

JEREMIAH

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Jeremiah chapter 25 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Here in Jeremiah chapter 25 we are going to see God tell His people, the Jews, how long they are going to be in captivity. God has been warning them and they have refused to listen and thus, judgment was coming and soon because of their sins.

Now some may read this and they may feel that God is being harsh, that He is unfair. That is not the case. God is patient, He is longsuffering and He warns us before judgment comes down. They refused to listen to the warnings and thus, they went into captivity.

Let me also say this. You hear people say, "I don't know what happened, I just fell into sin!" That is not true, you walked into sin and you refused to heed the warnings that God has given you.

"Don't go down that path, there is only death and destruction there!" "Stop, turn back towards Me!" And God will warn you through your friends, through the message you hear at church, when you get in your car and turn on the radio and what the Lord is doing is what He was doing with the Southern Kingdom of Judah, He is warning you! Now it is up to you to listen and obey and be blessed or ignore the warning and keep on walking down that path that **WILL** lead to destruction, not might!

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Jeremiah chapter 25 beginning in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

JEREMIAH 25**VERSES 1-9**

1. Here we see that Jeremiah dates this message for us by telling us it is in the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign. Jehoiakim was a son of Josiah, only he was wicked and led the nation for 11 years into idolatry before he was taken away captive by Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar succeeded his father on the throne in Babylon in 605 B. C. and Babylon was a powerful nation. He led his army to Carchemish and then defeated the Egyptians and some Assyrians. Then, in 606 B. C. he came down upon the Southern Kingdom of Judah and took some of the people, the noble's captive to Babylon with him.

At this point Jeremiah has been in ministry for some twenty-three years, speaking forth the Words of God. He arose early in the morning and probably continued on until late in the evening telling the people to get right with God, to repent of their sins or else the judgment of God would come upon them. And how discouraging that must have been for Jeremiah because the people refused to hear and obey the Words of God that he spoke.

And keep in mind that God had sent other prophets to warn them of the coming judgment if they did not repent and get right with God and they still refused to listen and now they had passed the point of no return. Because of that, this judgment of God should have been no surprise to them.

2. As I said as we opened up our study this evening, sin does not just happen. It is a gradual process that moves you farther and farther into its grips and away from God. You just don't fall into sin, but you do walk into it and you can either continue down that path that leads to destruction, like Judah did, or you can repent of your sins and turn to God, entering into life with Him. It is your choice! But God will warn you over and over again and it is your choice to either listen or not.

Remember what we were told in Jeremiah 6:17-18, **“Thus says the Lord: ‘Stand in the ways and see, And ask for the old paths, where the good way is, And walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, “We will not walk in it.” Also, I set watchmen over you, saying, “Listen to the sound of the trumpet!” But they said, “We will not listen.””** In other words, they can't blame God for what has come upon them, they can only blame themselves because they said, **“We will not listen.”**

3. Now let's look at this for a minute. Was God asking too much of them? Absolutely not, He only wanted them to return to Him. God wanted to bless them; He didn't want to chasten them. But God was not going to let them continue down this path that was leading to destruction. If you remember, back in Deuteronomy chapter 28, prior to the children of Israel entering the land, God spoke of the blessings that would come upon them for obedience. He told them they would be exalted as a nation. They will be fruitful and so will the land they live in. Their enemies will not be able to stand against them, but will flee away. As a nation, as a people, they will be prosperous.

Then came the warning that if they turned from the Lord, if they refused to repent and get right with God, then God would bring judgment upon them. As a nation they will be brought down. The fruit of their body and the fruit of the land will be barren. Confusion, disease, pestilence will come upon the people. The land will be as dry as a desert. Their enemies will cause them to flee. And their land will be taken captive with its people, with many dying in the battle. As a nation, as a people, they will have nothing. Is America listening to the warning? I don't think so!

You see, God does warn us and then it is up to us to listen. If we refuse then we should not be surprised of what comes our way. There are consequences to our actions. We can't blame God for what comes upon us, only ourselves and our hard hearts. But we do like to blame God for what comes upon us. After the tragic shooting at Columbine High School several years ago now, someone saw a bumper sticker that read, "Where was God on Tuesday?"

That was the day of the shooting. Think about that for a minute. God was exactly where we put Him, out of the schools, and out of our lives. And then we have the nerve to blame God.

As God said in verse 7 of Jeremiah 25, **"Yet you have not listened to Me," says the LORD, 'that you might provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt.'"** That was not only the Southern Kingdom of Judah, that is our nation as well, we are not listening!

4. Now God was going to use the Babylonians as His instrument of judgment against the Southern Kingdom of Judah. But why would God call this pagan Babylonian King, Nebuchadnezzar, *His servant?*

Because he was serving the purposes of God, he was fulfilling the plan of God. If you think about it, and this may be shocking to some of you, but Satan is a servant of God. The reason I say that is because Satan is giving people a choice, for to have real love you must have a choice. Now Satan is allowed to carry on his work but there is coming a day when it will cease and God will cast him into the Lake of Fire for eternity. But for now, he is fulfilling the purposes of God.

The same is true of rebellious man who is at war with God. They think that they are doing their own thing, they are even smug about it and yet, this is all going according to God's plans and purposes. We don't see the whole picture but God's Word gives us a good idea regarding what is going to happen and we see it coming to pass in our day as the nations of the world, as the religions of the world gather together to be one. They think they are accomplishing this and God has already told us it will happen! You can either serve God because you have a relationship with Him or you can serve God as an instrument that He will use to accomplish His plans and His purposes apart from Him!

VERSES 10-12

1. Things were great, business was great, they had a great time until the judgment of God fell upon them, then all the joy and celebrations they enjoyed so much were taken away from them. Domestic life was coming to a halt as the judgment of God was coming upon them.

2. We are told that the time of captivity in Babylon will be seventy years. Why seventy years? We don't have to guess because we are told the reason for this captivity in II Chronicles chapter 36 beginning in verse 19, **“Then they burned the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious possessions. And those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.”** II Chronicles 36:19-21.

Now how come they were punished for this, did they even know they were to give the land a Sabbath rest? Of course they did, God does not hold them accountable for something that they didn't know, they just chose to ignore it!

In Leviticus 25:3-5 we are told, **“Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruit; but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a sabbath to the Lord. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard. What grows of its own accord of your harvest you shall not reap, nor gather the grapes of your untended vine, for it is a year of rest for the land.”**

You see, every seventh year the land was to rest. There would be no harvesting, sowing but whatever grew you were to leave it alone. Then how would they eat, how would they survive? You can read on and see that in Leviticus 25:18-22 that in the sixth year God would provide enough food for them to eat until the eighth year when they would harvest the land once again. The land got its rest and the people would see and learn to trust in the Lord in providing for them.

Tragically, as they entered the land and for the next 490 years they never gave the land its Sabbath rest. And in Leviticus 26 we are told that if they disobey the Lord here they will go into captivity and that is exactly what happened. For 70 years the Southern Kingdom of Judah was in captivity in Babylon!

Now keep in mind that the reason for their captivity was their idolatry, their turning away from the Lord. The length of their captivity was based on them not giving the land its Sabbath day rest. Thus, for 490 years they did not give the land its rest and they owed God 70 years to cover that and that is exactly what God received from them!

3. Daniel, while in captivity in Babylon, had a copy of the scroll of Jeremiah and as he read it he recognized that the years of their captivity were coming to an end. And this caused Daniel to prepare his heart and seek what God wanted His people to do before they returned home. And in Daniel chapter 9 we see Daniel launch into an awesome prayer regarding the coming to the end of their captivity and their return home again.

We read in Daniel 9:2-3, **“in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.”** Daniel not only read the Words of God, he believed them and applied them to his life!

What a lesson for us. God means what He says and says what He means and we need to obey Him, we need to not only listen to what He is telling us but adhere to it! And think about it, in the days of Jeremiah this was a prophecy of what was coming. We now can look back on it because it is history, God has done this and it is hard to deny it. Again, may we heed His Words because there is another judgment coming, not only upon Israel but upon the inhabitants of this earth as God pours out His wrath upon a Christ rejecting world!

4. Like Daniel we have been told what is coming and the timeframe of the Lord's return for His Bride, the Church. We don't know the day or the hour but we do know the season and as you look at the events that are happening in the world it is hard to imagine this continuing on much longer.

What that should cause us to do is pray for this land we live in, pray for the people that their hearts would be open and they would come to that saving faith in Jesus because I think we can hear the footsteps of the Messiah coming for His Bride!

5. Now as much as the Babylonians were an instrument of God's judgment upon His people, they went too far! They were brutal and because of that God was going to judge them and He did!

VERSES 13-16

1. God is speaking of the cup of His judgment that will be poured out not only upon the Southern Kingdom of Judah but also on other nations. And this judgment they drink down will be so devastating it will drive them mad. The carnage will be more than they can handle. And the Lord is going to share with Jeremiah who this cup of judgment is for as He lists some of these nations.

VERSES 17-18

1. First of all, before we look at these nations I want you to notice the response of Jeremiah here. The Lord spoke to Jeremiah about what he was to do and we are told, **“Then I took the cup from the LORD’S hand, and made all the nations drink, to whom the LORD had sent me.”**

Do you really think the people wanted to hear this message? Of course not but it was a message the Lord wanted them to hear and Jeremiah obeyed the Lord, as difficult as it was for him to do. I look at people today and pastor’s, teachers, leaders in the church and they feel that Bible teaching is boring, that you have to spice it up and give the people what they want to hear but in doing that you are not giving them what they need!

Paul warned Timothy of a day when they will not want to hear sound doctrine, healthy doctrine and notice what Paul told this young pastor, **“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 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. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”** II Timothy 4:1-5.

Yes it is not going to be easy but this is what you need to do, you need to bring the Word of God to people and it doesn't matter if they want to hear it or not. You convince them that the Scriptures are the Word of God and we need to follow what God has said. You rebuke them for their errors. You exhort them to continue in the ways of the Lord. Don't stop giving to them the Word of God no matter who comes against you! May we heed those warnings!

You see, if you give people unhealthy doctrine, like unhealthy food, you will become unhealthy spiritually speaking and I think the church today is very sick because it has been partaking of junk food, unhealthy doctrine for far too long. The only solution, like the Lord said in Jeremiah 6:16, **“Thus says the Lord: ‘Stand in the ways and see, And ask for the old paths, where the good way is, And walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls.’ . . .”**

The problem for Judah is they refused to walk in those old paths, the Words of God and instead of finding peace they found bondage, captivity!

2. Notice also where this judgment begins because this is an important lesson for us to learn. Judgment always begins at the house of God, His people, because they should have known better.

Peter reminds us of this very thing as he wrote in I Peter 4:17, **“For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?”** Yes, it will begin at the house of God but then God’s judgment will move out to the heathen nations, the unsaved people, as we will see as we read on here in Jeremiah.

VERSES 19-26

1. The near term fulfillment is Babylon coming against these nations, but as we will see, this is looking into the future time of God’s judgment upon the world, the whole world! First of all we see Egypt is going to drink the cup of His Wrath. Then the Philistine cities would also drink the cup of His wrath and they were located on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

Then we see Edom, Moab, which were located south and east of the Dead Sea and Ammon was northeast of the Dead Sea. Tyre and Sidon were located northwest of Jerusalem and all these nations would be made to drink the cup of His wrath!

Dedan, Tema, Buz and the Kings of Arabia are nations located in the area of Arabia and they as well will be made to drink the cup of His wrath!

As we get to verse 26 we see nations that were located northeast of Jerusalem and the name Sheshach is a code name for Babylon, at least most scholars feel that is what it is related to as it speaks of the Kings of the north.

The key for me is what verse 26 says, “**. . . and all the kingdoms of the world which are on the face of the earth. . .**” I think that sums it up, right! Thus, the long term or complete fulfillment of this judgment is speaking of when the Lord will judge a Christ rejecting world and that happens during a period of time that the Bible calls the Tribulation Period!

Of this time we read in Revelation 14:14-10, “**Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, ‘Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.’ So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped. Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, ‘Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.’ So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses’ bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.**”

God is not only going to judge the people but the religious and commercial centers He calls Babylon. His judgment will be complete! It is after this period of time that the Lord will establish His Kingdom on this earth as He rules and reigns from Jerusalem and righteousness fills this land!

VERSES 27-29

1. The Lord likens this judgment to someone who is so drunk that they not only stagger all over the place but they finally fall and they can't get up anymore. That is the final judgment that is coming upon this world, apart from Christ no one will be able to stand!

And as we have seen, God's judgment began with His own people but ultimately His sword will go forth to the ends of the earth! We see that in Revelation 19:11-16 where we are told, **"Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."**

And once again this is not a local judgment that the Lord is speaking of here because in verse 29 of Jeremiah chapter 25 we are told, **"... for I will call for a sword on all the inhabitants of the earth ..."** So again I think this is ultimately looking at the judgment that comes during the Tribulation Period, those last seven years of history before the Lord returns to set-up His Kingdom on this earth.

VERSES 30-32

1. I remember several years ago we were with our grandkids at the zoo and all of a sudden we heard this loud roar and believe me, it got everyone's attention. One of the male lions was making his presence felt and what a roar that was. I think he was showing off for the female lion that was in there with him, you know how guys are!

But here's the thing. It is one thing to hear a lion that is in a zoo roar, it is another thing when the Lord roars and there is nothing holding Him back. And once again this judgment is not just on Israel or the people of the Middle East, but the entire world. We are told in verse 30 of Jeremiah 25 that this judgment is "**... against all the inhabitants of the earth.**" I think that is very clear! We see this point made more than once so we can see it has to be speaking of more than just the Babylonians, it is speaking of God's judgment on the entire world!

2. Now in just knowing that judgment is coming can be scary but I also know this as Peter reminds us, "**then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment.**" II Peter 2:9.

God does not judge the righteous with the wicked. He delivers the righteous out of His judgment and the unrighteous have a place reserved for them in this judgment. Now keep in mind that we do not stand in our own righteousness because the Bible says all our righteousness is like filthy rags before a holy God. We stand in the righteousness that Christ has imputed into our lives by faith, His righteousness!

Another point is that this is not our home. Our citizenship is in heaven from which we wait for the return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But for the earth dwellers, His wrath will be like a tornado, flattening all that is in His path. No one will be able to stand before Him in their own righteousness!

VERSES 33-38

1. Yes King Nebuchadnezzar will destroy the land as he defeats nation after nation but the reality is, that is not the complete fulfillment of what the Lord is saying here as I have said. He is speaking of the judgment known as the Tribulation Period and when you read this it is hard to imagine this much carnage. But we need to keep in mind that God has done everything possible to prevent it. Man has chosen to reject God, man has chosen to reject God's Word, and because of their actions they will be judged.

2. As the Lord speaks of this judgment He is also speaking to the shepherds or the leaders of the nation here starting in verse 34. And when He does He is speaking to both the civil and religious people.

And the Lord is warning them that things are going to get so bad that they are not to just put ashes on their heads as a sign of mourning, but they are to roll in ashes to show the depth of their grief and sorrow. And when God does judge them, they will shatter like a glass that is thrown to the ground. You are not going to be able to escape the judgment of God. It didn't matter if you were a King or a common person, rich or poor, educated or uneducated. The only way out is through the Door, Jesus Christ!

3. It is interesting that in verse 35 of Jeremiah 25 we see the Lord say, “**And the shepherds will have no way to flee, Nor the leaders of the flock to escape.**” During the reign of Zedekiah, the last King in the Southern Kingdom of Judah before their captivity, as soon as the Babylonians began to breach the walls of the city, Zedekiah and his family escaped through a tunnel. But they were soon captured.

And as they were brought before King Nebuchadnezzar, the King had all the sons of Zedekiah killed before him and then he blinded Zedekiah so the last thing he saw was all of his sons being killed before him. And he was then carried off to Babylon. Judgment is coming and like Zedekiah found out, you cannot flee the judgment of God! The only way out is through Christ as I have said!

4. As we move into Jeremiah chapter 26 and really continuing on through Jeremiah chapter 29 we will see how the people responded to his message from the Lord. And as you have already guessed, they not only rejected Jeremiah but his message as well was rejected by the leaders and the people! Let’s read on and see what transpired.

JEREMIAH 26

VERSES 1-6

1. Now keep in mind that this is not the same message that Jeremiah gave at the Temple back in Jeremiah chapter 7. Let me show you what I mean. Here in this message or sermon we see that it was given in “**in the court.**” But in Jeremiah chapter 7 we see that he gave this message or sermon at “**the gate.**”

Also, here in Jeremiah chapter 26 we see that the son of Josiah, Jehoiakim was the King and in Jeremiah chapter 7 we saw that Josiah was the King in the Southern Kingdom of Judah. The content may be similar but the timeframe is different because God's Word is unchanging!

2. Now here in Jeremiah chapter 26 we are going back a few years to the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign. And Jeremiah is told to go into the Temple area and speak forth the whole council of God. Don't diminish what God is saying. How important that is for each of us. Too often people add to or take away from the Word of God. But God warns us not to do that, for if a person does, judgment will come upon them.

We are told of this very thing in Revelation 22:18-19, where John warns us, "**For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.**"

Don't mess with God's Word, speak it forth in truth, don't add to it and don't take away from it! What a warning, may we heed it!

3. Now verse 3 is interesting because it seems like God is unsure how the people will respond to the words of Jeremiah. Make no mistake about it, God knows all, He wasn't taken by surprise. I tend to think this was more for Jeremiah's sake. It could be that the Lord was trying to encourage Jeremiah to continue on, you don't know what might happen, but God truly did!

4. Now to drive this point home the Lord wants Jeremiah to give the people an object lesson and Shiloh was to be that object lesson for them to see that God means what He says and says what He means!

Keep in mind that Shiloh was the place where the tabernacle was located when they first entered the land. Remember, they did not have the city of Jerusalem until the time of King David and the Temple itself was not built until the time of King Solomon.

And by this time Shiloh was destroyed because of their idolatry, probably first by the Philistines and then as the Assyrians came in and took the Northern Kingdom of Israel away captive. And God is saying that Jerusalem will look just like Shiloh. Learn from the past. It is still barren today so the lesson God gave to His people back then remains an object lesson of what happens when you turn from the Lord!

Now keep in mind that God used this same illustration back in Jeremiah chapter 7, beginning in verse 12. He said **“But go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel. And now, because you have done all these works,’ says the LORD, ‘and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you, but you did not answer, therefore I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust, and to this place which I gave to you and your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of My sight, as I have cast out all your brethren - the whole posterity of Ephraim.”** Jeremiah 7:12-15.

Shiloh became no longer a place of worship but a barren wasteland that remains in that condition today as I have said. But the people refused to look and listen to what God was saying. In Psalm 78:58-61 we read, **“For they provoked Him to anger with their high places, and moved Him to jealousy with their carved images. When God heard this, He was furious, and greatly abhorred Israel, So that He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent He had placed among men, And delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy’s hand.”**

Shiloh represents the judgment of God, the absence of God among His people because of their sin and their refusal to turn back to Him!

5. Now this message was from the Lord, it was a warning to repent and get right with the Lord or face His judgment! But, of course the false prophets were saying just the opposite. They felt the Temple was too sacred, God would never destroy it. The Temple was like a good luck charm. They placed their faith in an object instead of the living God! And listen to what they had to say to Jeremiah and his message!

VERSES 7-11

1. Why were the leaders and the people so upset with Jeremiah? Because they did not like the message he brought to them. They enjoyed what the false prophets were saying, a message of peace and prosperity and they did not want to hear of repenting and judgment.

Now think about what God was offering them, His grace and mercy and instead of taking hold of that gift that God had given them they take hold of Jeremiah, the spokesperson for God and they want him dead!

You see, Jeremiah is on trial here. They thought he was speaking blasphemy. They did not believe he was speaking for God because it went against what they wanted to hear. So to make this more official we see the religious leaders have assembled at the gate of the city where the court cases were held and judgments made. And they are trying to get Jeremiah put to death for what he was saying. It is not always easy to speak forth the Words of God because people don't want to hear it but it is necessary!

VERSES 12-15

1. I don't know about you, but man, it would be tough not to just let them have it. But look at the compassion that Jeremiah has for these people who are threatening his life. He wants them to understand that this is not his message but the Lord sent him with this message, it is from the Lord and not from man.

And his plea to them is to change their ways and return to the Lord. Even the threat of death did not stop him from speaking forth the Words of God. And the message really is never easy but if they wanted to see the judgment of God stopped, they need to obey the Lord and follow Him.

2. Jeremiah also knew that they may not receive this message well but he did not worry about his life. Death did not scare him. What he was concerned about is that if they did kill him they would only bring further judgment upon themselves! He was more worried about their fate than his because he knew where he was going and that should be true of us. We should be more worried about the fate of our family and friends and those we meet wherever we go than our own fate which is in the hands of God! He will complete the work not only in us but the work we are to do as He works through us and then it is time to go home!

VERSE 16

1. I think the religious leaders thought this was it for Jeremiah, the people will side with them and he will be put to death. But when push came to shove the people wanted Jeremiah alive.

Why did they say that? Look again at what they said, “**. . . ‘This man does not deserve to die. For he has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God.’**”

Does that mean that they got it and that they turned to the Lord? No, not really. For whatever reason, and probably the hand of God, they saw that this was a prophet of God but they still did not agree with what he was saying. Why do I say that? Because they did not change their ways, they continued down this path of destruction away from the Lord that will lead them into captivity!

Make no mistake about it, if you truly believe something it will affect your life. Let me show you what I mean. What if I told you that there was a bomb in this building and it was going to go off in 30 seconds. There is not a bomb in the building, don't worry. But let's say that there was and after I said that I just continued on teaching. Would you believe me? Probably not but if I said that there was a bomb in the building and it was going off in 30 seconds and as I was saying that you saw me run out the exit door, I bet all of you would follow me. You see, you believed as I did and it affected your life.

For these people, the words of Jeremiah did not affect their life, there was no change and judgment was still coming upon them.

2. What I also find interesting is that the religious leaders wanted Jeremiah dead while the people wanted him alive. They said he did nothing wrong. He is speaking for God. There are times when your biggest critics are those so-called religious people. Don't give up, don't give in. Stand up for the truths of God's Word! Our biggest battle is going to be within the church that has moved away from God and His Word, they are more of social institutions and because we believe the Bible is the Word of God they will mock us and call us unloving. Stand up for the Truth – don't give in to them!

VERSES 17-19

1. As they decided not to put Jeremiah to death, some of the elders strengthened their case by quoting from the prophet Micah, specifically Micah 3:12, which says, "**Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed like a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, And the mountain of the temple Like the bare hills of the forest.**"

This prophet made similar statements about Jerusalem and the Temple some 70 years earlier. And the King back then, Hezekiah, didn't put him to death, but listened with favor to this prophet. And as Hezekiah listened to this prophet he repented and God did not bring disaster at that time. Once again there is a choice for the nation and its people, to repent and get right with God to stop this judgment or to refuse and see the judgment of God come upon them. Tragically this time they refused to listen and obey.

2. So Micah was a lesson for them to see why they should not put Jeremiah to death. This prophet spoke of judgment and they let him live and because of their repentance God spared His judgment upon them. But next we will see an example of someone they put to death. I guess you would call this fair and balanced reporting?

VERSES 20-23

1. Urijah was another prophet of God who spoke during the time of Jeremiah. And at one point Jehoiakim heard what this prophet was saying and he went after him to put him to death. So this prophet fled to Egypt, a type of the world, where he was still captured and put to death. The lesson, don't flee to the world in fear for your life, they can't help you! Run to the Lord who is our strong tower! But for Urijah, his time to go home had come and they put him to death. So two points regarding two prophets of God, one they kept alive and the other they put to death. What would they do with Jeremiah? Let's read on and see.

VERSE 24

1. Ahikam stood up for Jeremiah and prevented the people from putting him to death. Ahikam's son, Gedaliah, was appointed governor of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B. C.

Make no mistake about it, the work is tough, it is not easy and I think many times we get discouraged. But remember what Paul said in I Corinthians 15:58, "**Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.**" Never forget that as you are serving the Lord!