

JEREMIAH, PART 1 (RETURN TO ME)
PROGRAM 21 (#912021)
WEEK 5 (912305)
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a Production of
Precept Ministries International
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SERIES: Jeremiah, Part 1 (Return To Me)

TITLE: Program 21 – The Stupidity Of Idolatry

MONDAY

OPEN

Do you remember that great American philosopher Forrest Gump? His mother taught him, “Stupid is as stupid does.” We are going to talk about being stupid today. We are going to talk about stupid things. And you need to hear what God has to say as He uses that word because you don’t want to be stupid. And what is stupid? Stupid is letting the world dictate how you live.

PART ONE

How do you like that American philosopher Forrest Gump? You know what? I was at the National Religious Broadcasters Convention, and I was flipping for the news and all of a sudden, there was “Forrest Gump.” And I have to tell you, I had some time. I sat down and watched that movie again. And I remember him saying, “Stupid is as stupid does.” And that’s what God is talking about in Jeremiah chapter 10. He is talking about the absolute,

total stupidity of learning the ways of the nations, of following gods that are not gods. And you know, as you look at this, if you're studying along with us, if you've connected to "preceptsforlife.com," if you've downloaded your free study guide, or if you're one of those that want to go deeper and you've gotten that deeper study on Jeremiah you've already read this chapter.

You've already seen the word stupid. You already know that it's about idols. But I think that sometimes we think, "Oh, idols were way back then. They have nothing to do with today." And yet, if you've been studying with us, you know that an idol is something that gets in the place of God. So when we think of idols, and we talk about it, and as I read, and as I teach you today about idols, I want you to stop and think, "Okay, is there anything, anything that is getting in the place of God? That is moved in to where God is to be? The position, the honor, the time, the energies, the finances, am I giving those to someone else other than God?" As a matter of fact, I want to take a minute, and God's just laying it on my heart that although we pray before we ever do this program, God's laying it on my heart to pray with you. Let's pray. Father, I thank You. Lord, I cry to You now that You would take Your Word, and that You would cleanse us with the washing of the water of Your Word. That You would make it to be a mirror that we can hold up to our lives right now to see if there is anything that we are worshipping in the place of You. Anything that we are bowing down to, anything that we are giving our allegiance to, anything that has stepped into our lives that is keeping us from You. And Father, if so, would You reveal that to us so that we can forsake that idol? So that we can stop walking in that stupidity, and return to You, and know the joy of waking with You. So speak to this, Precious One, that is hearing your Word. And cleanse them with the washing of the water of Your Word. And show them that You alone are God. In Your name we pray, Amen. I want us to go to Jeremiah chapter 10. All right, and now Jeremiah, God is speaking to him. And it says, **"Hear the word which the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel. Thus says**

the LORD, ‘Do not learn the way of the nations, and do not be terrified by the signs of...heavens....’ (Jeremiah 10:1-2) This week, I’m going to introduce you to a very dear friend of mine. She’s been coming to Precept Ministries. In fact, since she came to know the Lord we’ve had the wonderful privilege along with her church of being her teacher. She has done so many Precept courses. But she lived in Burma. And she was a Buddhist. There was Hinduism in the family also. And Shintoism where they worshipped the sun, the moon, and the stars. And so, you’ve got to realize that as we’re reading this, if you’re from the United States of America you may think, “Hey, that’s crazy.” But there are so many people in this melting pot called America that are now bringing their idols in. So you may not be doing this, but the person doing your nails, if you get your nails done, maybe be doing it. The person who you might go to their beauty parlor or you might go to their office, and they might have idols. So you need to know what God is saying. He says, “...**‘Do not learn the way of the nations, and do not be terrified by the signs of the heavens....’**”

(Jeremiah 10:2) Now this is very good for you and me because the signs are going to be showing up in the heavens. And God talks about this; it’s part of the last days. And the closer we get to the last of the last days, the last days begin with the first coming of Jesus Christ. They come to an end or to a conclusion with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. So the closer you get to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ it talks about signs in the heavens. As a matter of fact, let’s just go very quickly to Matthew chapter 24. And in Matthew chapter 24, they’re asking Him, “...**What will be the sign of Your coming...?**”**(Matthew 24:3)** And He says, “**‘You will...[hear] of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for [these] things must take place, but that is not...the end. ...nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom...in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. [and] all [of] these...are merely the beginning of birth pangs.’**” **(Matthew 24:6-8)** All right, now let me take

you to another scripture where you will see where He talks about signs in the heavens. Look at Luke chapter 21, verse 25, **“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 know that the heavens affect what goes on in the sea. **“Men fainting from fear and the expectation of...things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD with power and great glory.”** (Luke 21:26-27) So that you can know that as we look at Jeremiah and we’re living in the end of the age that the things that were written beforehand in the Old Testament **“...Were written for our instruction...,”** and for our encouragement, **“...upon whom the ends of the ages has come.”** (1 Corinthians 10:11) 1 Corinthians tells us that and Romans tells us that. (See Romans 15:4) So let’s go back to Jeremiah. Now, He says, **“...[Don’t] learn the ways of the nations....”** Verse 3, **“For the customs of the peoples are delusion....”** (Jeremiah 10:2-3) Now this word “delusion” is translated in Ecclesiastes when you see, “Vanity...vanity...all is vanity.” (Ecclesiastes 1:2) So it’s literally the same Hebrew word. **“For the customs of the peoples are delusion....”** (Jeremiah 10:3) And if you have a New Inductive Study Bible, and I pray that you do because it’s the one and only true study Bible because it doesn’t tell you what to believe, but how to discover truth for yourself. And you can find out that information by going to our website [“preceptsforlife.com.”](http://preceptsforlife.com) That’s [“preceptsforlife.com.”](http://preceptsforlife.com) It’s the best Bible you could possibly own if you want to discover truth for yourself. Well, it tells you in the footnote that “delusion” is really vanity. Now what is vanity? It means it’s empty. It means it’s absolutely nothing. It means it’s a vapor. It means it has no substance to it. So it says, **“For the customs of the peoples are delusion; because it is wood cut from [a tree]....”** It says, **“...the work of the hands of a craftsman with a cutting tool.”** (Jeremiah 10:3) It says, **“They decorate it....”** (Jeremiah

10:4) Now what are they talking about? They are talking about idols. And one of the things that we tell you when you download your free study guide is mark “idols” in your Bible. Anytime you find the word “gods,” “g-o-d-s,” little “g.” Put a “I” there a capital “I.” I put it over every pronoun. Verse 3 through 5 is all marked up. Look at what it says, **“They decorate it...,”** the idol, **“...with silver and with gold; they fasten...with nails and with hammers....”** It says, **“...so that it will not totter.”** (Jeremiah 10:4) In other words, they take that idol and because they are afraid it’s going to fall over. It has feet, but it can’t balance itself. And so they take a hammer, and they nail it down with their hands so that it will not totter. Now I want you to get, they have taken their hands and cut down a tree. They have taken their hands and they have fashioned this idol. They’ve carved out its eyes, its nose, its ears, its mouth, its trunk, its feet. Not only that, but they have taken their hands and they have made this silver and gold, and decorated it, and now they have to take their hands and hammer it down. **“Like a scarecrow in [the] cucumber field are they...they cannot speak....”** It says, **“...they must be carried, because they cannot walk! [Don’t] fear them, for they can do no harm, nor can they do any good.”** (Jeremiah 10:5) Now when you talk about this stupidity, and I want to get to it because we are going to go on a break, but I want you to jump to verse 8. It says, **“But they are altogether stupid and foolish in their discipline of delusion—their idol is wood!”** (Jeremiah 10:8) I just had to get to that word stupid, stupidity because remember, “Stupid is as stupid does.” We’ll talk about it in just a minute.

PART TWO

Have you ever seen a scarecrow? I mean, you take this thing, you stuff it with straw. You put on clothes. And its hands are up like this on a wooden thing. And it’s hanging there with its head so that the animals that come into the field will think, “Ahh, it’s a person. I can’t come into this field.” Have

you ever tried to talk to a scarecrow? I mean, it's just hanging there. It may look cute, and you may think of the "Wizard of Oz," but it is a scarecrow. And this is what He says, **"Like a scarecrow in a cucumber field are they...."** (Jeremiah 10:5) Your idol that you're bowing down to is just like a scarecrow. I mean, it's something stuffed with straw that you put clothes on it. It says, **"...And they cannot speak....,"** they can't communicate with you. **"...They must be carried, because they cannot walk...!"** (Jeremiah 10:5) You get up, and you take your idol in your hand. And you're going to bring it over here, and you're going to set it down. And then when it gets night, you have to pick it up, and you have to bring it home. Or if it starts to rain, or if there's thunder, and there's lightning, and this isn't one that has to do with the heavens and the suns and the moon and the stars, you've got to get that. And you've got to put it into shelter because it has legs on it, but it can't walk. "Oh, I forgot it." Well, it could have called to you if it had a mouth that it could open and speak, but it has a mouth, but it can't speak. What He's trying to show you is the stupidity of looking at the nation's gods, and what they are worshipping, and what they are trusting in. They're trusting in the works of their own hands. He says, **"...Do not fear them, for they can do no harm...."** (Jeremiah 10:5) And then this is the other thing that is absolutely key that you understand, **"...Nor can they do any good."** (Jeremiah 10:5) You say, "But I have read missionary stories, and I have read about people that were afraid that if they did not appease their idol that tragedy would come upon or sickness would come upon them." What we're going to do is, we're going to read a little bit longer, and then I'm going to take you in this program and the next, and we're going to get this context of what we're seeing here. And we're going to compare it with a larger teaching in the Bible on idols and on the fact that an idol is nothing. But behind the idols are demons. There are demonic powers. So they're making and fashioning this idol, and this idol cannot do them harm, and this idol cannot do good. But why do they have the idol? Well, they

have the idol because in their mind and in their thinking, they've got to have protection. They've got to have the gods help them. You see, man can turn from the knowledge of a true God and say, "Okay, I'm not going to worship them." But there is a void. Every man, every culture has learned this that there is a God shaped vacuum inside of a man that says, "There has to be another power beyond me. There has to be another power besides me." And there is. So now watch what God does in Jeremiah, I love it. He says, **"There is none like You, O LORD...."** (Jeremiah 10:6) Here are these people, and here are these idols that can neither do good nor harm. And then he says, **"There is none like You, O LORD...;"** he says, **"...You are great, and great is Your name in might. Who [will] not fear You, O King of the nations...?"** (Jeremiah 10:6-7) Here are these nations, and you're learning their ways when there is a God who is the King of the nations. the King of the nations, who rules over the nations even over nations that do not know Him, over nations that do not acknowledge Him. He says, **"Who would not fear You, O King of the nations? Indeed it is Your due...!"** (Jeremiah 10:7) The reverence, the respect the honor, the bowing down to You is Your due because You are God. He says, **"...For among all the wise men of the nations and...all their kingdoms...,**" all the kingdoms all over the world, **"...there is none like You. But they...,**" these idols, **"...are altogether stupid and foolish...."** (Jeremiah 10:7-8) Or, or the worshipers of these idols are altogether stupid and foolish. **"...In [the] discipline of delusion—their idol is wood!"** (Jeremiah 10:8) They're following after vanity. And following after vanity it's like they're in a fog. They don't know which way to go. **"Beaten silver is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz, the work of craftsman and of the hands of a goldsmith; violet and purple are their clothing...."** (Jeremiah 10:9) Not only do they fashion them with silver and gold, but some of them put on violet. Some of them put on purple. Now purple was a very expensive dye. It was the nobles and royalty that wore purple. He says, **"...Violet and purple**

are their clothing; they are...the work of skilled men. But...,” contrast again, **“...the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth quakes and the nations cannot endure His indignation. Thus you shall say to them, ‘The gods that did not make the heavens and the earth will perish from the earth and from under the heavens.’” (Jeremiah 10:9-11)** All these gods are just going to be swept away because there’s a day coming when men are going to come face to face, listen: absolutely face to face with the true and living God. And when they come face to face with the true and living God they are going to hang their heads in shame because all the idols will be gone, and there will be a knowledge of one and only one. And God tell us in His Word that **“...every knee will bow...and...every tongue will confess....”** What? **“...that Jesus Christ is Lord....” (Philippians 2:10-11)** That Jesus, the One who became a human being, the One who was born of a virgin, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, but born of the virgin, the One who is the Son of God, the One who modeled for us how we are to live, to worship God and God only, to do the things that pleases God, to speak the words that God speaks, to walk in total and complete dependence on Him. This One who died on a cross for your sins and my sins, who was buried, but because He is God was raised from the dead because His death satisfied God’s righteousness as He paid for our sins. This is the living One. This is the one that has been caught up to heaven. [This is the one who was the Son of man, who was coming on clouds of glory in all of His majesty. And all creation will testify to His coming as the lighting goes from the east to the west, as the sun and the moon and the stars are all darkened.] (See Matthew 24:27-31) And then they see the Son of Man coming they will know He alone is God. Bow the knee now, Beloved. There are no idols. No other gods except One: that’s Jehovah.