesson. Let us fear God above everything else. We never know how it will benefit our nation. Perhaps one day God will bring great judgment on our nation, but a remnant might be spared because we feared God. God never forgets those who fear Him and extends mercy to many generations because of those who fear Him. We could be responsible for God's mercy on a remnant of our nation even generations to come. What a solemn thing to think about!

## **Chapter 50**

### **Weeping and Seeking the LORD**

*"In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the LORD their God." (verse 4)*

There is coming a day when Israel and Judah will be reunited. Then they will go together to seek the LORD, weeping as they go. They will no longer be proud but will seek the LORD together and with humility.

*"They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten." (verse 5)*

Israel and Judah will seek the LORD with their whole heart.

*"My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace." (verse 6)*

"My people," God said, "hath been lost sheep." They were lost because they had bad shepherds. Their shepherds did not care for them properly. Instead of leading them to good pastures, those shepherds led them astray on the mountains. They wandered and did not even remember their resting place. They were restless and weary because they had no one to lead them to rest.

How we need good shepherds in our nation today, shepherds that will take great pains to care properly for the flock over which God has made them overseers. Some simply neglect the sheep and leave them to try to find their own way, and they end up wandering. Some lead the flock astray themselves. Either way, many sheep are hurt and lost. Many are restless and weary because they have no one to lead them to their resting place.

*"All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, even the LORD, the hope of their fathers." (verse 7)*

God's people were devoured by their adversaries because they had no shepherd to protect them. The adversaries devoured them without mercy, saying that they did not offend because God's people had sinned against the LORD. They were saying that God's people were getting what they deserved because they had sinned against the LORD, the hope of their fathers. They had left their source of hope, so their adversaries felt they were justified in doing them hurt.

### **God Will Judge Those Who Destroy Israel**

*"<sup>8</sup>Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he goats before the flocks. <sup>9</sup>For, lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country: and they shall set themselves in array against her; from thence she shall be taken: their arrows shall be as of a mighty expert man; none shall return in vain. <sup>10</sup>And Chaldea shall be a spoil: all that spoil her shall be satisfied, saith the LORD. <sup>11</sup>Because ye were glad, because ye rejoiced, O ye destroyers of mine heritage, because ye are grown fat as the heifer at grass, and bellow as bulls; <sup>12</sup>Your mother shall be sore confounded; she that bare you shall be ashamed: behold, the hindermost of the nations shall be a wilderness, a dry land, and a desert." (verses 8-12)*

Babylon felt that it had not offended in the way it treated Israel because, after all, Israel deserved it because they had turned away from their God. But Babylon had offended, they had offended a holy God. Israel was God's people. He was chastening them, but He still loved them. Chaldea had spoiled Israel; now God would cause Chaldea to be spoiled, and those who spoiled her would be satisfied by the spoil they had taken. An assembly of great nations would come from the north and set themselves in array against her. Their armies would shoot at her, and the arrows would be as the arrows of mighty, expert men. No arrow would miss its mark.

Why would all this come upon Chaldea? Because they were glad and rejoiced to destroy God's heritage. Because they were grown fat through spoiling the people of God. Now they would have heartache. Their mothers would be bereaved and ashamed. Part of the land would become desolate, like a wilderness.

Never rejoice at the judgment of God upon another. God may turn that judgment around and judge you.

### **Never Rejoice at Another's Judgment or God May Turn that Judgment on You**

*"<sup>13</sup>Because of the wrath of the LORD it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate: every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues. <sup>14</sup>Put yourselves in array against Babylon round about: all ye that bend the bow, shoot at her, spare no arrows: for she hath sinned against the LORD. <sup>15</sup>Shout against her round about: she hath given her hand: her foundations are fallen, her walls are thrown down: for it is the vengeance of the LORD: take vengeance upon her; as she hath done, do unto her." (verses 13-15)*

Babylon rejoiced in Israel's judgment. They rejoiced in the way they treated Israel and grew fat on their spoiling of her. But God would pour out His wrath on Babylon. The land would be desolate and uninhabited and a wonder to all those who passed by. "Shoot at her, spare no arrows," the LORD said, "for she hath sinned against the LORD." As Babylon had not spared Israel, God would not spare Babylon. Her foundations would fall, and her walls would be thrown down. This is the vengeance of the LORD. The LORD would take vengeance upon her. As Babylon did to Israel, so would it be done to Babylon.

You always reap what you sow. Make sure you do not sow evil and destruction; because, if you do, that is what you will reap.

*"Cut off the sower from Babylon, and him that handleth the sickle in the time of harvest: for fear of the oppressing sword they shall turn every one to his people, and they shall flee every one to his own land." (verse 16)*

Vengeance upon sin brings fear. Fear God, and you will have no need to fear His vengeance.

## **God Will Restore and Satisfy His People**

*"<sup>17</sup>Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones. <sup>18</sup>Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria. <sup>19</sup>And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied upon mount Ephraim and Gilead." (verses 17-19)*

God will bring back His people and satisfy their soul.

*"In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve." (verse 20)*

God will pardon His people, and their sin will be found no more.

## **Destruction to Those Who Fight Against God**

*"Go up against the land of Merathaim, even against it, and against the inhabitants of Pekod: waste and utterly destroy after them, saith the LORD, and do according to all that I have commanded thee." (verse 21)*

On the other hand, those who sin against God will be wasted and utterly destroyed.

*"<sup>22</sup>A sound of battle is in the land, and of great destruction. <sup>23</sup>How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken! how is Babylon become a desolation among the nations! <sup>24</sup>I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware: thou art found, and also caught, because thou hast striven against the LORD." (verses 22-24)*

No one can fight against God and win.

*"The LORD hath opened his armoury, and hath brought forth the weapons of his indignation: for this is the work of the Lord GOD of hosts in the land of the Chaldeans." (verse 25)*

Vengeance against nations is the work of the Lord.

*"Come against her from the utmost border, open her storehouses: cast her up as heaps, and destroy her utterly: let nothing of her be left." (verse 26)*

When God is done, there will be nothing left.

### **The Proud Will Fall but God Will Give Rest to His People**

Let us take warning and fear God and treat His people Israel well. We do not want to mistreat Israel, for then we will be fighting against God. If we fight against God as a nation, we may one day wind up with nothing left. Let us fear God and love Israel.

*"<sup>27</sup>Slay all her bullocks; let them go down to the slaughter: woe unto them! for their day is come, the time of their visitation. <sup>28</sup>The voice of them that flee and escape out of the land of Babylon, to declare in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God, the vengeance of his temple. <sup>29</sup>Call together the archers against Babylon: all ye that bend the bow, camp against it round about; let none thereof escape: recompense her according to her work; according to all that she hath done, do unto her: for she hath been proud against the LORD, against the Holy One of Israel." (verses 27-29)*

None will escape because they were proud against the LORD, the Holy One of Israel.

*"<sup>30</sup>Therefore shall her young men fall in the streets, and all her men of war shall be cut off in that day, saith the LORD. <sup>31</sup>Behold, I am against thee, O thou most proud, saith the Lord GOD of hosts: for thy day is come, the time that I will visit thee. <sup>32</sup>And the most proud shall stumble and fall, and none shall raise him up: and I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it shall devour all round about him." (verses 30-32)*

The LORD is against the proud and will destroy them.

*"<sup>33</sup>Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The children of Israel and the children of Judah were oppressed together: and all that took them captives held them fast; they refused to let them go. <sup>34</sup>Their Redeemer is strong; the LORD of hosts is his name: he shall thoroughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon." (verses 33,34)*

The Redeemer of Israel is strong. He will plead Israel's cause, and He will give them rest. God will give rest to His people



## Babylon Was Judged Because of Her Liars

*"<sup>35</sup>A sword is upon the Chaldeans, saith the LORD, and upon the inhabitants of Babylon, and upon her princes, and upon her wise men . <sup>36</sup>A sword is upon **the liars**; and they shall dote: a sword is upon her mighty men; and they shall be dismayed." (verses 35,36)*

What about America? Do we have lots of liars? Does God put up with lying? If God looked at our country and judged by whether or not we were full of liars, would we pass God's judgment or would we be partakers of it?

## Babylon Was Judged Because of Their False Gods

*"<sup>37</sup>A sword is upon their horses, and upon their chariots, and upon all the mingled people that are in the midst of her; and they shall become as women: a sword is upon her treasures; and they shall be robbed. <sup>38</sup>A drought is upon her waters; and they shall be dried up: **for it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols.**" (verses 37,38)*

Do we have false gods in America? What about money? Think of [the woman who went into the outdoor dining area at Youtube headquarters and opened fire](#) because she was angry at Youtube for taking away the money she got through advertisements. Yes, Youtube is reaping what it has sowed, and sadly, many other people are reaping what Youtube sowed as well. But this woman was still responsible for her actions. She was willing to murder people because a small amount of money was taken away from her. She wounded at least three people, including her boyfriend and then killed herself. Did it do her any good to take vengeance? Can she enjoy money where she is now? She couldn't take it with her. Money was her god.

What about me? What about you? Are we worshiping the false god of money? Think about it!

## Sin Brings Desolation

*"<sup>39</sup>Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell there, and the owls shall dwell therein: and it shall be no more inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. <sup>40</sup>As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the LORD; so shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein." (verses 39,40)*

Because of the sins of Babylon, she would be desolate. No one would dwell in her again. Only the wild animals would live there. The people of Babylon **were proud**, they **were liars**, and they **chose to worship other gods**. Now, they would reap the consequences of their choices, and their land would be left desolate and none would escape the judgment of God.

### **No Mercy to Those That Fight Against God and Harm His People**

*"<sup>41</sup>Behold, a people shall come from the north, and a great nation, and many kings shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. <sup>42</sup>They shall hold the bow and the lance: they are cruel, and will not shew mercy: their voice shall roar like the sea, and they shall ride upon horses, every one put in array, like a man to the battle, against thee, O daughter of Babylon." (verses 41,42)*

There is no mercy for those that fight against God and harm His people.

*"<sup>43</sup>The king of Babylon hath heard the report of them, and his hands waxed feeble: anguish took hold of him, and pangs as of a woman in travail. <sup>44</sup>Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan unto the habitation of the strong: but I will make them suddenly run away from her: and who is a chosen man, that I may appoint over her? for who is like me? and who will appoint me the time? and who is that shepherd that will stand before me? <sup>45</sup>Therefore hear ye the counsel of the LORD, that he hath taken against Babylon; and his purposes, that he hath purposed against the land of the Chaldeans: Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out: surely he shall make their habitation desolate with them." (verses 43-45)*

Those that fight against God will become so weak that even the least of the flock can rout them out. Babylon would be unable to resist the judgment of God.

Take heed! Do not fight against God!

*"At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved, and the cry is heard among the nations." (verse 46)*

Babylon's fall will shock the nations. They were very great and strong and proud; but they will be gone. There will be nothing left. Sin may bring some seeming benefits for a season, but those who serve it will find themselves with nothing left in the end. Prosperity may linger for a moment, but they will find themselves in utter destruction.

On the other hand, those who fear God may have trouble now; but this trouble will only endure for a moment. Joy will come in the morning. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy *cometh* in the morning." (Psalm 30:5b)

## **Jeremiah 51**

### **God Will Not Forsake His Own**

*"<sup>4</sup>Thus the slain shall fall in the land of the Chaldeans, and they that are thrust through in her streets. <sup>5</sup>For Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the LORD of hosts; though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel." (Jeremiah 51:4,5)*

Israel had forsaken God, but God did not forsake them. Even when God's people fail Him, God never fails His people. He always cares for His people and has compassion on them, even if He must chasten them.

*"<sup>6</sup>Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD's vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence. <sup>7</sup>Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad. <sup>8</sup>Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed. <sup>9</sup>We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country: for her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies. <sup>10</sup>The LORD hath brought forth our righteousness: come, and let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God." (verses 6-10)*

When judgment came upon Babylon, Israel came out of her and back to the LORD and declared His works. Likewise, when we see the judgment God is going to bring upon this world, we should come out and separate ourselves so that we are not partakers of their deeds or of their judgment. "<sup>17</sup>Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, <sup>18</sup>And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (II Corinthians 6:17,18)

## **Evil Will Have an End**

### **The Danger of Covetousness**

*"<sup>11</sup>Make bright the arrows; gather the shields: the LORD hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for his device is against Babylon, to destroy it; because it is the vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance of his temple. <sup>12</sup>Set up the standard upon the walls of Babylon, make the watch strong, set up the watchmen, prepare the ambushes: for the LORD hath both devised and done that which he spake against the inhabitants of Babylon. <sup>13</sup>O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness." (verses 11-13)*

Evil will have an end. That end is destruction. Several times in chapters fifty and fifty-one of Jeremiah, God repeats that the judgment of Babylon is the vengeance of the LORD. The Lord devised it and brought it to pass. Several specific sins are listed as reasons for God's judgment upon Babylon. This passage lists yet another one of these sins -- covetousness. According to Webster's 1913 unabridged dictionary of the English language, "covetousness" means, "A strong or inordinate desire of obtaining and possessing some supposed good; excessive desire for riches or money; -- in a bad sense."

Covetousness also refers to a strong desire to have what is not one's own. For example, in Exodus 20:17, God says not to covet anything that is your neighbor's. If we have a strong desire for anything that someone else has and we do not have it; or if we have a strong desire for anything that we do not have and are not able to get, we are guilty of covetousness? Do you think this is a sin that is prevalent in America? In light of this, do you think that we should fear, lest we receive God's judgment too?

### **The True God vs. False Gods**

*"<sup>14</sup>The LORD of hosts hath sworn by himself, saying, Surely I will fill thee with men, as with caterpillers; and they shall lift up a shout against thee. <sup>15</sup>He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding." (verses 14,15)*

God is the maker and controller of all things.

*"When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens; and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth: he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures." (verse 16)*

God controls the waves, rain, lightning, and wind by His voice.

*"<sup>17</sup>Every man is brutish by his knowledge; every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them. <sup>18</sup>They are vanity, the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish." (verses 17,18)*

God's work is by knowledge. Man's work is by error; it is vain and its results will perish. The ones who make the graven images will be confused, disappointed and ashamed because their gods are false gods. There is no breath in them. They cannot protect anyone. The false gods will but perish.

*"<sup>19</sup>The portion of Jacob is not like them; for he is the former of all things: and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: the LORD of hosts is his name. <sup>20</sup>Thou art my battle axe and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms; <sup>21</sup>And with thee will I break in pieces the horse and his rider; and with thee will I break in pieces the chariot and his rider; <sup>22</sup>With thee also will I break in pieces man and woman; and with thee will I break in pieces old and young; and with thee will I break in pieces the young man and the maid; <sup>23</sup>I will also break in pieces with thee the shepherd and his flock; and with thee will I break in pieces the husbandman and his yoke of oxen; and with thee will I break in pieces captains and rulers." (verses 19-23)*

Israel is God's rod and God will use Israel to judge the nations and break them in pieces.

*"And I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith the LORD." (verse 24)*

The Lord will recompense evil. Evil doers will not get away with their doings.

*"<sup>25</sup>Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the LORD, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain. <sup>26</sup>And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations; but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the LORD." (verses 25,26)*

When Babylon is destroyed, it will be desolate forever. No one will even take the stones from it to build with.

*"And the land shall tremble and sorrow: for every purpose of the LORD shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant." (verse 29)*

The purpose of the LORD will be performed.

*"For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; The daughter of Babylon is like a threshingfloor, it is time to thresh her: yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come." (verse 33)*

The time of harvest for evil doers will surely come.

*"<sup>34</sup>Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his belly with my delicates, he hath cast me out. <sup>35</sup>The violence done to me and to my flesh be upon Babylon, shall the inhabitant of Zion say; and my blood upon the inhabitants of Chaldea, shall Jerusalem say." (verses 34,35)*

Babylon was guilty of Israel's blood. They had devoured Israel, crushed her, made her an empty vessel, swallowed her up, filled themselves up with Israel's good things, and then cast Israel out. As they had done violence to the people of Israel, so would it be done to Babylon. The blood of the inhabitants of Zion would be upon the Chaldeans.

Be careful what you sow. You will reap what you sow.

*"<sup>36</sup>Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will plead thy cause, and take vengeance for thee... <sup>40</sup>I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams with he goats. <sup>41</sup>How is Sheshach taken! and how is the praise of the whole earth surprised! how is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations!... <sup>44</sup>And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up: and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him: yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall." (verses 36a, 40 & 41, 44)*

God would plead for Israel. God would take vengeance on Babylon and bring them down. He would punish them and place upon them all the evil they had done to the nations. Great and mighty Babylon would fall because God would take vengeance upon it.

The nation that lifts itself up against God, takes praise to itself, and persecutes the people of God, can expect to receive the vengeance of the Lord.

*"My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD." (verse 45)*

God's people will come out from Babylon, and they will deliver their soul; because they will come out before God brings upon Babylon His fierce judgment. The wicked will suffer, but God's people will escape the fierce anger of the LORD.

*"Therefore, behold, the days come, that I will do judgment upon the graven images of Babylon: and her whole land shall be confounded, and all her slain shall fall in the midst of her." (verse 47)*

Babylon was judged for its pride, its violence, and its persecution of God's people. It was also judged for its worship of graven images, false gods.

*"Ye that have escaped the sword, go away, stand not still: remember the LORD afar off, and let Jerusalem come into your mind." (verse 50)*

There must have been some, even in Babylon, that feared the LORD. God urged them to go out from Babylon and go afar off. There they were to remember the LORD and to remember Jerusalem. God would spare those who feared Him.

*"Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, yet from me shall spoilers come unto her, saith the LORD." (verse 53)*

No matter how high the walls are built or how strong the fortification is made, the judgment of God cannot be stopped.

*"The LORD God of recompences shall surely requite. <sup>57</sup>And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts." (verses 56b,57)*

Rulers, wise men, and mighty men will not escape.

*"Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire; and the people shall labour in vain, and the folk in the fire, and they shall be weary." (verse 58)*

The people will try in vain to defend themselves.

**Conclusion:**

God has made it very clear what pleases and displeases Him. God will judge those who are proud; those who get a name to themselves instead of giving glory to God; those who trust in themselves; those who trust in their riches; those who trust in their rulers and princes and the might of their own nations; those who follow after and worship other gods; those who persecute His people; those who fear man more than they fear God; and those who follow their own way and refuse to listen to or obey God and His word.

In light of all the things in the above paragraph, it seems that America is in big trouble. God will judge those who continue to walk in sin. We are sinking lower and lower in the mire of sin and down to the destruction brought about by evil ways. We are sick, and we will soon die if a remedy is not found. But it is not too late. How many will see the emergency and jump in and administer life-giving aid before it is too late. America needs rescuers (godly men and women) now! We need people to bring the only remedy – the Son of God, who can heal all our diseases and forgive all our iniquities. We need people who will turn our eyes back to the cross. Will you be one of these people? Hurry! Time is running out. Emergency Rescue is needed, and it is needed now! There is not much time left.