

***PRECEPTS FOR LIFE***  
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**SERIES: Jeremiah, Part 2 (God's Certain Judgment)**

**TITLE: Program 26 – Fear – Man Or God?**

**MONDAY**

**OPEN**

Have you ever heard the word discombobulating? Fear can discombobulate you. It can throw you into a panic. It can make you so you don't know which way to turn or what to do. And when you start to fear, if you don't fear God, then you're gonna lose all your sense of balance and direction. We're going to talk about the fear of God versus the fear of man today, as we look at God's precepts for life.

**PART ONE**

We have probably come to what I consider the saddest chapters in the book of Jeremiah. I mean, that's the way to start out a program, isn't it? Hey, we're gonna study the saddest chapters in the book of Jeremiah! And yet, they are chapters that God put there so that you and I could learn His precepts for life. And “...through [those] **precepts get understanding**; [and]...**hate every false way.**” (Psalms 119:104, KJV) We're in Jeremiah chapter 40

through 44 this week. Last week we looked at Jeremiah chapter 35 to 39. When we looked at those chapters we saw basically three principles, and I want to give them to you. And the first one was that people want prayer. I mean, when they're in trouble, when they're frightened, they want prayer. When they don't know what to do, when they can't handle the situation, they want prayer. They want prayer, but they don't want interference from God. The second thing that we saw is that leadership is crucial. Everything rises and falls on leadership. It can make or destroy a nation or a group of people. And, if you've read on with me in Jeremiah chapter 40 to 44, you already know what I'm talking about, but we're going to go through those chapters verse by verse and you're going to see what happens when a people are afraid, or when they are led by leaders who are afraid, and who do not fear God. The third thing that we saw last week, as we looked at it is that we, us individuals; listen carefully, must take a stand for truth, for justice, for righteousness. We must take a stand, even if it costs us our freedom, even if it costs us our welfare and even if it costs us our life. Because if you and I don't take a stand in the midst of this crooked and perverse generation in which we're living with these people in darkness and going farther and farther away from God, then where is the light going to be? Where is the one that's going to restrain evil? Now, between cutting that program and cutting this program many things happened in the United States of America just in one quick week, what we heard was that President Obama went to a meeting and it was called a human rights campaign meeting, but it was a meeting that was a gathering of gays and lesbians and transgenders and bisexual people, and he stood before them and this is what he said: "For nearly 30 years, you've advocated on behalf of those without a voice. That's not easy. For despite the real gains that we've made, there are still laws to change and still hearts to open." When we say that there are laws to change, then we're saying society is changed, or something changed, or the laws that were in the past were not valid laws so those laws need to be done away with. He said,

"There are still fellow citizens, perhaps neighbors, even loved ones -- good and decent people -- who hold fast to outworn arguments and old attitudes; who fail to see your families like their families; who would deny you the rights most Americans take for granted. And that's painful and it's heartbreaking." In other words, what he's saying is we need to reshape the thinking of America so that America accepts homosexuality, bisexuality, and transgender changes and that, as something that is perfectly acceptable and perfectly normal. Now if we do that, if we accept that, then what we have to realize is we are going against the clear teaching of the word of God. And as I say that, I want you to know that adultery is not acceptable, sex outside of marriage, in the Word of God, is not acceptable. And it's included in those sins were God says [let no one deceive you, don't be deceived-fornicators and that's adulterers, people having sex outside of marriages, fornicators, adulterers, he says homosexuals, effeminate, etc. have no inheritance in the kingdom of God.] (PARAPHRASE, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10) So if we buy that then what we're doing is we're not standing for truth. Why would we do that? Well, the other thing that he said in that speech was that hate crimes legislation had passed the house and as soon as it got to his desk, he was going to sign it in so therefore, those people, didn't have to fear anymore. Fear what? Fear the criticism, fear the ostracism, or fear the fact that there are people that think that their lifestyle is detrimental to them. So that would mean that eventually on this program if anybody complained or got on my case then I could not mention what the Bible says about homosexuality, or about adultery, or about any sin, or about the way to Jesus Christ, because it would be considered a hate-crime speech. Not only that, but in that same week what happened also was the white House came out against Fox News Network. And as you read it in the Christian Science Monitor they said that the White House did not like what they were hearing was happening in Fox News. Now when you stop and think about that and it's the first time I've ever heard it said that they are not a legitimate news network. If they're not

legitimate, can you get rid of them because they illegitimate? Can you declare them illegitimate? Now why am I bringing these things up? Because you are gonna hear this program at a later date, you are going to listen to these truths at a later date. I'm bringing them up because you and I need to understand that we are living in epical times. We are living in difficult times and we are living in times where you better know what it means to fear God, because **"The fear of man brings a snare...."** (Proverbs 29:25) Now Jesus Christ in Luke chapter 21, talking about the last days said this, **"There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves."** (Luke 21:25) You just think about the tsunamis and that perplexity just for instance. Then it says in verse 26: **"Men fainting from fear [men fainting from fear] and the expectation of the things [that] are coming upon the world...."** (Luke 21:26) What we are headed for is very, very difficult times. And, Precious Ones, it is my goal; it is my passion that you be ready and prepared for the days ahead. And Jeremiah, I, I think really it is the sovereignty of God that you and I are studying the book of Jeremiah at this time. Let's go to Jeremiah chapter 40 because remember in Jeremiah chapter 39, Jerusalem is destroyed. And, you say what could be worse? You're saying that these chapters are sadder than the destruction of Jerusalem? Yes, they are. And you'll see why they are even sadder. Because Jeremiah has been prophesying since the thirteenth year of Josiah, it is now 586 B.C. in Jeremiah 39. He has been prophesying for 41 years. For 41 years, he's been telling them about this time that is coming. He's been telling them that God is going to destroy Jerusalem and that he is going to bring Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon across and over to Jerusalem and that he is going to besiege the city, and he does it first in 605 B.C. then he does it in 597 B.C. and takes 10, 000 captive. And then in Jeremiah 39, we're in 586 B.C. and it has finally come to pass. Now when it happens there's always an aftermath so to speak of war. And so what we see in Jeremiah chapter 40 verse 1 is:

**“The word [of the LORD that] came to Jeremiah...after Nebuzaradan captain of the bodyguard had released him from Ramah...,”** it says, **“...when he had taken him bound in chains among all the exiles of Jerusalem and Judah who were being exiled to Babylon.” (Jeremiah 40:1)** Now you and I have already studied and we know that there is a short chapter in Jeremiah about the good figs and the bad figs. And the good figs are the ones that are going to be exiled into Babylon. (See Jeremiah 24:5) And they are to settle down, and they are to build and to plant, and to have houses, and to pray for the prosperity and the goodness of Babylon 'cause that's where they're gonna live for seventy-years. And so he tells them what they're to do. He calls those the good figs. He leaves the bad figs there in Jerusalem. Now, when you see Jeremiah being led away with the exiles that are on their way to Babylon, you can know that he is considered a good fig. But as we saw last week, Nebuchadnezzar knows about Jeremiah and he gives an order to the captain of the bodyguard and that is: You take care of Jeremiah. (See Jeremiah 39:11-12) Whatever Jeremiah wants, Jeremiah can have. If Jeremiah wants to stay in the land, he can stay in the land. If he wants to come to Babylon, he can come to Babylon. You take care of him. Why? Because Jeremiah's a man that fears God more than he fears the face of man. But we will talk about that in just a minute.

## **PART TWO**

Welcome back, Beloved. I cannot tell you how important I believe these lessons are. And in the sovereignty of God, God has me teaching Jeremiah right now. I mean for about ten years, I have been going through the whole Old Testament teaching and it's just like a clashing of cymbals to get people's attention, you know, to be like a climax, an attention getter. And what He has done is He has brought Jeremiah and the times that we are living in together to make this big sound to get our attention. Well, in Jeremiah chapter 40, he's going to tell us about the Word of the Lord that

came. And what he does is in the next verse, he shifts and he tells us the Word of the Lord, but he gives it to us through this captain of the guard. Watch it in Jeremiah chapter 40. Now those of you that just happened, in the sovereignty of God, to find this program need to know that you can go to [preceptsforlife.com](http://preceptsforlife.com), [preceptsforlife.com](http://preceptsforlife.com) and you can get a study guide that goes along with this and you can study the Word of God with us. Precept Ministries International is dedicated to establishing people in God's Word and to help you discover truth for yourself, to help you go deeper with others and to help you disciple others. And if we ever needed that, we need it now so that we are able to stand in the days ahead and not fear the face of man, but fear God. Okay, so he says **“Now the captain of the bodyguard...,”** verse 2, **“...had taken Jeremiah and said to him, ‘The LORD your God promised this calamity against this place.’” (Jeremiah 40:2)** Now how did he know that? Well, Daniel was in Babylon. Ezekiel was in Babylon since 597. And Daniel is reading Jeremiah's letters. He knows how long the captivity is going to be. And all the exiles are there and they know the message that Jeremiah has brought and they know that this calamity has come from God. I mean, they're a country at this point that has enough sense to recognize this. He says, **“‘And the LORD has brought it on and done just as He promised....’” (Jeremiah 40:3)** Just as He promised; in other words, God speaks and as Jeremiah chapter 1 says, [He watches over His word to fulfill it.] (PARAPHRASE, Jeremiah 1:12) So the Lord has brought it on just as He promised. He said, **“...‘Because you people sinned against the LORD...,’”** he said you sinned against God, **“...‘and [you] did not listen to His voice, therefore [therefore] this...has happened to you.’” (Jeremiah 40:3)** Now there's something to be learned here. And what He is saying is, when you and I know that this is the way that we are to walk in and when we don't walk in it then we bring God's judgment on ourselves. This is why I shared with you what was happening in the United States of America. You cannot muzzle the mouth of people that are going to speak

truth from the Word of God and not get in trouble. And you can look at the history of nations. Yes, the governments have succeeded for a time being in muzzling the mouth of people and in putting to death Christians and martyring them but listen that is not the end of the story, there is a God in heaven who is righteous, there is a God who is coming. And just read 2 Thessalonians chapter 1, with his angels and with flaming fire and He's going to destroy those who destroyed His people. (See 2 Thessalonians 1:7) God is in charge. God is on His throne. Yes, we're going to suffer, but you and I have to know this: that God always judges sin and he always judges according to His Word. He says, **“But...behold...”** this is the captain now of the bodyguard. **“...‘[Behold], I am freeing you today from the chains which are on your hands. If you would prefer to come with me to Babylon...,’** he says, **“...come along, and I will look after you...;”** I will take care of you, **“...‘but if you would prefer not to come with me to Babylon, never mind. Look, the whole land is before you; go wherever it seems good and right for you to go.’”** (Jeremiah 40:4) And **“...Jeremiah was still not going back....”** He just stood there; he didn't go anyplace. Then, **“...He said...,”** to him, **“...‘Go on...then to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon has appointed over the cities of Judah, and stay with him among the people; or...go anywhere that seems right for you....’** So the captain of the bodyguard gave [Jeremiah] **a ration and a gift and let him go. Then Jeremiah went to Mizpah [and he went] to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam and [he] stayed with him among the people who were...in the land.”** (Jeremiah 40:5-6) He made his decision to stay with the people. And and what you're going to see this week, as we go through the word of God, you're going to see how terribly, terribly sad it was, Beloved, but how Jeremiah, you just sense, that he cannot leave these people. He knows the people in Babylon are going to be all right, but he cannot leave these people. So catch the order of command now: Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon has wiped out Israel, wiped out

Judah. He has taken them into captivity. He has left some in the land. So under Nebuchadnezzar what you have is you have Gedaliah. Gedaliah was the son of the guy who in the days of Josiah found the word of God that had gotten lost in the house of God. (See 2 Kings 22:8-9) So here he is, he's a godly man and you find that Gedaliah is going to stay there and he's gonna rule over the people. Now as you read, and this is your assignment for this week, I want you to read Jeremiah 40, 41, 42, 43, and 44. Just sit down and read it. It reads like a novel. It really does. It reads like a good, good sad story. But what you are going to find out is that it is Jeremiah that is going to stand between the people and God and call them not to fear man; not to fear the face of man, not to fear the nations, not to fear the powers, but to fear God. You see in any situation, you and I need to understand that: **"The fear of man brings a snare...."** (Proverbs 29:25) It's a trap. The fear of man brings a snare, but **"...the fear of [God] is the beginning of wisdom...."** (Proverbs 9:10) Now wisdom is knowing what to do, having the knowledge and being able to apply that knowledge to the situations of life. And that's what you're going to see this week as we look at these scriptures and as we look at what it means to be afraid and to let fear control you or to fear God. And you're going to see the contrast as you look at Jeremiah a man who for forty-one years has feared God. It hasn't been easy, he's been panicked, it's been hard. He's not been allowed to get married, he's found himself put in a cistern sinking in mud, I mean, he's given a loaf of bread a day, he thinks he's going to die, he begs the king to please not put him back in to that dungeon, but let him be in the courthouse. (See Jeremiah 37:20-21) But he goes through all those trials and yet there is one overriding stabilizing factor, and that is that Jeremiah fears God and Jeremiah's trust is God. What is your trust? We'll talk about it more in the days to come.