

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

TITLE: Program 44 – Standing In God’s Council

THURSDAY

OPEN

In 1988, a man by the name of Edgar Whisenant came out with a tract, “Eighty-eight reasons why Jesus is coming in October 1988.” (“88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1988”) People ran up credit card bills. They sold their property. They got ready, and Jesus didn’t show up. What is going on? And are those same things happening today? We’ll look at Jeremiah and find some answers.

PART ONE

As we look at Jeremiah chapter 23 and 24 this week our subject is shepherds, rulers and prophets. Woe to those shepherds that don’t shepherd the way God wants them to shepherd. Woe to those rulers who do not rule the way God says we are to be ruled in justice and in righteousness according to His Word. And woe to those that are prophets that are giving a dream, that are saying the oracle of the Lord when they are not speaking the

word of God. (See Jeremiah 23:34) Woe to them. This is what we're going to looking at. And I want you to open your Bibles to Jeremiah chapter 23. Now we're in the portion where he is talking to the prophets. So in Jeremiah chapter 23, verse 1 to 8, put in the margin of your Bible, "the leaders," "the rulers," "the shepherds." And we've spent plenty of time, and you have seen that a shepherd is a ruler. That he's speaking primarily to those that are at the top of the people that are leading the people. Then in my Bible next to verse 9 I've written "the prophets" because now he's going to speak to the prophets. If you are studying along with us, if you are downloading our free study guide or you're going for the gold and getting the one that is more in depth, then what you know is you are supposed to be marking "prophets". And the way I mark "prophets" is I draw a green megaphone. And because they're false prophets, I color it black because they are in the dark. They are not in the light. And so we got to verse 13. We got a little bit beyond that, but I want to pick up at Jeremiah chapter 23, verse 13. And I want you to know that what you are going to learn is so critical because the Bible tells us that in the last days that false teachers, false prophets are going to come and they're going to mislead many. And Jesus warned about this in Matthew chapter 24. (See Matthew 24:11) In verse 13, of Jeremiah 23, **"Moreover, among the prophets of Samaria...."** That's the Northern Kingdom. **"...I saw an offensive thing: they prophesied by Baal...."** That's a false god. **"...And [they] led My people...astray."** (Jeremiah 23:13) Now I opened this program with the illustration of Edgar Whisenant. If I'm pronouncing his name wrong, it's spelled, "W-h-i-s-e-n-a-n-t." But he was giving a false prophecy, and he led people astray. I mean it changed the way they were living because they were absolutely convinced that Jesus was coming back in October of 1988. He had given them 88 reasons. Well when people were sending that to me, and some of them were saying, "I believe this is true." I thought, "You haven't been studying with us because if you were studying with us you would be able to look at his prophecies and know that they were wrong." This was an engineer. He got fascinated with prophecy. The

problem was he didn't know it and understand it in light of the whole counsel of God. That's why Paul says, ["I have not backed away from declaring to you the whole counsel of God because," he says, "I know after my demise, after I die that false teachers are going to come in and they are going to lead this flock astray."] (PARAPHRASE, Acts 20:27-29) And I just want to make a comment about those that thought that Jesus Christ was coming, and they ran up their credit card thinking they'd never have to pay their debt. That is not righteousness. I mean that is stealing. That is lying. And that is a disgrace to God for any Christian. So he says in verse 14, **"Also among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a horrible thing...."** (Jeremiah 23:14) So he's saying, "I saw it in Samaria, in the Northern Kingdom, I'm seeing it in the Southern Kingdom of Judah." He says, **"...The committing of adultery and walking in falsehood...."** (Jeremiah 23:14) These prophets that were going around speaking for God were fornicating. I mean they were being sexually impure. Doesn't it break your heart when you get these people on, on television, or finally when their sins are exposed, and you find them, and they're in perversion or they're in homosexuality or immorality? I just want you to know that if you claim the name of Christ you better live righteously. So then he goes on to say, **"...And they strengthened the hands of evildoers...."** (Jeremiah 23:14) I mean sometimes they get on TV, and they confess. And they don't say, you know, "This was sin. This was an abomination to God." And the Bible says, ["Don't be deceived. Fornicators and adulterers and homosexual and effeminate and liars, etc., have no inheritance in the kingdom of God. Such were some of you, but you were washed, you were justified, you were sanctified in the name of Jesus Christ."] (PARAPHRASE, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11) See these people are not turning people back from their wickedness. I mean if Jesus Christ is coming, you don't go out and run up your credit card bill. That is wickedness. And so it says, **"...All of them have become to Me like Sodom...."** He says, **"...And her inhabitants like Gomorrah."** (Jeremiah 23:14) Now remember when God came to Abraham and He said,

“You’re my friend. Am I going to withhold from you what I’m going to do?” And then He tells him He’s going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. And Abraham says, “But Lord, if You find this many righteous people in there do You promise me You will not destroy it?” And he couldn’t find that many. And it got down to ten and God had to destroy them. (See Genesis 18:17, 20-32) God’s justice and righteousness as the Shepherd of shepherds, as the Chief Shepherd demands that righteousness be upheld and that sin be judged. He says, **“Therefore”** in the light of what these prophets are doing, **“Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets, ‘Behold, I am going to feed them wormwood and make them drink poisonous water, for from the prophets of Jerusalem....’”**

(Jeremiah 23:15) Now watch. **“‘...Pollution has gone [throughout] the [whole] land.’”** **(Jeremiah 23:15)** There’s pollution all over. Where did it start? It started in Jerusalem and it spread, and pollution does spread. **“Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. [Don’t listen to them.] They are leading you into futility....’”** **(Jeremiah 23:16)** Do you realize that there’s some so-called Christian television programs and teaching programs that you need to turn off? Why? Because they are not speaking according to the whole counsel of God, because they are leading you into futility. There was a man and, and his name was Kenyon, and he’s like the father of the faith movement. And he came up with the teaching that became known as the weekend in hell. And the weekend in hell was when Jesus Christ died on the cross, and they said He descended into hell. And there all the demons were tormenting Him. And He was walking around kind of in a daze and He was just a wreck of a man. And this is the way that Jesus overcame death and overcame hell. That is a distortion. I mean that is a distortion of what Hebrews teaches. That’s a distortion of the cross. And yet you know what? It started with Kenyon, and then it spread to people that are teaching and are very, very popular on Christian television today. And people bought it because it sounds fascinating and it sounds dramatic. And one woman, I mean a very popular

woman Bible teacher just took that and it broke my heart. It broke my heart because this woman has a humongous following. You've got to watch out what you listen to. And you say, "How am I going to know?" That's what the purpose of this program is all about, to teach you to discover truth for yourself, to take you deeper, to give you an understanding of the whole counsel of God so that you know the Bible book by book. This is why we've taught you through Isaiah, why we're teaching you through Jeremiah, why we've taught you through the book of Philippians, why we have taught you through the book of Samuel, why we have taken you book by book, chapter by chapter, verse by verse so you can know truth. This is why we're teaching you how to discover truth for yourself, why we have books like "Lord, Teach Me to Study the Bible in Twenty-Eight Days," "God, Are You There? Do You Care? Do You Know about Me?" Books that take you into books of the Bible, teach you how to study that book, how to discover truth for yourself. The psalmist says **"I have not turned aside from Your [commandments] for You Yourself have taught me."** (Psalm 119:102) You are perfectly capable, if you are a child of God of being taught by God Himself. You've got the Bible. You've got the [Holy Spirit living inside of you to lead you and guide you into all truth.] (PARAPHRASE, John 16:13) You simply need to learn accurate skills of observation, so that you can interpret the word correctly and know how to live it. Well, we'll be right back, and we're going to continue looking at these false prophets.

PART TWO

Do you realize, my friend, how the lives of people have been altered because they have believed in these false prophets, Nostradamus, when you look at Edgar Cayce, and that's a long time ago for some of you. But I'm 75, so hey, I remember hearing about him. All these predictions he would make, these trances that he would go into and people are being led into futility. Listen to what God says in Jeremiah chapter 17, verse 16. **"Thus says the LORD of**

hosts, **‘Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility; they speak a vision of their own imagination....’**” (Jeremiah 23:16) In other words, it does not line up with the Word of God. It’s something that’s come into their mind. It’s like “Eighty-eight reasons why Jesus is going to come in October 1988.” (“88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1988”) So he goes on to say **“...They are leading you into futility....”** (Jeremiah 23:16) Futility is emptiness. He says, **“...They speak a vision of their own imagination, not from the mouth of the LORD.”** (Jeremiah 23:16) **“If any man speaks, let him speak [according to] the oracles of God...,”** (1 Peter 4:11) 1 Peter chapter 4, verse 10 and 11. If you have a speaking gift, you are to speak what God says. He says and, and **“They keep saying to those who despise Me, ‘The LORD has said, ‘You will have peace....’”**” (Jeremiah 23:17) Can you imagine talking to people that are living in sin, talking to people that are despising God, and you despise God if you do not honor God and saying to them, “You’re gonna have peace, peace, peace.” Now remember that’s what we saw earlier in Jeremiah. The prophets prophesied falsely and My people love to have it so saying “Peace, peace” when there is no peace. (See Jeremiah 6:14) He says **“...As for everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart, they say...,”** (Jeremiah 23:17) these **“false prophets,”** and you want to mark it with that megaphone. **“...they say, ‘Calamity will not come on you.’”**” (Jeremiah 23:17) No judgment’s going to come on you. Calamity is a catastrophe of some sort, some shape. It may be a snow storm. It may be a hurricane. It may be a flood. It may be a terrorist attack. It may be a volcano erupting. It can be all sorts of things. But Amos 3:8 says, **“...If...calamity occurs in a city has not the LORD done it?”** (Amos 3:6) We take teaching tours, and we teach in Greece. We teach Philippians in Philippi, Thessalonians in Thessaloniki. We go down and we teach among other things Acts in Athens, Corinthians in Corinth, etc. And one of the things that we also do is another tour in Rome where we teach the whole book of Romans. And what we do is we try to teach on the spot. So

we go to Pompeii, and Pompeii you see the results of a volcano on a city that is extremely, extremely sinful. You can see the Word of God. You can see the judgment of God in these places because they said, “Calamity will not come on us.” He says, **“But who has stood in the council of the LORD, that he should see and hear [God’s] word? Who has given heed to His word and...,”** yes, I hear You and has **“...listened [to God]?”** (Jeremiah 23:18) Remember one of the key phrases in the book of Jeremiah is the fact that you did not listen, you did not listen, you did not listen. In other words, you put your little fingers in your ears, and you did not listen. You listened instead to the false prophets because you liked that message better, because it was not a message of repentance. It was not a message of God’s going to judge your sins. It was a message of peace, peace. It was a message that the temple’s here. God’s not going to destroy us. And they missed the word of God. He says, **“Behold, the storm of the LORD has gone forth in wrath, even a whirling tempest; it will swirl down [right] on the head of the wicked. The anger of the LORD will not turn back until He has performed and carried out the purposes of His heart; in the last days you will clearly understand it.”** (Jeremiah 23:19-20) Now is He talking about the last days of Zedekiah, the last days of these four final kings of Judah? Is He talking about that? It could be. Those could be the last days that He’s talking about. Or is He talking about that three and a half years when all hell breaks loose on the face of this earth before Jesus Christ comes to rule as King of kings? It’s called **“...the day of the LORD...,”** (1 Thessalonians 5:2 and Joel 2:1) It’s called a **“...day of vengeance....”** (Isaiah 61:2) It’s called a **“...day of judgment....”** (Matthew 12:36) It’s called a day such as has never been so terrible and will never be again. (See Joel 2:2) Either way it applies to both. “The anger from God,” is a key repeated word. As a matter of fact, when you study anger, the one that gets angry the most is God. It’s a righteous anger because sin destroys. Sin deceives. Sin will lead you to hell, to the lake of fire where you will spend eternity, if you don’t know Jesus. He says, **“I did not send these prophets,**

but they ran. I did not speak to them....” (Jeremiah 23:21) I wasn’t saying a word to them. **“...But they prophesied.” (Jeremiah 23:21)** Prophesied saying, “I’m speaking for God,” and I want you to know that we are not to despise prophesying, but you better be very, very careful. When people get up and say, “Hear the Word of the Lord. ‘I’m unhappy with My people. I’m gonna judge them.’” Why would you bother listening to that when you could read the Word of God and find out exactly what God is saying? He says **“...If they had stood in My council, then they would have announced My words to My people...,”** and listen, **“...and [they] would have turned them back from their evil way and from the evil of their deeds.” (Jeremiah 23:22)** A true spokesman from God deals with sin. A true spokesman from God does not whitewash and cover up sin. A true spokesman from God stops people and says, “Wait a minute; that is wrong.” And even if the people turn on them and they say, “We don’t want to hear it, get away from us.” A true spokesman from God will be like Jeremiah. He’ll take the flack because you’ve been called of God to turn people back from their sins. And listen to me, Precious One, if ever America needed a true speaker, a true man, a true woman to speak the Word of God throughout the land in pulpit after pulpit, it is now. Jesus is coming back. We don’t know when. He told us He didn’t know when. God knows when. (See Matthew 24:36) But Jesus said be ready. And you and I need to help people get ready by telling them that sin is sin and calling them back to a holy and righteous God and watch out that you don’t get caught up in sin. This, Beloved of God, is your exhortation, your precept for life today. **“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to [present] you [faultless before His throne].” (Jude 24)**