

BRACE YOURSELVES (IN CHRIST) JUDGMENT IS COMING

Jeremiah 23:16-29

"Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless; They speak a vision of their own heart, not from the mouth of the Lord. They continually say to those who despise Me, 'The Lord has said, "You shall have peace" ' ; And to everyone who walks according to the dictates of his own heart, they say, 'No evil shall come upon you.' " For who has stood in the counsel of the Lord, and has perceived and heard His word? Who has marked His word and heard it? Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord has gone forth in fury—A violent whirlwind! It will fall violently on the head of the wicked. The anger of the Lord will not turn back until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart. In the latter days you will understand it perfectly. "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran. I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in My counsel, and had caused My people to hear My words, then they would have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their doings. "Am I a God near at hand," says the Lord, "And not a God afar off? Can anyone hide himself in secret places, so I shall not see him?" says the Lord; "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the Lord. "I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in My name, saying, 'I have dreamed, I have dreamed!' How long will this be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies? Indeed they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart, who try to make My people forget My name by their dreams which everyone tells his neighbor, as their fathers forgot My name for Baal. "The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream; And he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat?" says the Lord. "Is not My word like a fire?" says the Lord, "And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?"

Jeremiah was a **true** prophet of the Lord. **Jeremiah 1:4-5** says, "Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations."" There were many false prophets of Jeremiah's time. The time of Jeremiah was in times that started out seemingly good for the nation of Judah, during the reign of King Josiah, in the people's eyes anyways and in the "opinions" of the false prophets, but Jeremiah was called to preach essentially the same thing that John the Baptist preached (some 600 years later) and likewise what Jesus Himself also preached. That message? "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Jeremiah's message to God's people was similar to, without a doubt, what God is saying to His people now. Judgment is coming. For us the message is to repent, to confess our sins to God, to have a change of mind to no longer follow our own

selfish desires but to do the will of God. For us it is to not be dismayed by what is coming, to not be discouraged when it seems as though evil is triumphing all around us and then for all of us too, we must cling to Jesus with all our might. We have the same choice that God's people had in the time of Jeremiah. We can listen to the false prophets who say, "all is well, God loves you, God wants to bless you, God has great plans for you, God wants to prosper you not harm you, surely God's judgment is only for those who are not God's people." Yet God says of those prophets and the people who listen, "They continually say to those who despise Me, 'The Lord has said, "You shall have peace." Yes, we can have peace, but not as the world gives, not a peace that the world promises.

There are three New Testament passages of Scripture that tie in specifically with the message that God spoke to His people through the prophet Jeremiah. **1.** "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; **but he who does the will of God abides forever.**" (1 John 2:15-17) The Apostle John, the beloved of Jesus said that. **2.** "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!'" (Matthew 7:21-23) That came from Jesus Himself. **3.** "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." (James 4:4) That was from James, the brother of Jesus.

You may be thinking that this message is starting off pretty harshly. Yet, here's how this ties in with our passage of Scripture, the warning that was for God's people in the time just prior to them going into captivity to Babylon, and to us in this present time. Whatever we may be holding on to in this time in our lives, things of the world, lusts of the flesh, assuring words that may come from false prophets that just say all the things you want to hear, those are the very things that can and will become a stumbling block to you. A personal example is that we know that Jesus prayed to the Father just before He was to be crucified on a cross by saying, "**that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.**" (John 17:21). Similarly, we should certainly listen to what the Apostle Paul said, "Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being **like-minded, having the**

same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." Sounds great doesn't it. That is what we all should be hoping for. As much as Jesus, as much as I, and as much as all of you may hope for us to be one in spirit and purpose, unfortunately, on this side of eternity that will never fully happen. Why is that. Satan has been given power on this earth to which he is out to steal, kill, and destroy." (**John 10:10**) Not only that, just as it was in Jeremiah's day, where no one wanted to hear his message of repentance, many today have the same mindset. "God is love, not hate. God loves us and understands us", they say. In reply to that, Jeremiah wrote, "And to everyone who walks according to the dictates of his own heart, they say, 'No evil shall come upon you.' "

If you look at the progression of how things went with Judah, first they saw the falling of Israel and those of the nation of Israel taken into bondage to the Assyrians. Yet they said, "surely this won't fall upon us." Sound familiar to what people say of the nation of the United States of America? After the nation of Judah saw the falling of the nation of Israel they were then warned that judgment was coming to them also. Yet they said, "meh." Then when Babylon began their seige of Jerusalem of the nation of Judah, they said, "meh, peace, peace." For about a 1-1/2 years it took Babylon to break through the wall of Jerusalem and then the carry off to captivity the people of Judah from God's holy city, Jerusalem. We have been seeing the same thing with the U.S.of A. The gradual chipping away of what is symbolically the wall around this nation. Removing of God from our schools, abortion, homosexuality, transgender all promoted in the name of tolerance and love while mocking the character and ways of God. Once again as Jesus said, "**Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'**"

"Am I a God near at hand," says the Lord, "And not a God afar off? Can anyone hide himself in secret places, so I shall not see him?" says the Lord; "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the Lord." God is omniscient (He knows all there is to know) and He is omnipresent (He is everywhere). Nothing escapes His eyes. While that may be discouraging to those who are trying to just do their own thing, to those who really don't want to do God's will, to walk in His ways), yet it can and is very reassuring to those of us who do love God, to us who do want to please God, to us who do want to walk in God's ways." The Apostle Paul wrote in **Philippians 4:4-7**, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your

requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." There's the peace that God promises. A peace within His people who have His Holy Spirit. He IS near. He knows what we are going through. "He knows when you've been bad or good so be good for goodness sake." Yeah I know, that isn't Scripture and it isn't talking about God but it is true. God sees all. God is looking for those who will say, "I will love You, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; So shall I be saved from my enemies." (**Psalm 18:1-3**) Yet just as King David who wrote that knew, we must remember and keep in mind also. He alone is God Almighty, all things are on His time and according to His perfect plan. Judgment is coming. As the Apostle Peter said though, "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?" (**1 Peter 4:17**)

That is why, first of all, it is imperative for us all to start with believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (**John 3:16-17**) There will be times where all we can do is hold on to the promise of God, to hold onto Jesus our Lord and Savior. There are times where it may seem that the judgment of God will never come to those who are making a mess of our community, and our nation, and in this world. Next it is up to us to repent of our sins against God. After all, Jesus died on the cross for our sins, why would we continue to sin knowing that it displeases our Lord and Savior. Not only that but just as was mentioned earlier Jesus said, "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." Jesus also said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed." (**John 8:34-36**) In our passage of Scripture for today in Jeremiah, "Indeed they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart, who try to make My people forget My name by their dreams which everyone tells his neighbor, as their fathers forgot My name for Baal." Baal was a false god in the time of Jeremiah, an idol that was worshipped, but many claimed to say that they didn't worship Baal. Just as then we can do now and put a long list of idols in the place of Baal to mean the same thing. As Jesus said in quoting Isaiah, "'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'" (**Matthew 15:8-9**)

What does this mean though for God's people who do believe on Jesus, who have repented of their sins, who are repenting of their sins, who do try to do the will of God? "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!" (**2 Timothy 3:1-5**) "Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition." (**2 Thessalonians 2:3**) Jesus even said, "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold." (**Matthew 24:12**)

Are we in the times of the very last of days where there is a great falling away to where the love of many will wax cold? By all appearances, we are on the threshold of those times, if not already in them. "What is the chaff to the wheat?" says the Lord. "Is not My word like a fire?" says the Lord, "And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?" The chaff is the stuff from the wheat that gets winnowed away or blown away or is burnt in the fire to where all that is left is the good grains of the wheat. Another analogy that Jesus used was in the parable of the wheat and the tares. The tares were the weeds that grew around the good wheat and they were both left to grow together until the day of the harvest. God is telling us in His Word that evil WILL become more pronounced as we move closer to the time of Jesus' return and that it will be more and more people around us will turn to their own self-will and be opposed to the will of God. There will be false prophets that will try to sugar-coat God's message to believe God turns a blind eye to the sins of His people. He sees all and we will be judged accordingly. Jesus will stand in our defense on judgment day IF we are really His, if He is truly our Lord and Savior. The IF that Paul used is in **Colossians 1:21-23**, "And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight— **IF** indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister."

I, as a minister of the gospel, have the same obligation to preach the whole gospel of Jesus Christ. I would love to, more than anything just tell people how much God loves them, which He truly does, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (**Romans 5:8**) And that God has nothing but good things ahead for you. ERRR...WRONG! God actually tells us to cling to Him as He told His people, the Israelites, "that you may

love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days." (**Deuteronomy 30:20**) Likewise we are told in the New Covenant, with Jesus as our Lord and Savior, "let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (**Hebrews 12:1-2**)

Yes, we need to brace ourselves, in Christ, judgment is coming but in Christ we will overcome all that comes our way! Amen!