

**JEREMIAH, PART 1 (RETURN TO ME)**  
**PROGRAM 41 (#912041)**  
**WEEK 9 (912309)**  
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**SERIES: Jeremiah, Part 1 (Return To Me)**

**TITLE: Program 41 – Good And Bad Shepherds, Part 1**

**MONDAY**

**OPEN**

How important are rulers, and how important are those that speak for God? I will tell you this, Beloved, that if the people do not know the Word of God for themselves and embrace it as the Word of God, a ruler, a prophet can destroy a nation. So you better listen carefully to the lessons God has for us this week in Jeremiah.

**PART ONE**

I'm sure that you have heard the statement that everything rises and falls on leadership. Well this week we're going to look at Jeremiah chapter 23 and Jeremiah chapter 24. Just two chapters, and the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter is really slim pickings so to speak. It's got a good message in it, but it is a very short chapter. And yet chapter 23 is so important. It's important in the history of Israel. It's a message that Israel needs to listen to today. But it is also important in your life and in my life because we're going to see principles.

We're going to see precepts for life. And what we're going to see is it is very important that we have godly rulers, rulers who truly fear God and who are not on the throne, so to speak, not at the head of that country to propagate their own ideals and their own precepts, so to speak. But rather, that there are men on that throne of that particular nation that fear God. And if they don't fear God what do you need? You need a people who really know God, who know God's Word, and who are willing to stand for truth no matter what it costs them, to be willing to lay down their lives. One of the heroes of modern day faith during the time of Hitler's rise to power was Dietrich Bonhoeffer. And many young people have been captivated by the life of this young man, a life of a man that would not capitulate to Hitler, a life of a man that ended up in prison, the life of a man when he was destined to get out and Hitler died, was put to death. It's hard to understand when you know that God is sovereign until you understand that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. (See 2 Corinthians 5:8) And that, **"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of [the] saints."** (Psalms 116:15, KJV) We have come to a time in history when I believe that we not only need to teach our children how to live according to the precepts of God, but we need to teach our children that those precepts of God are worth dying for. And how do you die? We're living in a time when our whole culture in the United States of America is crumbling before us or has crumbled before us and is lying in the dust because of the leaders that we have chosen. So this is a very, very important lesson. Now what God's going to do is He's going to open Jeremiah chapter 23 with this statement, **"Woe to the shepherds...."** (Jeremiah 23:1) And when He's talking about shepherds, He's talking about rulers. Then He's going to give a word to the prophets. And the prophets are really those that speak for God. And so I want to begin by reading a few verses in Jeremiah chapter 23, verse 1, **"Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of My pasture! declares the LORD."** (Jeremiah 23:1) Now you want to mark "shepherds".

I don't know if you went to our website, which is "[preceptsforlife.com](http://preceptsforlife.com)."

And if you go there you can get a free study guide, and you can study along with us. And you know what? I love hearing from you. I pile up in bed and I like to read before I go to sleep. And I read this list of your comments that you send to us telling us what the ministry is meaning in your life and what the Bible studies are doing and what you are learning. And that just absolutely, absolutely thrills my heart because I want you to be able to **"...be steadfast, [and] immovable, [and] always abounding in the work of the Lord...."** (1 Corinthians 15:58) So over "shepherd" you're gonna put like a shepherd's crook, okay. It says, **"Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of My pasture!" declares the LORD. Therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel concerning the shepherds [which] are tending My people: 'You have scattered My flock and driven them away, and [you] have not attended to them; behold, I am about to attend to you for the evil of your deeds....'"** (Jeremiah 23:1-2) He says "Here you are as a shepherd. Here's your shepherd's crook. And you are not tending to My sheep. You are not taking care of My sheep." And He says, "They're the sheep of My pasture." And He says "I am going to attend to you, and you're going to experience evil." Now to whom was He speaking? Well, what I want us to do is I want us to review who Jeremiah was bringing the message to in the days of Jeremiah. Remember it's [the word of the LORD which came to Jeremiah in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah.] (PARAPHRASE Jeremiah 1:2) Now we know that there was so to speak, a revival. There was a repentance, and a return to the Lord under the days of Josiah. Why? Because they found the Word of God, in his eighteenth year they found the Word of God which had been lost in the house of God. And he gathers all the people, and they make a covenant to follow God. (See 2 Chronicles 34:14-21, 33) But then Josiah dies. The king of Egypt is going up to fight at Carchemish. And Josiah gets in his way, and he says, "Josiah, go home." And Josiah won't listen and he's saying it's God

that's telling you to go home and because Josiah won't go home then God kills him. (See 2 Chronicles 35:20-24) Now God told him that after he died that He was going to bring evil on the Southern Kingdom of Judah, and He was going to do that because of the sins of Manasseh. Manasseh was the grandfather of Josiah. Manasseh, his daddy's name was Amon, and then Josiah. So then the next kings Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah, those kings are the shepherds of His people. And so He has a message for the shepherds of His people. Now I want you to look for a minute at Jeremiah chapter 2, verse 8, Jeremiah chapter 2, verse 8. And this is what He's talking about. He's saying "My people have forgotten Me. They are not seeking Me." Listen, it doesn't matter who your ruler is. You, as a people are still responsible to God. But then He comes down and says in verse 8, **"The priests did not say, 'Where is the LORD?' And those who handle the law...."** (Jeremiah 2:8) These are the scribes that write it down. **"...Did not know Me; the rulers also transgressed against Me...."** (Jeremiah 2:8) The word literally, if you have a "New Inductive Study Bible", and you look in the margin it's literally "the shepherds." I want to take you back, and I want you to see the importance of shepherds in the Word of God. And I would suggest that you simply get these notes down so that you can go back, and so that you can think about all of this, okay. So we're going to look at shepherds. And what I want to do is I want to start in Genesis chapter 46, verse 32, Genesis chapter 46. Now this is laying the groundwork for what we're going to see in Jeremiah chapter 23. So Genesis 46, and it is verse 32. And this is what He's talking about. He's talking about the children of Israel. And Joseph is dealing with his brothers and his household because Joseph is living in Egypt and his brothers are living in Canaan. I mean they've been living in Canaan. Now they've come to Egypt. And it says and **"Joseph said to this brothers and to his father's household 'I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and will say to him, 'My brothers and my father's household, who were in the land of Canaan,**

**have come to me; and the men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of livestock; and they have brought their flocks and their herds and all that they have.”” (Genesis 46:31-32)** So he’s saying they’re just shepherds. Now when you look at this, it’s important for you to know that Israel understands what shepherds are, because they were literally keepers of sheep and keepers of flock. This was despised by Egypt. But when God says, **“Woe to the shepherds...,” (Jeremiah 23:1)** and He’s talking to Israel, Israel understands what a shepherd is to be and what a shepherd is to do. The rulers of a nation are the shepherds. And God holds rulers accountable, especially rulers of His elect people, the nation of Israel. **“...the rulers also transgressed against Me....”** Then He says **“...The prophets prophesied by Baal and [they] walked after things that did not prophet.” (Jeremiah 2:8)** And what happened? We’ll talk about it in just a minute.

## **PART TWO**

I am so excited, Beloved about this week’s lesson because it is so crucial. If the leadership is corrupt, if the prophets are prophesying by Baal, if we’re not getting the pure unadulterated word of God and we are following prophets that are prophesying dreams and visions in this day and that’s what we’re clinging to and that’s what we’re running after, then we’re in trouble. Now I can’t do anything about the rulers. I can let my voice be heard to our senators and to our congressmen, and I believe that we should. And we can let our voice be heard to the President of the United States. But you and I can still stand firm and standing firm have a clear conscience. So what we’re going to do in this segment we’re going to look at shepherds. Genesis chapter 48, verse 15, and it is a prophetic passage. Genesis chapter 48, verse 15, Jacob, who is the father of the nation of Israel. Remember we went from Abraham, then Abraham’s son Isaac, and then from Isaac we went to Jacob. Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. But the covenant promise was through

Jacob. And so Jacob's name is later changed to Israel. And this is what He says to them. Genesis chapter 48, verse 15, Jacob is blessing his son Joseph, and he said, **"...‘The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been [the] shepherd all my life to this day, the angel who has redeemed me from all evil....’"** (Genesis 48:15-16) Then he's putting the blessing on it. But what I want you to see is this was a people that knew what shepherds were. This was a people who knew that God is the ultimate Shepherd. Now we're not gonna see it today, but we're going to see an awesome prophetic passage that is going to take you right to the future. So I can't wait until we get there. But look at Genesis chapter 49, verse 22 to 24, and you see again what He is saying to Joseph. And then He says in verse 24, **"‘But his bow....,’"** speaking of Joseph, **"‘...remained firm...his [hands] were agile, from the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob (from there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel).’"** (Genesis 49:24) From Jacob is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel. Do you know what He's doing? He is passing over millenniums, and He is taking us to the very second coming of Jesus Christ. So if we draw a timeline and right here we put the cross, and that's the first coming of Jesus Christ. Now when Jesus Christ is born where do they lay Him? They lay in a manger, in a feeding trough where the animals that were shepherded, not just sheep would eat. Okay, but He's taking us all the way to the very end of time, and He's taking us to the thousand year reign of Jesus Christ when Jesus Christ is going to be the Shepherd over the whole world. He is the Stone of Israel. Remember what Jesus said? In His first coming. And He talked about that He was a stone of stumbling, and Peter comes along and he affirms this, that Jesus is the stone of stumbling. (See 1 Peter 2:8) He is the Stone of Israel. And so He's taking you right here to this time. And we're going to see that as we do our study this week. This is why I'm so excited. We are going from these days of Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah and what he's saying at that time all the way past the first coming of Jesus Christ. So we're going to go

from this time all the way through the birth of Jesus Christ and the second coming of Jesus Christ. And so what I want to do is I want to put a cloud here just before the thousand year reign. Put an arrow down, and that's the second coming of Jesus Christ. He is born of a woman, of a virgin, because He has to be without sin to die for your sins and my sins so that you and I might know God. And listen to me very carefully. Our rulers may be ungodly. Our rulers may be leading us to destruction. America may never ever be the same. America may never recover. But Precious One, that doesn't change your destiny and your future because you have a Shepherd, and that Shepherd is God Almighty. And He will lead you and He will guide you and He will put you in His hand and He will say "No man can pluck you out of My hand." I believe with all my being and our staff believes that there's no more important thing for this hour than for God's people to know truth for themselves. And so we are a people that are on a mission. This is not just a ministry; this is a movement to establish people in God's Word as that which produces reverence for Him, a people that are strong and that know God and no matter what their shepherds do and when the prophets speak or those that speak for God, which is those in the pulpit, those that are on the television screen, those that are on the Internet and claim to be spokesmen for God, you and I need to know how to check them out. And you've got to help others understand these truths. And I urge you to go online and find out how you can get involved in this ministry. We teach people all over the United States of America how to study the Word of God for themselves. You just go to "[preceptsforlife.com](http://preceptsforlife.com)". And we want to take you and show you not only how to discover truth for yourself, but how to go deeper and how to disciple others. Because in these last critical days it's going to be those that know their God that are able to stand firm and take action. (See Daniel 11:32) That's a verse from Daniel chapter 11, verse 32, and it's the second part of the verse. And you've got to remember that you have Jeremiah, you have Daniel, and you have Ezekiel the three of them

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prophesying during this very important time. And what do they tell us? You've got to know your God. You cannot forget Him. You need to remember Him day after day. And you need to say, "God, I'm going to feed on Your Word. I'm going to know You and whether by life or by death I will stand for You."