

**JEREMIAH**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Jeremiah chapter 3 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Keep in mind that God called Jeremiah into the ministry back in chapter 1 and the Lord wants Jeremiah to understand that it is not going to be easy but He will equip Jeremiah for this work.

His primary ministry is to the Southern Kingdom of Judah and he was to warn them of the coming judgment of God if they don't repent and get right with God. We are told that his ministry began in the thirteenth year of King Josiah's reign, which would put it around 627 B. C.

As we begin our study tonight these first five verses of Jeremiah chapter 3 are the conclusion of his first message. Then, from Jeremiah 3:6 through Jeremiah chapter 6 we will see Jeremiah speak forth his second message to Judah.

And once again Jeremiah is calling for the Southern Kingdom of Judah to repent and return to the Lord but his words seem to fall on deaf ears. They were not prepared for the coming judgment, not because they were not warned, but they just didn't listen! Let me show you what I mean. We are told,

The Pearl Harbor Report demonstrated that not only were an admiral and a general unprepared, the authorities were unprepared and the whole nation was in a lethargy of self-satisfaction. In spite of all the evidence that an attack would come, people were amazed when it did.

Thus is the approaching judgment of God going to come upon the world; the Bible informs us that judgment is coming. Men are warned to flee from the wrath of God. They are warned that sudden destruction will come upon them, that it will come suddenly as a stroke of lightning from the east and the west and as unexpectedly as a thief in the night.

In spite of all these warnings the world sinks in its lethargy of self-satisfaction. It will be awakened by a blow far more rude than Pearl Harbor, for just as the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, so are His judgments.

- Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Timeless Illustrations for Preaching and Teaching*, p. 141

Now some of you may be thinking, “Hey, I thought we are talking about the Southern Kingdom of Judah and their coming judgment?” We are but make no mistake about it; these lessons are in here for us to learn from. The Lamb of God who has come to take away the sins of the world is coming again as the Lion from the tribe of Judah to put down man’s rebellion against Him! And like Judah, people laugh and continue on with life thinking everything is okay when judgment is at the door!

With that as our background, let’s begin reading in Jeremiah chapter 3 beginning in verse 1 and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

### JEREMIAH 3

#### VERSE 1

1. Jeremiah takes them back to the Law, what the Word of God says. He takes them to Deuteronomy 24:1-4 where it talks about a man who divorces his wife, that he can't go back to her again. As you read that it seems wrong, it does not seem fair. First of all God is holy, He is just, He is fair so we are missing something if we think that God is being unfair.

Then why would God say that? God knows the heart of man and it is truly wicked! You see, if He allowed that to occur it may promote or degenerate into wife swapping. Keep in mind that the men Lorded over their wife and thus, they would lend them out to others and God sees marriage as sacred.

2. Did you notice what Judah was doing? They were being unfaithful to the Lord, they were going after many lovers or false gods, they were playing the harlot. So God had every right to get rid of them, to divorce them but notice even in their unfaithfulness what He says to Judah, “**Yet return to Me,**’ says the LORD.”

Please understand that when the Lord says “**return**” it is a Hebrew word that carries with it the idea of repentance, of turning around from the direction you were going and return to the Lord! You must repent and believe because without repentance why do you need a Savior and without repentance you are not turning towards the Lord! They were looking for love in all the wrong places. True love is found in the Lord!

And here is the wonderful thing. It does not matter how many false gods you have gone after, how many idols you worship, God is calling for you to return to Him, to repent of your sins and receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Even at the end of the Bible, the last book of the Bible in the last chapter of the Bible we are told in Revelation 22:17, **“And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.”** God is calling, are you listening? God is calling, are you going to obey and come to Him? God said, **“... return to Me.”**

#### VERSES 2-5

1. God paints a disturbing picture of their actions. They went after these gods, sought them out to fulfill their lustful desires. In fact, in Jeremiah chapter 2 the Lord likens their activities to wild animals in heat. There is no stopping these animals and their desires that drive to mate. And Judah was doing the same thing with these false gods, they couldn't stop themselves.

This picture that is being painted here reminds me of what Paul said in Romans chapter 1. That when a people, when a nation turn from God then He will give them over to a debased mind, all kinds of immoral activities. We see that here with Judah, these groves were the high places where they worshiped these false gods and they would turn into all kinds of immoral sexual activities and drunkenness. And what we see here with Judah we see with our nation today. A nation who has turned from God and God has given us over to all kinds of immorality and you can look at the results of what a nation is like apart from God. It is not pretty nor is it intended to be!

2. God did try to warn them through the prophets but they refused to listen. He tried to warn them through various judgments He placed upon them, like withholding rain in the land. We see this in Deuteronomy 28:23-24 as God warned them if they turn from Him, “**... your heavens which are over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you shall be iron. The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust; from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed.**”

God warned them in His Word and thus, this should have been a sign for them to repent, to get right with God. But instead of getting right with God they turned to Baal, the god of rain. A very sad day when God brings judgment to awaken a people or a person out of their sin and instead of repenting they come up with a plan on their own to get out of the situation. What a tangled web we weave for ourselves and in the end, we lose!

3. That ends Jeremiah’s first message and as we move on into verse 6 of Jeremiah chapter 3 through chapter 6 of Jeremiah we will see his second message to the nation, to the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

#### VERSES 6-10

1. Many times object lessons are easier for us to see than just words and what Jeremiah is doing here is painting this vivid object lesson of what happened to the Northern Kingdom of Israel because of their idolatry. Keep in mind that at this point the Northern Kingdom of Israel was already taken into captivity by the Assyrians in 722 B. C. because of their wickedness, their idolatry. And the warning was that if you continue down this path you will also be taken into captivity.

God speaks of their “**backsliding**” and the idea here is that they refused to obey God, they refused His way and they did it their way and in the end, by not listening to God, they lost! The more you rebel against the Lord, the more you reject His will for your life, the farther away from Him you are going. Your life is getting darker and darker and the only way to rectify that is to repent and return to Him!

2. As you read the Scriptures you can see the amazing love, the patience, the longsuffering that God has for His people! All the immorality, all the idolatry, all the wickedness and God was still calling out to her, calling for her to return to Him and the tragedy we are told, “**But she did not return.**” And as bad as that was, we are also told that “**her treacherous sister Judah saw it.**” The problem for the Southern Kingdom of Judah is that they did not learn the lesson, they did not take to heart what happened to Israel and they continued down that same destructive path.

3. As you look at verse 8 you see that the longsuffering of God had come to an end for the Northern Kingdom of Israel. God brought judgment upon them by the hands of the Assyrians. You can read through II Kings 17:5-20 and see all the abominations that the Northern Kingdom of Israel was involved in prior to their captivity and it is not pretty.

In knowing all that you would think that the Southern Kingdom of Judah, in seeing all that happened to the Northern Kingdom of Israel would finally get it but we are told, “**yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also.**” They thought they could get away with it but they were not going to get away with anything. Yes God is a God of love, of patience, He is longsuffering but there comes a point when sin must be judged and we saw it with the Northern Kingdom of Israel and it is coming for the Southern Kingdom of Judah!

4. We read things like that and we wonder why they didn't get it, why they didn't learn from history? Before we are too smug, we don't learn either, we repeat those lessons because we refuse to learn from them and we go down that same path! God warns us, tries to get our attention, showing us that what we are doing is wrong, even giving us object lessons of what has happened to others that have traveled down that path, and yet we can justify our sin and we think, ***"That won't happen to me!"*** Learn the lesson, it will! Fear the Lord!

5. Now we need to keep in mind that Jeremiah is speaking during the time of Josiah who was a godly King and he tried to bring reform to the nation. The problem for the people of Judah was that this was just superficial; there was no change in their hearts toward God. In a sense it was fashionable to go to Temple!

That should sound familiar because that goes on even today. People go to church for all kinds of reasons except for the most important one, to worship God! Like in Judah's day, God wants our **WHOLE** heart and instead they were giving their heart to God in **"pretense."** It is the Greek word SHEQER, (sheh'-ker) and it speaks of "falsehood, fraud." It carries with it the idea of deceiving someone or one whose word is not good. You see, their actions were just for show, all outward, and their heart was still far from God. And God is no different today, He wants our whole heart, He does not want us to come to Him half-heartedly!

Listen to what G. Campbell Morgan wrote regarding idolatry and the true worship of God, giving to God our whole heart. He wrote,

. . . When a man makes a god according to the pattern of his own being, he makes a god like himself, an enlargement of his own imperfection. Moreover, the god which a man makes for himself will demand from him that which is according to his own nature. . . . Men will be faithful to those gods who make no demands upon them which are out of harmony with the desires of their own hearts.

When God calls men, it is the call of the God of holiness, the God of purity, the God of love; and He demands that they rise to His height. He cannot accommodate Himself to the depravity of their nature. He will not consent to the things of desire within them that are of impurity and evil. He calls men up, and even higher, until they reach the height of perfect conformity to His holiness. God's call to humanity is always first pure, and then peaceable; first holy, and then happy; first righteous, and then rejoicing.

- G. Campbell Morgan, Studies in the Prophecy of Jeremiah, p. 36

Jesus reminds us in Matthew 6:21, “**For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**” Who is the love of your life? May it be the Lord because if anything else gets in your way you will have a divided heart and I will tell you that the things of this world will win out!



VERSES 11-14

1. We have been through the history of both the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah in our studies in Kings and Chronicles. And you saw how wicked the Northern Kingdom of Israel was. In knowing that how can God say that Israel was more righteous than Judah?

First of all the Northern Kingdom of Israel did not have a copy of the Word of God. They at one time had priests but they fled to Judah because of the wickedness in the land. Secondly, Israel did not try to cover up her sin with a cloak of righteousness; they did not try to look good outwardly when inwardly they were wicked like Judah was doing.

I see this played out in one of Jesus' letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor, to the church of Laodicea. He wrote in Revelation 3:15-16, "**I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.**"

That sounds pretty drastic and nasty, why would God say that He is going to vomit these people out of His mouth? Because they were lukewarm towards Him, it is as simple as that. You see, if you are hot, on fire for the Lord that is where you need to be. If you are cold to the Lord, rejecting Him, rejecting the things of God, then there is no pretense or deception going on, you reject the Lord and you tell people that. God can work with you on that one.

But if you are lukewarm you are walking around thinking you are saved and going through the motions of religion, you are not going to see any need to come to God, to get saved, because you already think you are. I hate to say it but it is people like that who are the hardest to reach and Jesus said of those that are lukewarm that He will vomit them out of His mouth!

2. Now as bad, as wicked as the Northern Kingdom of Israel was we see God's love as He is calling them back, calling them to return to Him. Yes they were in captivity, but they can repent and return to the Lord, it is a matter of the heart and not a matter of location! Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me – it is amazing!

### VERSE 15

1. You can agree with me on this or not but if you don't then you have to prove me wrong.

There has **NEVER** been a true revival that has come apart from the Word of God! That is shocking to some but it shouldn't be! (Josiah – II Kings 22, Ezra – Nehemiah 8-9, Peter – Acts 2:14-41)

Notice what the Lord wants to give to His people, **“shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.”** Did you get that? Not feed us with falsehood and deceit. Not feed us with junk food. Not entertain us but shepherds who will give to us the knowledge and understanding of God through His Word! If you desire to seek the truth, God will give you shepherds after His own heart that will feed you what you need to grow in the Lord. If you refuse the truth, He will give you shepherds that will tickle your ears and leave you spiritually malnourished.

Paul warned us of this very thing in II Timothy 4:2-4, **“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”**

God wants to give to you that which will help you to grow but He will not force you. If you want teachers to tickle your ears with fairy tales, then that is what you will get and we see a lot of that today. But if you want to be fed the Word of God the Lord will give you teachers that will help you to grow! Puritan pastor John Shaw put it like this,

In a word, ministers according to God's heart preach Jesus Christ. Christ is the end, He is the scope, He is the design of their ministry. That design is to bring sinners to Christ, to build up believers in Christ. They preach Christ in His person, Christ in His natures, Christ in His offices, Christ with the free offers and tenders of His grace, Christ in His righteousness, Christ with His unsearchable riches. . . .

- John Shaw, *The Character of a Pastor According to God's Heart*, pp. 12-13

### VERSES 16-18

1. Now we are jumping ahead in time to the Kingdom Age and the Lord is telling Israel to turn to Him because His Kingdom is coming. What a call for us, that we don't become lethargic in our walk with the Lord but we are steadfast, immovable always abounding in our labor for the Lord because He is coming back!

2. This is interesting because the Ark of the Covenant, which was the place where God dwelt in the Temple, above the Mercy Seat between the Cherubim is no longer to be looked upon or needed. Why is that? Because this was a picture of God but in the Kingdom Age you no longer need the picture because the Lord will be ruling and reigning from Jerusalem! When you have the person you don't need the picture!

3. Also note that both Judah and Israel will be together in the Kingdom Age, one nation and no longer a divided Kingdom. It is what the Scriptures tell us, it is what we see today in Israel and it will be what we see in the Kingdom Age! When it speaks of both the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah coming “**out of the land of the north**” I believe it is a picture of their release from their Babylonian captivity. Keep in mind that many from Israel came to Judah because of the revivals that were going on in Judah and how pagan Israel was. But it is also a picture of how God will bring His people from the four corners of the earth, as He sets up His Kingdom, to a land that He has given them as an inheritance – ***THE LAND OF ISRAEL!***

#### VERSES 19-25

1. As God looks at Israel He is wondering how He can bring them into this pleasant land and the only way is by repenting and returning to Him. God wants to restore them but they must turn back to Him.

The hills, the groves are where they worshiped these false gods and in the end they found out that these gods could not help them. They saw the error of their ways and they knew that their help was not going to come from the hills or some location but from a person, from the Lord! He is the salvation not only for Israel, not only for the Jews but also for the Gentiles, you and me!

It is as Psalm 121 says, **“I will lift up my eyes to the hills - from whence comes my help? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade at your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; he shall preserve your soul. The LORD shall preserve your going out and your coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore.”**

The Psalmist is not saying that his help is coming from the hills or mountains but within the shadow of those hills sits the city of Jerusalem and the Temple of God, his destination. Thus, his help is from the Lord, the one he is on a pilgrimage to worship. And to make the point once again, remember what we were told in Jeremiah 3:23, **“Truly, in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, And from the multitude of mountains; Truly, in the LORD our God Is the salvation of Israel.”** Yes this was a dangerous journey, but he had the right perspective of the situation. Nothing is too hard for the creator of heaven and earth; He will see this pilgrim home! That is what the Lord promised in the Psalm and here in Jeremiah!

Now let's look at our own lives. Who are you putting your trust in? Who are you looking for help to come from? Is it your job? Maybe it is your retirement savings? Maybe it is your health? Maybe you are banking on your intelligence? Let me put it like this because we can go on-and-on regarding what people put their trust in. Whatever it is, it will fail you! Put your trust in the Lord, He is our hope, He is our salvation and He will never fail us!

2. Maybe some of you tonight blew it today, this week, this month, maybe this whole year so far and you think that God has forsaken you, He can't love you anymore. That is totally wrong. Just like with Israel here, God is standing with His arms opened wide with forgiveness if you would only turn back to Him!

God is calling for His wayward children to return to Him and we see them freed from their captivity in Babylon and ultimately their captivity by the Antichrist during the Tribulation Period! God loves us so much that He will do whatever it takes to draw us back but we must repent and return so we can rest in His arms!

#### **JEREMIAH 4**

##### **VERSES 1-2**

1. Look at the love our heavenly Father has for His people as He continues to call out to them to return to Him. But too often these are just empty words of repentance, it is just lip service and the person's heart is far from the Lord. How can we tell? Because there is no change in their behavior, they are still doing the same things as they were doing before; there is no change in their life. They may sing out, "**The LORD lives**" but their heart is far from God.

It is very reminiscent of what we read in Jeremiah 3:10, "**And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah has not turned to Me with her whole heart, but in pretense,' says the Lord.**" You can't fool the Lord; everything is open and naked before Him. He knows everything about us and thus, you need to be real, you need to be honest with Him because you will not fool Him but you can fool yourself!

2. Today people use phrases like, ***“Praise the LORD!”*** as well as other Christian jargon and they truly think it makes them spiritual. Folks, it is not knowing how to talk, but how to walk! Jesus said in Matthew 7:21-23, **“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”**

Then what does Jesus want? Matthew 7:24 tells us, **“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock.”** He wants us not only to hear His words but to do them, to live what we say we believe or else our faith is empty! God wanted His people to follow through with what they said back then and God wants us to follow through with what we have said today, that if we truly have repented of our sin that we would walk accordingly. Our walk would match our talk!

#### VERSES 3-4

1. When your alarm clock goes off in the morning what do you do and don't say, “I hit the snooze button!” You wake-up and this is a wake-up call for the Southern Kingdom of Judah. If you remain in your spiritual sleep you will be judged so ***WAKE-UP!***

2. In these two verses the Lord gives us three different illustrations to make His point. The first illustration is that of fallow or hard ground and that before planting can take place you have to break up that fallow ground! The fallow ground that is spoken of here is the heart and God wants them to break up the hardness of their heart so that they could receive the things of God, God's Word can take root and grow in their lives. H. A. Ironside put it like this, "The plowshare of conviction must overturn the hardened soil of the heart."

The second illustration deals with not planting or sowing among thorns. Why is that a bad idea? Because they will compete with the plants for moisture, nutrients and eventually they will choke out the life of the plants! What are the thorns? They are the cares of this world! We can become so consumed with the things of this world that it chokes out what God wants to do, the fruit He wants to produce in us!

And the third illustration that God is using to awaken them and us is that of circumcision. Circumcision was given to Abraham as a covenant that God made with him. The Jews would circumcise their sons on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of their life. The problem comes when we allow a ritual to become more important than the principle that God is trying to show us through it. The Jews thought they were right with God because they were children of Abraham, circumcised on the 8<sup>th</sup> day.

And yet Paul says in Romans 2:28-29, "**For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.**"



And I believe that is the point that the Lord is making here. God wants us to circumcise our hearts, to remove that which makes us insensitive to Him. In other words, if you obey what circumcision was to represent, then spiritually you are circumcised. God is looking for a reality not a ritual. We do that with baptism. Baptism doesn't save us, but it is an outward expression of what has taken place in our hearts! Let that hardness be removed so you can receive from the Lord!

3. They did have a choice in the matter. The Lord warned them that if they refused to return to him that **“My fury come forth like fire, And burn so that no one can quench it, Because of the evil of your doings.”** Judgment was coming unless you get right with God. Paul put it like this in Hebrews chapter 10:31, **“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”** The warning is there but so is the invitation to come back to the Lord!

#### VERSES 5-8

1. What does this mean? Because they did not break up the fallow ground of their hearts, because they sowed the seed of God's Word among the thorns, because they did not circumcise their hearts, judgment was coming! The sound of the trumpet was to alert the people, to gather an assembly together, the enemy is coming and Jeremiah is the one sounding this trumpet to let the people know these things.

2. This judgment was to come from the north and the nation that would come down upon the Southern Kingdom of Judah was the Babylonians! Interestingly enough we read in the book of Daniel that the Babylonian Empire is described as a lion, fierce and strong. They made three assaults upon Jerusalem, the first in 606 B. C. and the last when they destroyed the Southern Kingdom of Judah in 586 B. C., burning it and tearing it down, taking the people captive.

3. We have heard our President say that we are no longer a Christian nation and it is hard to argue with that. We are not a Christian nation and the reason I can say that with such certainty is because how we no longer blush, we are not embarrassed by sin but we flaunt sin like it is good, it is right!

J. Vernon McGee had these words to say as he looks at our nation and where we are at. He wrote,

The *Reader's Digest* published an article quite some time ago entitled, "The Book Almost Nobody Reads." Of course, they were referring to the Bible. I agree with that title. But notice what was said: "In short, one way to describe the Bible, written by many different hands over a period of 3,000 years and more, would be to say it is a disorderly collection of 60 - odd books which are often tedious, barbaric, obscure and teeming with contradictions and inconsistencies. It is a swarming compost of a book, an Irish stew of poetry and propaganda, law and legalism, myth and murk, history and hysteria." Now that is a *lie*, my friend! The man who wrote the article knows nothing about the content of the Word of God.

I say to you that we are in the same kind of position today as were those people in the days of Jeremiah. The nation at that time had rejected God, but the people were still making a pretense of following Him. Such a people will find themselves rejected by God and by the world. America is following that same path. We are not loved by the world today. After World War II we were the pious people who were going to bring democracy to the world. What have we done? We have brought lawlessness into our own land. Do you think we should bring lawlessness into the trails of the jungle as we have into the streets of our cities? Is that the kind of civilization we are going to bring to people?

We find ourselves despised by other nations. God said it would be that way. No people can pretend to be God - fearing, be hypocritical about it, and still expect the world to look up to them. God has ordered it that way. I know it is not popular to say this - Jeremiah wasn't very popular in his day, either. I am not expecting to win any popularity contest. The chamber of commerce will never elect me to be the man of the year. They would rather give me the boot, I am sure. But I must tell you honestly the message of this Book: A people who turn away from God will find that God turns away from them.

- J. Vernon Mcgee, Thru the Bible, Vol. III, pp. 366-367

VERSES 9-10

1. As you read this it seems like Jeremiah is questioning the goodness of God. He seems to be saying that God is lying to His people, that the prophets spoke of peace and now we see destruction coming! How can that be? First of all we are told in Numbers 23:19 that, “**God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?**” So God can’t lie, never has and never will. Then what is going on here? What is Jeremiah saying?

Again, there were many prophets of God in the land and they said they were speaking for God but they weren’t. They were going around saying “*Peace! Peace!*” when there was no peace to be found. They had a message of health, wealth and prosperity, but it wasn’t from God. They were telling people that God loves them and He would never bring this kind of calamity upon them. But they were not speaking for God. Then why did God allow these false prophets to go around and speak these lies? Why didn’t God just speak forth the truth?

Because the people did not want to hear the truth! Yes there were the true prophets of God speaking forth but the people did not want to listen and thus, they listened to the false prophets and had a false hope, a false security. We are told in Jeremiah 5:31, “**The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule by their own power; And My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end?**” You can listen to false prophets but in the end their words will fall to the ground and God’s Word will stand! Who are you going to listen to today?

VERSES 11-18

1. We see Jeremiah speak of this destructive wind of judgment that is coming upon the Southern Kingdom of Judah. The sirocco wind comes from the deserts east and south of Israel and it brings with it this scorching heat and whirling dust. Judgment was blowing down upon them by the hands of the Babylonians.

And to illustrate the destructiveness of this we are told in verse 15 that Dan, which is the northernmost part of the Northern Kingdom and Ephraim which is the southernmost part of the Northern Kingdom are a vivid reminder of what is coming your way! They were destroyed by the Assyrians and thus, as this Babylonian army is approaching them they can see the dust being kicked up by their horses and chariots and they will now recognize they can't escape.

2. Keep in mind that we are still some 20 years from their first invasion and some 40 years from their third and final assault and the deportation of the Jews to Babylon. And God is still pleading with His people to get right with Him. But as Jeremiah tried to speak the truths of God the false prophets were going around calling him a traitor. The reason for all these things was their sin, their wickedness and their refusal to repent and return to the Lord, it was not Jeremiah!

VERSES 19-22

1. Notice the compassion that Jeremiah has for his people. He could have said, "***They are only getting what they deserved!***" But Jeremiah did not say that, he spoke the truths of God and he mourned over their refusal to turn back to God. He is weeping for the nation and for His people. Jeremiah knows what is coming to pass even if the people did not believe it.

Remember when the Lord was looking down upon Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives and He began to weep for the nation and His people. He could have said, *“They are only getting what they deserved!”* But Jesus did not say that. We are told in Matthew 23:37-39 what took place as Jesus wept over the city and said, **“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’”** And they also refused to listen to His warning of the coming judgment upon them for turning from God just as the people of Judah did in Jeremiah’s day and they did not escape this judgment!

May we have that kind of love, that kind of compassion for the people of this world! May we not tell them, *“Turn or burn!”* May they see our love for them and share with them the love that God has for them as Jeremiah did and as our Lord did!

2. As you read this and you look at what took place in Kings and Chronicles, you see the total destruction of the land because the people turned from God. God saw His people as foolish, like silly children because they turned from the One who loves them so. The consequences then, of that broken relationship with God is that you grow in doing evil and you can’t discern what is good anymore, you are totally confused.

Don't we see that in our nation today? As a nation we have turned from God, and now as a nation we are bent on evil, we don't even know what is right or wrong. We call good evil and evil good because we have no King, we have no God to look to any longer; we have taken Him out of the picture. Look at abortion, adulatory, homosexuality, greed, lying, drugs, the occult activity, and-so-on that people see nothing wrong with.

I have shared this story with you before, but I think it bears repeating. "In a July 1997 issue of U.S. News & World Report, there appeared a very disturbing report based on two articles from the publication The Chronicle of Higher Education (June 27, 1997). The educators who wrote these articles were expressing shock at moral relativism being expressed by their students."

"Robert L. Simon (a professor of philosophy at Hamilton College) related his students' reactions to the Holocaust. He stated: 'Although groups denying the reality of Holocaust have raised controversies . . . I have recently seen an increasing number of students who, although well-meaning, hold almost as troubling a view.'"

"They accept the reality of the Holocaust, but they believe themselves unable morally to condemn it, or indeed to make any moral judgments whatsoever. Such students typically comment that they themselves deplore the Holocaust and other great evils, but then they wind up by suspending moral judgment."

“In another article in the same issue of The Chronicle, Kay Haugaard (an instructor of creative writing at Pasadena City College) was dismayed with her students who had read a story about human sacrifice (where people are ritually stoned to death believing their crops will then grow well). Haugaard couldn't believe the responses from her students when asked their views on human sacrifice. She stated: ‘No one in the whole class of more than 20 ostensibly intelligent individuals would go out on a limb and take a stand against human sacrifice.’”

And tragically we even see this in the church where some people believe that there is nothing wrong in murdering abortion doctors or nurses or workers, even though they wouldn't do it themselves. We are truly a nation that is confused about good and evil because we have moved away from God and His Word!

#### VERSES 23-26

1. What is Jeremiah talking about here? First of all I think he is speaking of the Babylonian invasion upon the Southern Kingdom of Judah. But I also think it speaks of a future judgment of God upon a Christ rejecting world, the Tribulation Period!



In Revelation 6:12-17 we read, **“I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?’”**

#### VERSES 27-29

1. Make no mistake about it, judgment was coming and it was coming quickly. Thus, Jeremiah was to warn the people that God’s time clock is ticking and they need to prepare themselves, they need to get right with God. The wonderful thing here is that God does not completely destroy the people, He has His faithful remnant back then, today and even in the Tribulation Period!

VERSES 30-31

1. When they see the dust of the Babylonian army they were going to flee for their lives, but they would not escape. And the nation is pictured as a woman who dresses herself up to go after lovers, to go after help, and they will not find any. There is no hope apart from God. Philip Graham Ryken put it like this in regards to a people who refuse to turn back to God, “This is what happens to anyone who tries to ignore God’s wrath against sin. You can dress up for a night on the town, seeking satisfaction and salvation from someone else, but you will not be saved.” (Philip Graham Ryken, Jeremiah and Lamentations, p. 79)

Salvation is not a matter of changing our outward appearance, it is a matter of the heart and only God can change that!

2. As I close, things look dark and they are. Jeremiah is speaking of the horrible judgment that was coming upon them, there was no escape. Folks, there is coming another horrible judgment of God known as the Great Tribulation Period, and there is no stopping it.

Our only hope is Jesus Christ. It is only through Him that we can be taken out of this great trial that is coming upon the earth dwellers, those that don’t know Christ. And it is out of this judgment that the Kingdom Age is birthed and we will enter in with our Lord.

I will close with this, I will close on a positive note from Paul as he said in Titus 2:13-15, **“looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.”** There is no hope in this world; our only hope is in Christ!