

JEREMIAH, PART 1 (RETURN TO ME)
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WEEK 4 (912304)
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SERIES: Jeremiah, Part 1 (Return To Me)

TITLE: Program 16 – Accurately Reflecting God

MONDAY

OPEN

What happens when you don't know God? When there's no knowledge of God in the land, in the place that you live, what happens? Well we're all going to believe something, and the something that we will choose, in all probability, will be a lie. And that lie will lead to deception and that deception will lead us farther away from God into actually, the judgment of God.

PART ONE

Well Beloved, we have come to what some consider the third message of Jeremiah. Others say, "Well, it's the second message." What is the message? The message is one that is telling these people, as I said in the opening to the program, "You are deceived." And he's going to let them see that deception and where that deception leads. Now what has he done in Jeremiah? Well, in Jeremiah chapter 1 we have met Jeremiah the prophet. We have heard that

his message and his ministry began in the thirteenth year of Josiah. (See Jeremiah 1:2) And as he brings this message, he is told that he is to be a prophet, not only to Judah, but a prophet also to the nations. (See Jeremiah 1:5) God assures him that He watches over his work to perform it. (See Jeremiah 1:12) God tells him, “I’m sending you to a people who have forsaken Me, a people who have gone after other gods, a people who have worshiped the works of their hands.” He assures him that He’s going to be with him and that he is to deliver the message and he is not to be dismayed by these people’s faces. And as He tells him that He lets him know, “They’re gonna fight against you. They’re gonna come against you, but I have made you like a bronze wall. I’ve made you like a fortified city and you can stand.” (See Jeremiah 1:16-18) Then in Jeremiah chapter 2 through Jeremiah chapter 3, verse 4 we believe that we have the first message of Jeremiah. Some say, “No, there’s only two up to the point of chapter seven.” But we believe we have the first message. And the first message is this: [“You’ve forsaken Me. You’ve turned from the fountain of living waters and you have gone over here and you have hewn cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.”] (PARAPHRASE, Jeremiah 2:13) So what is God’s message? Well, if you’ve forsaken Me, God’s message is, “Hey, return to Me. Return to Me. Come back to Me.” **“Return, O faithless [ones and] I will heal your faithlessness....” (Jeremiah 3:22)** We see that God’s eyes are searching for someone who will do justice and who will be truth. (See Jeremiah 5:1-3) And by that he means who will walk in truthfulness, who will walk in faithfulness. And then in Jeremiah chapter 7, we have the next message, and this is what we’re looking at this week. It’s chapter 7, 8, and 9. And it is a chapter that has the word “deception” in it. It’s a chapter that has the word “deceit” in it. And what you see is His eyes are looking for faithfulness, and yet He’s not finding it because here is a people that are deceived. This is a people that are saying one thing, but they are living another way. Now what is that called? It’s called hypocrisy. Well in

Jeremiah chapter 7 the chapter opens up this way, and let me read it to you. **“The word that came to Jeremiah...the LORD, saying, ‘Stand in the gate [of the temple] of the LORD’S house [stand in the gate of the LORD’S house] and proclaim...this word, and say, “Hear the word of the LORD, all [of you] Judah, who enter by [the] gates to worship the LORD!”” (Jeremiah 7:1-2)** Now you have to understand the temple was the center of everything. It was like the heart of Israel. It was the center of Jerusalem. It was up on a mount. It was a gorgeous, gorgeous structure that Solomon had built. All the inside was just laden with gold. Over the place where the holy of holies was there was the Shekinah glory, the pillar of cloud during the day, the pillar of fire during the night. This was the house that was called by God’s name. And so He’s sending Jeremiah and He says, “I want you to go to that temple, and when you get there and you see these people that are entering in to the house of the LORD, I want you to tell them **“...“Hear the word of the LORD...!”” (Jeremiah 7:2)** And the word of the LORD is this: You’re trusting in vain things. Listen to what He says. **“Thus says the LORD...the God of Israel, ‘Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you dwell in this place. Do not trust in deceptive words, saying “...the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.””** He says, **“...Amend your ways....” (Jeremiah 7:3-5)** Now why is He saying that? Because He’s told them over and over and over again, “I’m going to judge you. I’m going to judge you, and I’m going to judge you because you’ve forsaken Me. I’m going to judge you because I can’t find anybody that is seeking after justice and that is seeking after truth. I am going to have to judge you.” And so as He tells them that He is going to have to judge them, He’s speaking to them as they come into the temple. It’s like somebody’s standing outside in front of the church and saying, “Wait a minute. Before you go in there I just want to say one thing to you, you need to amend your ways. You need to change the way that you’re living.” And they’d brush him aside and say, “Hey, leave me alone. Leave

me alone. I'm a Christian. I'm fine. Have you ever talked to someone and said, "But wait a minute, you have professed to know Jesus Christ and you're gonna steal, you're gonna lie, you're gonna cheat, you're gonna do that to your neighbor. You mean, you're gonna sleep with her? You told me that you believed in Jesus Christ." Do you see? So they're saying, "Hey, I'm fine, **“...the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.”**” (Jeremiah 7:4) They think that they're okay because the temple of the LORD is there. And if the temple of the LORD is there God would never destroy the city. Now God has been telling them, "You're going to go into captivity." God's been telling them He's going to destroy Jerusalem, but they haven't listened and they think, no, it's not gonna happen because of the temple of the LORD. It's like you say it three times and it's like a rabbit's foot. You rub it three times and it works. And so they were saying, **“...the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.”**” (Jeremiah 7:4) It's not gonna happen. They were deceived. Watch what He says. He says, **“Do not trust in deceptive words....”** (Jeremiah 7:4) And you want to mark “deceptive.” You want to mark “deceit” and I put a black cloud around it. And then I kind of shade it gray. And what I do is I put a black arrow down, because deception destroys you. Deception puts you in darkness. Deception doesn't make things black and white. They make them gray and neutral. And so He says, **“...If you truly amend your ways...if you truly practice justice between a man and his neighbor, if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, or the widow, and [you] do not shed innocent blood in this place, nor walk after other gods to your own ruin,”** He says, **“then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers [forefathers] forever and ever.”** (Jeremiah 7:4-7) He says, "I promise you this land. I promise it to you forever and ever and ever." But He also told them in Deuteronomy if you get in the land and you do not obey Me then what's going to happen is I'm going to kick you out of the land. You're just gonna be kicked out.

You're gonna go into the other nations and you are going to be dispersed.
(See Deuteronomy 29:25-28) And they're thinking, "Oh no, oh no.

“...The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.” (Jeremiah 7:4) God would never do that to His temple. And God says, “Oh yes I would. And the only way for you to stay in this land, the only way for Me to bless you is for you to amend your ways; that you change your ways.” Remember they've forsaken Him. Remember He's saying, “Return to Me,” and that's the only way it's going to happen. Now why? Well, when you come to the end of this message which is in Jeremiah chapter 9, what you see is, you see God defining Himself, describing Himself. And I want to jump there for a minute because I want you to see and to understand Precious One, how vital it is that you understand and that you know God, and that you have a correct understanding of Him. This is what He says in verse 24, **“But let him who boasts boast [in] this, that he understands and knows Me...I am the [one] who exercises lovingkindness [and] justice and righteousness on earth...I delight in these things....” (Jeremiah 9:24)** So when He tells them to amend their ways, what do they have to amend? Well, first of all they have to **“...practice justice between a man and his neighbor,”** and that's not happening. And God's a God of justice so you've got to do that. Then He says, **“If you do not oppress the alien, the orphan...the widow, and [you] do not shed innocent blood in this place, nor walk after other gods....” (Jeremiah 7:5-6)** Who is God? He is not only justice, but God is righteousness. And they're not behaving righteously. They're not following the commandments. They are not obeying the voice of the Lord. They're simply thinking: Hey, I, I'm a child of God, the temple's here. I've got it made. You know it's like, oh, I walked an aisle. You know, have you ever shared with someone and they just kind of brush you off. And they brush you off with “I'm a Christian, I'm all right.” I think, “Hey, I'm not sure you really are. Because if you were a Christian, wouldn't you be excited about

someone sharing truth with you, doing what God called them to do?” We’ll talk about it more right after this important announcement.

PART TWO

We’ve come back to Jeremiah chapter 7, this new message that has to deal with the fact that the people are trusting in deceptive words. In verse 4 of chapter 7 it says, **“Do not trust in deceptive words....” (Jeremiah 7:4)** You come down to verse 8 and he says, **“Behold, you are trusting in deceptive words...,”** listen, **“...to no avail.” (Jeremiah 7:8)** When you and I believe a lie, when you and I are deceived, that deception has an effect on us. That deception changes the way that we think, the way that we behave. I’m telling you, if we really understood the righteousness of God, the holiness of God and the justice of God in having to deal with unrighteousness and ungodliness, if we really understood the justice of God when we looked at the cross and realized that God’s justice, His holiness, demanded a sacrifice for the sins of mankind; otherwise there would never be forgiveness of sins. I mean you look at the cross and it shows you the justice of God, the righteousness of God, and it shows you the lovingkindness of God. The word in the Hebrew is “hesed” “h-e-s-e-d” and it is a word that is used to define God. When God passes in front of Moses it says “the God who is full of lovingkindness.” (See Exodus 34:6) He is a God of love. He is a God of compassion, but He is a God of righteousness. And if we’re not righteous, Precious One, then God has to judge you. And so when you believe a lie it carries its consequences. Oh, you may not heed them immediately, but if what you are believing is wrong, it leads to death. The Bible says, [“As a man thinks in his heart, in his mind, so he is.”] (PARAPHRASE, Proverbs 23:7) And if you are thinking crooked you are going to be crooked. If you are thinking vile you’re going to be vile. If you’re thinking immoral I guarantee you, eventually you’ll be immoral. If you’re thinking rebellion in your heart I guarantee you unless something

happens, you're going to rebel. So he says to them, **“Behold, you are trusting in deceptive words to no avail. Will you steal, murder...commit adultery...swear falsely...offer sacrifices to Baal and walk after other gods that you have not known?”** And then you get up; you're doing all these things and **“then come and [you] stand before Me...,”** at the temple, and you stand there in the **“...house, which is called by [His] name....”** (Jeremiah 7:8-10) **“...the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.”** (Jeremiah 7:4) You're saying it three times. You think it's a rabbit foot, and now you're standing before the temple of the LORD, you're standing in this house which is called by the LORD'S name. And He says, **“[It's] ...become a den of robbers in your sight...?”** He says, **“...Behold, I even I, have seen it,' declares the LORD.”** (Jeremiah 7:11) I've looked at the temple, and you know what? It's not the sacred holy temple that I intended. It's become a den of robbers. And if you studied the Scriptures you know that all sorts of idols were set up there. You know that there were male cult prostitutes plying their wares right in the temple. You know that there were idols to the sun god and things like this. I mean it was a den of iniquity, but it bore the name “the temple of the LORD.” What's going on in your church? What is the reputation for First Baptist or First Methodist or First Presbyterian or whatever? What is the reputation of the people in that church? Are they coming and they're going and they're going about their ways? They, they go, they worship. They take communion. They baptize their children and everything. I mean if you've watched any of the “Godfather” series, I mean you see the godfather and all of his clan in the church and the baby's getting baptized. You see him paying the Father generously. But then he walks out and what is he? He's nothing but a gangster. He's nothing but a murderer? He's a drug dealer. He sells alcohol. He flaunts it in front of the law. We look at “Godfather” but we don't look at us. We don't see that, listen, what we are is what gives the church the reputation that it has. And you and I are Christians. That means

that we are called by His name. And so when the church empties out and the people go out, what do you see? He's saying you're a people that are saying **"....the temple of the LORD....," (Jeremiah 7:4)** and yet you're just a den of robbers. He says, "I've seen it," declares the LORD." Then He says this. **"But now go to My place which was in Shiloh...."** He says, **"...Where I made My name dwell at...first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel."** (Jeremiah 7:11-12) I will never forget going to Shiloh. It was just absolutely incredible. You can't go there right now and we don't take our teaching tours there because it's really not safe. It's West Bank territory right now. But listen, it wasn't West Bank territory in the eyes of God. It is the territory that God gave to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his descendants forever. And when they came across that Jordan River the first time under Joshua they brought the tabernacle. They brought that tent. They carried those parts of the tent and they got to Shiloh and the clouds stopped and they set up the tabernacle there. Incredible! Incredible! I've been there. I've stood out there and I've looked around me and I've been filled with awe and I've talked to some of my Jewish friends and where was it set? Where's the east?" The tabernacle was always set up with its one and only door toward the east in the light of the rising sun. So if you find the east and then you turn around so that you're going west, you're going to go all the way until you come to the Holy of Holies. And I remember standing there teaching, teaching out of Samuel, teaching out of Joshua, teaching them where they were, teaching out of Judges and showing them this is Shiloh. This is where the tent was. This was about 300, 350 years that the tent was set here. It wasn't its final resting place. And then I turned and I said, "And some of you are sitting in the Holy of Holies." Oh my goodness, what overtook your heart at that moment? And it just made you realize that a holy God wants a holy people. And Precious One, if you're not living in holiness and yet you're saying, "The temple of the LORD, this body's the temple of the LORD, sure I'm a Christian. Oh, it's okay. God knows. God

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understands; besides look at the rest.” I want to tell you something. You are trusting in deceptive words. You have been deceived and you can’t live that way and expect to see God. The Bible says in Hebrews 12, [“without holiness no man will see the Lord.”] (PARAPHRASE, Hebrews 12:14) God expects you and me to be holy. His lovingkindness, His justice, His righteousness command it and supply it.