

JEREMIAH

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Jeremiah chapter 20 as we continue our study through the Word of God. And as we have seen, Jeremiah is warning the people of the Southern Kingdom of Judah of the coming judgment of God because of their sin and their refusal to turn back to God. And Jeremiah is not only speaking to the common people, but also to the elders of the city and the priests.

Last time we saw that this message that he gave outside the potsherd gate, in the valley of Hinnom, he then gave in the Temple area. Listening in was a priest by the name of Pashhur who does not appreciate what Jeremiah has to say. And probably all the priests didn't appreciate it but this one will step forward as we will see this evening and do something about it. Probably because of the position he held.

Also, if you have ever been discouraged in ministry, frustrated by how people respond, down because what people say or do to you, then you will understand what Jeremiah is going through. He is so upset that he is going to blame God for all of this happening to him, he is going to reject his calling and go as far as cursing the day he was born! Not a good day for this man and yet, I think we can relate to what he was going through.

That means God has some lessons for us to learn from all of this. So let's begin reading in Jeremiah chapter 20 beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

JEREMIAH 20**VERSES 1-2**

1. This priest, Pashhur had oversight of the Temple, the Temple guards, the entry to the courts and more. He was, in a sense, chief of security at the Temple. And Pashhur hears what Jeremiah has to say, the Words and warnings of God and you would think that would be a good thing but it wasn't.

Why was this wrong? Because it went against what Pashhur believed. He did not want to hear that judgment was coming, that the land was going to be destroyed and the people taken into captivity. So, kind of like the prophecy police, he arrests Jeremiah and Pashhur places him in a dungeon. He was most likely beaten, at least struck by Pashhur and placed in stocks over night.

2. Do you know what the biggest threat to Christianity is today? This may surprise you but it is organized religion! Let me show you what I mean and I am not going to spend a lot of time with this but it is a warning about where these false teachers and leaders are taking people and all in the name of Christ but not the Christ of the Bible.

For instance, Erwin McManus, an Emerging Church leader, says that his goal is "*to destroy Christianity as a world religion,*" that "*the greatest enemy to the movement of Jesus Christ is Christianity*" and that he wants to be a "*recatalyst for the movement of Jesus Christ.*"

In other words, you can be a follower of Jesus but you don't have to be a Christian to do that, you don't have to be born again! Really, then why did Jesus say, "**... 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'**" John 3:3. And doesn't it mean we are a Christ-follower if we are a Christian? Absolutely it does!

Here is another interesting issue. What was the reason God became flesh and dwelt among us? They believe it was to show us how to live. They don't see Him as the Son of God who came to die for the sins of the World! They see Him like other religious world teachers, like Buddha, He had the Christ consciousness in Him or whatever!

Roger Oakland warns us of what is being taught. He wrote, “. . . *being born again, receiving Jesus Christ as Savior, Lord, and Master is not a pre-requisite to being a Christ-follower. Richard Foster teaches that anyone, not just believers, can practice these spiritual disciplines and become like Christ.*”

Dan Kimball, another Emergent pastor, teaches that non-believers will readily accept Jesus as an example to follow, but they do not want anything to do with going to church or with Christians who take the Bible literally. Kimball accuses Christians of keeping non-believers away from the Christian faith by being “different.”

In his book, “*They like Jesus But Not the Church,*” Kimball says that the distorted view that the non-believer has of Christianity is the fault of Christians who take the Bible literally. Kimball accuses fundamental Christians of keeping non-believers away from Christ by acting and living differently from those who are not Christians.

Aren't we supposed to take the Bible literally? Of course we are because, as Paul tells us, **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”** II Timothy 3:16-17.

And as followers of Jesus Christ are we not supposed to be different than this world, that those old practices we were involved in are cast away? Of course we are to be different. Paul said in II Corinthians 5:17, **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”**

Also, listen to what Paul says in I Corinthians 6:9-11, **“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”**

Did you notice that? Paul says that these things were part of your old life but in Christ you have been cleansed and you no longer practice those things! Yes we are to be different that is why we are to be a light in this world that is filled with darkness, the darkness of sin! Kimball’s viewpoint is exactly the opposite from what Jesus was teaching.

In his book Kimball describes the Christians, who he sees as being a hindrance to people becoming followers of Christ, as follows. He wrote, *“People who are always saying negative things about the world, are anti-gay, take the whole Bible literally, . . . are pro-Israel, read end-time novels, and endorse . . . fire-and-brimstone preaching . . .”*

An Emergent church article titled *“Christ-Followers in India Flourishing Outside the Church,”* claims that there are many who have become “Christians” yet continue their religious practices as Hindus. They worship Jesus along with their Hindu gods in their homes. Leonard Sweet said, *“One can be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ without denying the flickers of the sacred in followers of Yahweh, or Kali, or Krishna.”*

And as the world sinks darker into the abyss of sin, farther from God we will see these church leaders promoting sin and coming against the true followers of Jesus! And think about it, if you can't trust the Word of God at some points then you really can't trust it at all because man is deciding what is of God and what is not. That is not how it works. God decides and He has given to us His Word.

In fact, in Psalm 138 God has placed His Word above His name and that means all that He is. So if His Word fails than God can't be trusted at all, He is nothing. But that is not the case even though the so-called church is coming against the Word of God and against those who believe it and are looking for His soon return!

This physical persecution of Jeremiah began in the organized religion of his day and I believe we are going to be seeing it emerge in our lifetime. Right now it is the verbal abuse but I don't see it ending there. The so-called church will work with the state and for those who stand up for the truth; they will try to silence us just like they were doing with Jeremiah!

VERSES 3-6

1. As Pashhur releases Jeremiah you would think that Jeremiah would just walk away and not say anything, but that is not what takes place. Jeremiah lets him have it! He tells him his life is going to be filled with "*fear on every side,*" thus the name Magor-Missabib. No longer will he be called Pashhur, which means, "*Prosperity all around.*" And Jeremiah explains to him what that fear will be all about.

You see, it doesn't matter if Pashhur believes that the judgment of God is coming or not, it is going to happen. And as the judgment of God comes upon the land, as the Babylonians invade the land, no matter where Pashhur looks, he will be filled with fear!

In fact, Pashhur is going to die in Babylon, in captivity, the very thing he said was not going to happen did come upon his life and his families! And to die in captivity was a huge disgrace; you were not able to be buried in the land of Promise. And all the wealth they worked so hard for will be given away, given over to the Babylonians. No longer ***“prosperity all around”*** but ***“fear on every side!”***

2. As you read this it seems like Jeremiah is invincible, that nothing is going to stop him from sharing the Word of God. But like all of us, Jeremiah had his ups and downs. And I am not saying his ministry was not tough, it was but the Lord warned him before his ministry even began that it was going to be tough but the Lord was going to be with him.

But in the midst of all this we are going to see Jeremiah complain to God. He is going to blame God for all these things coming upon his life. He is going to reject his calling; he does not want to do this any longer. And it is so bad that he is going to curse the day he was born! Let's read on and see what Jeremiah has to say to God.

VERSES 7-8

1. When we find ourselves in situations that we don't like, that just doesn't seem fair we like to blame God, especially when we are serving Him and then these things happen to us. For Jeremiah, he says that God had enticed him or persuaded him into this ministry. And because of that how could he resist God. ***“It is your fault God that I'm in this predicament!”***

You see, people are mocking him; he is the laughing stock of the nation. Now why was all this God's fault? Because Jeremiah felt that since God got him into this ministry and promised to protect him somehow God failed on His part. First of all God does not fail, never has and never will.

But let's look at this a little closer. What did God promise Jeremiah? We don't have to guess. Back in Jeremiah chapter 1, beginning in verse 6 we can see what took place between Jeremiah and the Lord and what the Lord said to him. We are told, "**Then said I: 'Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth.' But the LORD said to me: 'Do not say, 'I am a youth,' for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you,' says the LORD. . . . 'Therefore prepare yourself and arise, and speak to them all that I command you. Do not be dismayed before their faces, lest I dismay you before them. For behold, I have made you this day a fortified city and an iron pillar, and bronze walls against the whole land - against the kings of Judah, against its princes, against its priests, and against the people of the land. They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you. For I am with you,' says the LORD, 'to deliver you.'**" Jeremiah 1:6-8, 17-19.

Jeremiah felt that if the Lord is with Him and will deliver him that nothing and no one is going to be able to touch him. But that is not what God said to him. He told Jeremiah they are going to get in his face, they are going to fight against you, but in the end you will be standing and they will have fallen. They will either be killed or taken into captivity. They will not escape.

2. I think we do the same thing as Jeremiah. We think that if we are serving God in the ministry, and we all are, that it will all be good, no major problems. I had that mentality when I first came up here some 19 years ago to be the pastor of this church. “This is going to be great, we are all working for the kingdom of God and there will be this wonderful unity as we work together.”

That was not the case. My first encounter with trouble was a 10 or 12 page letter that was left at the church door telling me why I should not be the pastor here at Calvary. And over the years you would think it would get better, easier, but it doesn’t because we all have that flesh nature that tries to resurrect itself in our lives and it gets in our way. And when trouble comes we then like to blame God for it. “God, how can you do this to me when I am serving you?”

Now here’s the thing and I think it is important that we understand this! God never promised us a life without tribulation; in fact He warned us that we will have tribulation in this life. But in the end, those who are in Christ will be standing and the wicked will have fallen. It is as Jesus said in John 16:33, **“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”**

In other words, we need to keep our eyes on the Lord and in the midst of these times, the persecution we face for what we believe, God will use this to help us to grow in Him and trust in Him. It is not easy and if it was we would not need the Lord!

3. Now as Jeremiah is seeing all this come upon him as he is serving the Lord, as he comes to the conclusion that God is at fault for all of this, notice what this will cause him to do. Let’s read on and see because again the Lord has a lesson for us here.

VERSE 9a

1. “That’s it, I quit! I can’t take this any longer, good-bye!” That was Jeremiah’s solution to this problem. And once again I think we can relate to this. “People never say thanks for what I am doing. I quit!” “People are making fun of me. I quit!” “I’ll come to church but I am not going to serve anymore. What is the use?”

The problem here is you have an **“I”** problem, it is about **YOU!** If you are serving the Lord to get recognition, to get pats on the back, then something or someone will get in the way of you serving the Lord. If you are serving the Lord because you love the Lord and this is what He wants you to do, then you will not be moved from the work that God has for you.

2. Now as much as Jeremiah wanted to drop out, he couldn’t. Look at what happens in the last part of verse 9 of Jeremiah chapter 20.

VERSE 9b

1. When God has called you into a certain ministry you are not going to be able to resist. Yes you may be discouraged from time-to-time, even think of quitting because of all the persecution, like Jeremiah did. But if God has truly placed that burden upon your heart you won’t be able to resist. That was Jeremiah!

VERSE 10

1. It seems like Pashhur told the people what Jeremiah said to him, and now the people were mocking Jeremiah, saying, “*Fear on every side!*” The reality here is that judgment was coming and they refused to see it, they refused to listen to what Jeremiah was saying except to mock him and laugh at him.

They also placed his life under the microscope, watching for him to make a mistake so they can catch him and expose him. The religious leaders of Jesus day also tried to catch Jesus. When you stand up for the things of God and people don't like it, they will try to bring you down.

One writer put it like this,

Sometimes preaching leads to suffering. Proclaiming the true Word of God may lead to opposition, hostility, and even persecution, as it did for Jeremiah. Sometimes believers suffer for the sake of God's Word, especially if they live in a culture that has turned its back on God.

- Philip Graham Ryken, *Jeremiah and Lamentations*, p. 319

How true that is. In the liberal church, the emerging church of our day we have people mocking us because we believe in the literal return of Jesus Christ and that before He returns He will pour out His wrath upon a Christ rejecting world.

But as much as they want to mock us, make fun of us, put us down, God's Word clearly tells us that He is coming back as the Lion from the tribe of Judah and He will pour out His wrath upon the earth dwellers.

Listen to what Peter tells us regarding the days we are living in and what people are saying regarding the judgment of God. In II Peter 3:3-7, **“knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.’ For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”**

In the last days, the days we are living in there will be mockers who deny the Lord’s coming and his judgment. But Peter tells us we need to look back at the previous worldwide judgment, the flood and just as that happened the next judgment will come and it will be by fire. People can mock and laugh all they want, but it is coming whether they believe it or not!

VERSES 11-13

1. Notice how Jeremiah’s whole attitude has changed here. How did that happen? Because he is focused once again upon the Lord as he brings all his concerns before the Lord. What this does is it has given him a correct perspective of who God is and the situation that Jeremiah found himself in.

As you focus upon God, fellowship with Him, you will have a correct perspective of any situation because you will see that God is in control! And when you have that, praise and worship unto God will flow from your life as we see here in verse 13 of Jeremiah chapter 20.

“Sing to the Lord! Praise the Lord! For He has delivered the life of the poor From the hand of evildoers.” Jeremiah 20:13. No longer is Jeremiah focused on himself but on the Lord and thus, what flows from his lips is praise unto the Lord. If you are not praising the Lord then see where your eyes are focused, I bet they are not on the Lord but yourself or the situation you are in!

2. Now as we move into verse 14 something changes. Some feel that this is a different day or week or even month from what he had just written because his attitude has changed so quickly. But if you think about it one minute we can be praising the Lord and the next minute cursing the day we were born as Jeremiah was. Let’s read on and see what Jeremiah has to say as he takes his eyes off the Lord and he is sinking deeper and deeper into the depths of despair.

VERSES 14-18

1. We have seen Jeremiah blame God for all that has happened to him. We have seen Jeremiah reject the calling that God had placed upon his life only to realize that he could not stop sharing the Word of God with the people. And here we Jeremiah wish he was never born.

Why did Jeremiah say that? Because life was just too tough for Jeremiah as people were mocking him, making fun of him and even abusing him. In fact he wishes that the man who came to bring the news to his father that he had a son was consumed like the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. It was not a joyous time is what Jeremiah is now saying.

In fact he wishes he had died in the womb, that this man who brought the news to his father would have killed him before he was born. How can Jeremiah praise God one minute and then curse the day he was born the next? That is the Christian life folks! We are so fickle in that we can blow hot or cold in a matter of seconds and I think that is what we see here with Jeremiah.

He once again took the weight of these things upon his own life and he was broken, he could not stand. But God never told him to do that. The Lord was the one who would carry him through these times. Remember what Peter said as the cares of this world, the difficulties of life come upon us. He said, **“casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”** I Peter 5:7.

What are you holding onto this evening that the Lord wants you to give to Him? You are to cast **“all your care upon Him”** and not just what you want. And in the end, if you don't, you will be weighed down, you will feel the burden upon your life and it will be difficult for you to walk. Cast your cares upon Him and know that He cares for you!

2. As we move into Jeremiah chapter 21 we are going to see the prophecies that were spoken during the reign of King Zedekiah, who was the last King in the Southern Kingdom of Judah as the Babylonians came in and destroyed the city and took the remaining people captive. Let's see what Jeremiah has to say to King Zedekiah.

JEREMIAH 21**VERSES 1-2**

1. Zedekiah was the last king in the Southern Kingdom of Judah before the third and final assault by the Babylonians, which destroyed the city and saw the nation taken away captive. And Zedekiah was a wicked King and led the nation for 11 years into idolatry. And he went along with the false prophets who were speaking of peace but now there was no peace, only the invading Babylonian army.

You see, his back is now up against the wall and he sends Pashhur, not the same one as we read about in chapter 20, to go and ask Jeremiah if the Lord will fight for them when the Babylonians attack. Now he may have been thinking of what happened when the Assyrians surrounded the city during the reign of Hezekiah, who was a godly man and King, and the Lord destroyed 185,000 Assyrians in one night. But it was too little, too late. Judgment was coming.

VERSES 3-7

1. Now this is interesting. Zedekiah wants to know if God is going to fight for them, will they be victorious against the Babylonians. And instead of the Lord fighting for the Southern Kingdom of Judah, His people, He is going to fight against them and be with the Babylonians! In other words, Jeremiah is telling them, “Put your weapons away, you are not going to win this battle!”

Not exactly a feel good message but that is not what they needed to hear a “feel good message.” They needed to hear the truth and sometimes the truth hurts, it convicts us and that is good because it means we are still alive. We have not shut our eyes or closed our ears to the things of God!

2. Now God's judgment is always seasoned with some grace and mercy and we will see that as we read on. And it may not be what you think in regards to grace and mercy but listen carefully because God is trying to awaken them out of their spiritual sleep!

VERSES 8-10

1. This is not something that King Zedekiah or the people wanted to hear. If you want to live you need to surrender to the Babylonians, don't fight against them. Or, if you want to die then try fighting against them and you will die! The choice is yours!

Think about that for a minute. The only way that they were going to survive was if they surrendered to the Babylonians. That is true in our own lives. Not that we need to surrender to some tyrant King but to a loving Savior who has come to free us from our captivity in sin. As Jesus said, "**Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.**" John 8:36.

2. For Jeremiah, those words brought him a lot of trouble. You see, they thought that he had sided with the Babylonians; they thought that Jeremiah was a traitor! This was not Jeremiah's idea, but the Words of God, which they refused to acknowledge because the false prophets were speaking of health, wealth and prosperity. Judgment was coming and the only way to live was to surrender, but it was their choice. Nothing was going to stop this judgment!

VERSES 11-14

1. God is asking His people to execute justice, not to be corrupt, to be fair in all your dealings. There is nothing wrong with that and yet they could not do it. They couldn't even do the basics because of their wicked hearts. And then they were wondering why God was angry with them?

2. And it is interesting because even though they were evil, even though their hearts were far from the Lord the people of Jerusalem saw themselves as safe, secure, but God is telling them that they are going to be punished for their actions, a fire of judgment will consume them.

3. As we move into Jeremiah 22 this evening you could call this section, “*The Tale of Three Kings.*” You see, Jeremiah is going to speak of the last three kings of Judah prior to their last King, Zedekiah.

Keep in mind that Jeremiah began his ministry at a young age, in the thirteenth year of King *Josiah*'s reign. And Josiah was a good King who came to rule the Southern Kingdom of Judah at the age of 8, and ruled for 31 years. At the age of 16 he began to seek the Lord and by the age of 20 he began to purge the nation of idolatry. And at the age of 26 he had the Temple cleansed and the Law of God was found and read. Josiah tried to lead the nation into a relationship with the Lord, but for the most part the people only had a superficial relationship.

At the end of his life Josiah went up against Pharaoh Necho because they were going to aid the Assyrians in their battle against the Babylonians. And for some reason Josiah felt the need to fight against the Egyptians even though Necho told him not to fight in this battle, he warned him against it because the Lord warned him that Josiah should not get involved. But Josiah refused to listen and was killed in battle. A battle he should have never been involved in.

Then Josiah's son, **Jehoahaz**, became King and he was wicked. And in the 3 months he reigned he tried to undo all his father had done. Here in Jeremiah he is also called **Shallum**. You see, after the death of Josiah, Pharaoh Necho and the Assyrians defeated the Babylonians, and then Necho and the Egyptians came down upon Jerusalem. He took Jehoahaz back to Egypt with him where he died. This is the first of the 3 last Kings in Judah that the Lord is going to speak about in Jeremiah chapter 22, verses 10-12.

Necho then places **Eliakim**, another son of Josiah, on the throne, and changes his name to **Jehoiakim**. He too was wicked and reigned for 11 years as a vassal King. And his focus was building up his palace as the nation was falling apart around him. Jehoiakim was taken away captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. This is the second King the Lord speaks about in Jeremiah chapter 22, verses 13-23.

Now Nebuchadnezzar places **Jehoiachin**, the son of Jehoiakim, on the throne. He is also known as **Jeconiah** and **Coniah**. And he too was wicked, reigning for only 3 months and 10 days before he was taken to Babylon. And this is the third King the Lord speaks about in Jeremiah chapter 22, verses 23-30.

And that leads us back to the last King in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, Zedekiah, who reigned for 11 years and then in 586 B. C. the Babylonians made their third and final assault upon Jerusalem, destroying the city and taking those left alive back to Babylon with them.

So let's look at what the Lord has to say to these Kings and to the nation.

JEREMIAH 22**VERSES 1-5**

1. Is Jeremiah speaking to King Zedekiah here or to all the Kings who would sit on the throne of David? He could be speaking to Zedekiah but when you think about it, by the time he was King there was no stopping this judgment. So as you look at verses 4 and 5 they would not fit the timeframe of King Zedekiah!

The reality is that this is what all leaders should practice, treat people fairly. Micah 6:8 says, **“He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?”**

But they could not even do the basics because their relationship with God was off which then made their relationship with people off.

2. And once again He gives them a choice, to obey His Words and there will be a King sitting upon the throne of David but if they refuse; the Kingdom will come crashing down!

VERSES 6-9

1. The Lord is warning them that as beautiful as their land and homes may be, as beautiful as the kingdom may be, the land will become desolate!

2. What is also tragic here is that other nations will recognize why this destruction had come upon them. It was because they had forsaken the Lord and yet, God’s own people did not even see this.

God did warn them back in Deuteronomy 29:22-28, before they even entered the land that this is what would happen if they turned from Him. Moses tells us, **“so that the coming generation of your children who rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a far land, would say, when they see the plagues of that land and the sicknesses which the Lord has laid on it: ‘The whole land is brimstone, salt, and burning; it is not sown, nor does it bear, nor does any grass grow there, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, which the Lord overthrew in His anger and His wrath.’ All nations would say, ‘Why has the Lord done so to this land? What does the heat of this great anger mean?’ Then people would say: ‘Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt; for they went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods that they did not know and that He had not given to them. Then the anger of the Lord was aroused against this land, to bring on it every curse that is written in this book. And the Lord uprooted them from their land in anger, in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as it is this day.’”**

They were blinded to their own sin and all the freedom they thought they had, in the end, brought them into captivity.

VERSES 10-12

1. We are told in II Chronicles 35:23-25 regarding the death of Josiah, **“And the archers shot King Josiah; and the king said to his servants, ‘Take me away, for I am severely wounded.’ His servants therefore took him out of that chariot and put him in the second chariot that he had, and they brought him to Jerusalem. So he died, and was buried in one of the tombs of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. Jeremiah also lamented for Josiah. And to this day all the singing men and the singing women speak of Josiah in their lamentations. They made it a custom in Israel; and indeed they are written in the Laments.”**

Now they are being told not to weep for Josiah, the dead but they should be weeping specifically for those who will be taken into captivity. You see, Shallum or Jehoahaz reigned for 3 months and was taken away captive by Pharaoh Necho and the Egyptians. And he died down in Egypt not seeing the land of Jerusalem anymore!

VERSES 13-17

1. Now the Lord is speaking of the next King, Jehoiakim is now on the throne, the brother of Jehoahaz and another son of Josiah. And during his 11 year reign the Babylonians were strengthening in power and as Judah is falling apart he is building up his home and he is not paying the people for the work they were doing.

And as much as he was taking care of his home, building it up, this was not going to stop the coming judgment of God. You see, the Lord is telling Jehoiakim that his home will not protect him from the coming judgment. The Lord points him back to his father, Josiah, who was a good King, wanting him to follow his example. The heart of the Lord is seen in people's lives in how they treat others, the less fortunate, the poor and-so-on. If you want to know the heart of God reach out to them and as you meet their physical needs, share Christ with them.

But for Jehoiakim, his heart was truly wicked. And the result of his actions is seen in the next verses.

VERSES 18-23

1. As wicked as the people were Jehoiakim was far worse and he was their leader. Thus, in his death the people are not going to care because he was such a wicked King. He was more concerned about himself than the nation around him.

2. What was one of the things that lead the King and the nation away from the Lord? Look at verse 21 and you will see that it was "**prosperity**" that caused them to take their eyes off the Lord and trust in their riches! That still happens today. Things get in the way of people coming to church, serving the Lord!

Now for the people of Judah, in the end, all that they trusted in, all that the false prophets had said, all the idols they were in love with will be taken away as they go into captivity! And this judgment will be so bad, so painful that it will be like a woman in labor but the end result will not be a blessing but a curse as they will be taken into captivity!

VERSES 24-30

1. Coniah, (also known as Jehoiachin or Jeconiah), was the last King the Lord is going to speak about here in this section. And Coniah was wicked and the Lord was finished with him, He wanted nothing to do with him. He only reigned for 3 months and 10 days and then was taken into captivity.

We are told of these events in II Kings 24:13-17, **“And he carried out from there all the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king’s house, and he cut in pieces all the articles of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the Lord, as the Lord had said. Also he carried into captivity all Jerusalem: all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land. And he carried Jehoiachin captive to Babylon. The king’s mother, the king’s wives, his officers, and the mighty of the land he carried into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. All the valiant men, seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths, one thousand, all who were strong and fit for war, these the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon. Then the king of Babylon made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin’s uncle, king in his place, and changed his name to Zedekiah.”**

And in just those short 3 months and 10 days he turned so far from the Lord that the Lord placed a blood curse placed upon him and his descendants because of his wickedness. And I am sure that at this point Satan and his forces were probably throwing a party.

Why would they do that? The reason is simple. Back in II Samuel chapter 7 God promised David that through his seed the Messiah would come. And from Solomon on down in the Southern Kingdom of Judah there was a descendant of David on the throne. But now this blood curse placed on the descendants of Coniah has put a halt to that. It looked like Satan won. I wonder how the people felt when they heard this, did it even bother them? It should have!

But as evil as man may be, we don't need to fear because God has a plan! In the New Testament book of Matthew we see Jesus Christ presented as Messiah the King, the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. And so Matthew takes us back to Abraham, the father of the Jews to show us the lineage of Christ. Matthew takes us through the lineage of Solomon, from which Coniah was a descendant to Joseph, Jesus' step-father.

Again, keep in mind that the Lord said that no descendant of his, Coniah's, shall be on the throne of David. So then how can Jesus sit on the throne of David with this blood curse on the descendants of Jeconiah or Coniah? Keep in mind that Joseph is not the biological father of Jesus but the legal father of Jesus. That means the blood curse did not pass to Jesus because He was the adoptive son of Joseph. And yet He had all the rights of that lineage, including the right to sit on the throne of David through His adoptive father, Joseph!

But what about the blood line, where does that come in? When we look at the Gospel of Luke we will see the genealogy of Mary and Mary is also from the lineage of David, from the tribe of Judah. But her genealogy is not through Solomon and Jeconiah. You see, her lineage is through another son of David, Nathan and thus, there is no blood curse that is passed on to Jesus for if there was, then He could not have paid in full the penalty for our sin, He would have His own sin to deal with! But Jesus was without sin as the Scriptures tell us!

It is amazing what God has done but we should not be amazed, He is God! This is how God could bring forth the Messiah from lineage that has been cursed? All things are possible with God and don't ever forget that. Don't ever think that Satan has outsmarted God! Thus, He had royal blood through Joseph, and yet without the blood curse through Mary.

It is as Charles H. Dyer sums it up for us as he wrote,

This prophecy also helps explain the genealogies of Christ in Matthew 1 and Luke 3. Matthew presented the legal line of Christ through his step-father, Joseph. However, Joseph's line came through Shealtiel who was a son of Jehoiachin (Jeconiah, Matthew 1:12; cf. 1 Chron. 3:17).

Had Christ been a physical descendant of Joseph and not virgin-born, He would have been disqualified as Israel's King. Luke presented the physical line of Christ through Mary, who was descended from David through the line of his son Nathan (Luke 3:31). In that way Christ was not under the "curse" of Jehoiachin.

- Charles H. Dyer

Now for those who say that Jesus was not virgin born, think again. If He wasn't then He had the blood curse placed upon Him, He was with sin and He could never sit on the throne of David. I think I will trust God's Word over man's wisdom, won't you?