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~ Our Spiritual Safari examined what is likely the harshest message given in the entire Word of God in our last report from Jeremiah. We intentionally passed over the judgment of Jeconiah, also known as Jehoiachin, and who was called “*Coniah*” by the Lord – because the prefix “*Je*” denoted belonging to Jehovah – and the Lord had set this man aside at the time in which we are studying. So, let’s drop back and briefly revisit his father Jehoiakim. Sound confusing? Well, not to worry – it’s really rather simple. These are all bad kings; but, during these reigns, there was still prosperity in Israel. The rich were getting richer – and the poor were being utterly abused, and trampled underfoot. That was the status quo in Israel; in spite of the Lord having said so much about the poor to them. God says a lot about the poor in the Bible, and He gives detailed instructions as to how He demands they be treated. It is impossible to ignore the theme of poverty in Scripture – both in the Old Testament and the New Testament....

XXII

13 Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work;

14 That saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and it is cieled with cedar, and painted with vermilion.

15 Shalt thou reign, because thou closest thyself in cedar? did not thy father eat and drink, and do judgment and justice, and then it was well with him?

16 He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know me? saith the LORD.

17 But thine eyes and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it.

~ Jehoiakim was encouraging the people to enrich themselves by all the wrong methods. Capital was not paying labor a fair wage as agreed – and oppressing the poor was enriching big business. The government was encouraging the practice. As a result, Jewish society had become shameful. Verses fifteen and sixteen refer back to Josiah – who had been a good king – and two things were happening now: fraud and greed were rampant in every aspect of their lives, and the poor literally had nothing whatsoever. In fact, the rich didn't even want the poor man to have dirt to eat – the rich just wanted the poor man dead – and the rich man didn't hesitate to kill a poor man just to add a few more pennies to his already vast wealth.

There was no such thing as “*middle class*” in Israel at this time – only filthy rich and dirt poor. The average man in the land was suffering tremendously. So, it fell on Jeremiah to call attention to the problem that the rich were hoarding wealth in their pride and arrogance simply for the sake of building bigger palaces and more barns – and profiting from the labor of others by iniquitous methods of wealth acquisition – but the poor were being used and abused and given nothing in return. To make matters worse, the rich were professing that God was blessing their evil doings with prosperity, and they were acting as if the poor had some character flaw that God was punishing! Sound familiar? It should; because mankind still has this problem today.

James 5: 1 Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. 2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. 3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days ~

There are only two questions God has for any man concerning their material wealth today: 1) where did you get it? – and, 2) for what do you use it? Any reasonable, thinking person knows that every facet of life today is slanted to benefit the rich man. In these United States, the poor man pays more taxes, percentage wise, than the richest one percent of

Americans pay. Moreover, the laws are geared to protect the rich, while the poor man receives no justice on any level. As a result, rich men only give to political campaigns and people that might benefit them in some way. They do not give to the Lord's work; no one – and I do mean *NO ONE* – is giving anything substantial to the man who is trying to get the entire Word of God out to the entire world in sound doctrine. You can just write that down. Well, I just happen to know that God notices this problem.

Even the self-professing believer, who claims to love the Bible so much, and who manufactures a veneer of fundamentalism, really only spend their money on themselves. They might give a few dollars to an alleged orphanage, or some lost cause — such as feeding stray dogs in Des Moines — but it's misdirected giving, done in a self-serving self-righteousness, designed only to make themselves feel better about squandering that which they should be giving to the work of the Lord. Now, I already know this talk steps on the toes of those who actually dare read one of my reports – and I know I am not going to get the support of the rich man teaching the Bible this way – but I'm just passing along that which Jeremiah already said; and, because Jeremiah never got the support of the rich man, I'll just have to take whatever the Lord gives me in this connection.

Frankly, the lowest level of sinful living is for a so-called Christian to surround themselves in plush luxury while the true man of God who is executing the Lord's work is suffering in poverty; which is the way it is in the modern church. I'm not talking about living uncomfortably – because I am sure the Lord wants you to have the modern amenities in a safe, pleasant, and agreeable environment – but, if you have the means to live in opulence and luxury, your first obligation to the Lord is to help the man of God do his job. That applies to Christian organizations, too, by the way. Religion always caters to the rich. Churches around this forum on which I teach talk about how God is blessing them with finances. My question is: what are you doing to get the Word of God out in sound doctrine? Unfortunately, the typical truthful answer is: nothing. Those who say they are so blessed and doing so well sure don't seem interested in helping the Spiritual Safari continue; but I digress.

Most, if not all, of God's children who are honestly trusting and obeying Him in His plan and purpose for their lives are very poor people – and they aren't being helped, either. I just happen to know what I am talking about. That's the way it is. I could give an enthusiastic sales pitch for this missionary ministry, and many people would pat me on the back and tell me what a fine job I'm doing, but they won't support it. If you are passing by supporting the sincere, proper, correct and complete teaching of the Bible in order to build a bigger house, drive a more expensive car, eat at the finest restaurants every night, or take a cruise every year – then don't bother calling yourself a Christian – because you're anything but a Christian. You can claim Jesus all day long — but He won't be claiming you in that day.

Many will accuse me of whining and crying, and using myself as the illustration in Jeremiah – but I'm just telling you what I know; and you can write it down as the truth. This sort of thing is what the Word of God condemns – in both the Old Testament and the New. Well, Josiah knew he could not claim to love the Lord if he did not have a concern for the poor and needy; because God has a profound concern for us. The two groups of people that are the most difficult to reach with the Gospel are the filthy rich and the dirt poor. Those at the top are obligated to help those at the bottom – and that's the *O-N-L-Y* way those two groups will ever be reached with wisdom and truth. This is absolutely the fundamental problem in the world today. Our secular world problems have nothing to do with race or politics – trust me – it's a rich and poor separation – that's what's real.

One does not have to be a Christian long before we realize that living the Christian life is not easy; in fact, it's extremely hard. Accepting the Lord is easy – particularly in times of trouble; and easy-believism is a cancerous epidemic in the church today – but walking in the Spirit in the direct will of our Father is difficult; and there is no way we can do it in our own strength. Well, Jeremiah's job was strenuous, burdensome and arduous; and giving his message was awkward and inopportune for him. Jeremiah was trying to tell God's chosen people – the nation Israel – that they had gone too far in sin and idolatry; and attempting to warn them to turn back before it was too late. Well, who's going to support that negativity? They didn't support it in Israel immediately before the captivity; and they won't accept it today.

I know God will always love you unconditionally. The question is: do you really love Him? If there is not a radical change and conversion of your heart and life as a result of salvation, then you don't love Him; because that would be impossible. Most people become wildly religious, but they aren't saved.

Today, although the nation Israel seems to have intervals of peaceful rest at times – and there are days when the world does not hear of any conflicts – the tension they have with their Palestinian, Arab, and Persian neighbors prevent them from experiencing true and lasting peace or safety in that land. Isaiah proclaimed their turmoil when he said, “... *there is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked.*” Jeremiah, about a hundred years later, was revealing the rotten and corrupt fruit these wicked people had produced. They rejected God – but God still gave them hope in the truth that One was coming Who would reign over Israel, and Who could bring them the peace they had not known for a very long time – and, of course, they rejected Him, just as they do to this day....

18 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! they shall not lament for him, saying, Ah lord! or, Ah his glory!

19 He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

20 Go up to Lebanon, and cry; and lift up thy voice in Bashan, and cry from the passages: for all thy lovers are destroyed.

21 I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; but thou saidst, I will not hear. This hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my voice.

22 The wind shall eat up all thy pastors, and thy lovers shall go into captivity: surely then shalt thou be ashamed and confounded for all thy wickedness.

23 O inhabitant of Lebanon, that makest thy nest in the cedars, how gracious shalt thou be when pangs come upon thee, the pain as of a woman in travail!

24 As I live, saith the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence;

25 And I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand of them whose face thou fearest, even into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans.

26 And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die.

27 But to the land whereunto they desire to return, thither shall they not return.

28 Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not?

29 O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD.

30 Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.

XXIII

1 Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD.

2 Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD.

3 And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.

4 And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD.

~ After a devastatingly harsh message from the prophet Jeremiah, we have a ray of hope break through now. The night never waxed so dark that the prophets couldn't see the light of God. God's Word was the lamp to Jeremiah's feet. God said He would cut off the kings of Judah – and He did – but that didn't stop His plan and purpose for Israel. See, these kings have all been in the line of David through Solomon; but the Lord Jesus Christ will come through the line of David through an altogether unknown son named Nathan. From Nathan's lineage will come a little peasant girl in Nazareth named Mary. God always has the last word, my friends. I know that modern political leaders claim to follow God, and they use Him for credibility but, there isn't – and never has been – a politician in history who was righteous in the eyes of God as a result of following His commands for a just government; no, not one....

5 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

7 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;

8 But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.

~ Verse seven and eight actually constitute one of the most remarkable prophecies in the Bible. The Passover is the oldest religious holiday in man's history. It makes no difference whether one is a Reformed or Orthodox Jew – they remember the Passover and deliverance out of Egypt. When God brings Israel back into the land according to the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy, they're going to forget all about the Passover because the new work He is going to do in them will *FAR* surpass the deliverance out of the slavery of Egypt. So, there is no possible way the nation Israel is back in that land today according to prophecy. God is not using the nation Israel as His witness today – but He isn't through with them, either. This is a tremendous truth that you either believe – or you don't believe; and, if you don't believe it, then you don't believe the Bible is the Word of God. You're hearing it straight from the Spirit of God by His man – Jeremiah – in this report. Alright, be that as it may, it wasn't helping Jeremiah much in the days in which we are studying....

9 Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the LORD, and because of the words of his holiness.

10 For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force is not right.

11 For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD.

12 Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil upon them, even the year of their visitation, saith the LORD.

13 And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to err.

14 I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of

evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.

15 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets; Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall: for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land.

16 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD.

17 They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.

~ Only a spurious dreamer subscribes to a theory of being made great again. Only a spiritually drunken religious whore speaks along those lines, my beloved. God says it cannot be done, and will not be done. Isaiah has already told us there is no peace for the wicked. Our problem is not that people don't want peace. No, the problem is that the heart of mankind is desperately wicked. God asks, "... who can know it?" Well, we don't know the human heart; because we don't have the faintest idea how evil and defiled we can be. Much of our worst sin is done in pure ignorance. Wicked men in power cannot bring about anything good – irrespective of how much they claim "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!" If they could, then they would contradict the Word of God; and I am here to tell you: that will never happen – something else you can just write down somewhere....

18 For who hath stood in the counsel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word, and heard it?

19 Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked.

20 The anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly.

21 I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.

~ Political leaders in our day are just like the religious rulers in Israel in the time in which we are studying. They were altogether corrupt and they wholly ignore the poor man. The rich religious man sitting on his throne of gold in Rome today – or in some pulpit of some mega church in some other country – has not been sent by God. They are *ALL* false shepherds who are not interested in giving God's message. I know that because the Bible tells me so. Israel was filled to the brim with these false prophets in that day, too – and Jeremiah was standing utterly all alone! God rejected both the political rulers and the religious rulers – and He sent Jeremiah to tell them they were all a bunch of phonies and frauds! People are all for religion today – make no mistake – they're religious up to the crown of their heads; and they're as proud and pious as a prickly porcupine in a pigpen. Unfortunately, there are very few – and I do mean *VERY* few – who are actually seeking after the True and Living God – the Lord Jesus Christ according to the Word of God. Candidly, it's nearly non-existent. Those who do honestly stand for the Lord stand alone – *ALL* alone....

22 But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.

23 Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off?

24 Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.

25 I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed.

26 How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart;

27 Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal.

28 The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD.

29 Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?

30 Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour.

~ Verse thirty is altogether grating, jarring, brassy and discordant in one simple nineteen word sentence! 99.666% of what you are reading and hearing in modern church and other religious circles is not the Word of God, friends. It is stolen truth that has been diluted, remanufactured, and repackaged into a counterfeit lie. It appears very similar to the genuine article – but it isn't. There are Godless professors and totally lost theologians who are absolutely wrecking the faith of believers today – and most "Christians" couldn't tell the difference if their life depended on it – because their lives *DO* depend on it – and they have not the dimmest of a clue. It is ingrained in the heart of men to do evil. Well, God is going to do something about it – mark His Word – He is against it; and it will all fall in one night. I don't purport to know when it will happen – but I do know it *WILL* happen that way....

31 Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith.

32 Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their

lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD.

33 And when this people, or the prophet, or a priest, shall ask thee, saying, What is the burden of the LORD? thou shalt then say unto them, What burden? I will even forsake you, saith the LORD.

34 And as for the prophet, and the priest, and the people, that shall say, The burden of the LORD, I will even punish that man and his house.

35 Thus shall ye say every one to his neighbour, and every one to his brother, What hath the LORD answered? and, What hath the LORD spoken?

36 And the burden of the LORD shall ye mention no more: for every man's word shall be his burden; for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the LORD of hosts our God.

37 Thus shalt thou say to the prophet, What hath the LORD answered thee? and, What hath the LORD spoken?

38 But since ye say, The burden of the LORD; therefore thus saith the LORD; Because ye say this word, The burden of the LORD, and I have sent unto you, saying, Ye shall not say, The burden of the LORD;

39 Therefore, behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, and cast you out of my presence:

40 And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.

XXIV

1 The LORD shewed me, and, behold, two baskets of figs were set before the temple of the LORD, after that Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, and the

princes of Judah, with the carpenters and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon.

2 One basket had very good figs, even like the figs that are first ripe: and the other basket had very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad.

~ Alright, our Spiritual Safari ends this long and exhausting leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God with the sign of the figs. There are good figs and bad figs. God just happens to make a very definite distinction between good and evil – and here it is, my beloved readers. God says He is going to send these people into Babylonian captivity because they are a bunch of rotten figs. That’s God’s estimation; and those are His words – not mine. Jeremiah spells out the captivity in no uncertain terms; and he gives the length of time they will be slaves in Babylon. God calls Nebuchadnezzar “*My servant*” in verse nine of the next chapter. When we get to the prophecy of Daniel, we’ll see that Daniel led Nebuchadnezzar to a saving knowledge of the Lord. Well, bad things are coming quickly for these people now – and it is all at the direction of God Almighty.

Israel is not a land flowing with milk and honey today. They have a water deficit. Water is the one commodity they desperately need in Israel. Remember, God has just sent a drought back in chapter fourteen; and God said He intended to make that land a perpetual desolation. Well. That’s what Israel is today. If you want to argue that fact, then you’re just arguing semantics – you’re not objectively comprehending prophecy. The world can know very definitely that God has accomplished His judgment of both the people and the land. God’s judgment is upon that land today, just as the curse of sin is upon the entire earth as I type this report and as you read it. This world doesn’t produce even ten percent of what is capable of producing, friends. That’s what sin does – it cripples, and takes all the good out of life....

3 Then said the LORD unto me, What seest thou, Jeremiah? And I said, Figs; the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.

4 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

5 Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good.

6 For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up.

7 And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.

8 And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil; surely thus saith the LORD, So will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt:

9 And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them.

10 And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers.

XXV

1 The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that was the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon;

2 The which Jeremiah the prophet spake unto all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying,

3 From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day, that is the three and twentieth year, the word of the LORD hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened.

4 And the LORD hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear.

5 They said, Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that the LORD hath given unto you and to your fathers for ever and ever:

6 And go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke me not to anger with the works of your hands; and I will do you no hurt.

7 Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, saith the LORD; that ye might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt.

8 Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Because ye have not heard my words,

9 Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations.

10 Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle.

11 And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

12 And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.

13 And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations.

14 For many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them also: and I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the works of their own hands ~

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