

Jeremiah 11:6 – 14:13

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~ In our last report from our Spiritual Safari, Hilkiah, Jeremiah's father, re-discovered the book of the law of the Lord that had been lost in the temple; and the discovery had such a profound effect upon King Josiah that he called the nation together, and made a decree that they would keep the law and worship the True and Living God. The law this speaks of is found beginning in Exodus chapter twenty, and runs through the instructions God gave to Moses concerning the construction of the tabernacle in chapter twenty-five. Naturally, that all covers one's relationship to one's neighbors, to the property of others, and the proper way one is to conduct themselves as a child of God. Well, the people took Josiah's oath to keep the law, but it was only an outward, surface and shallow profession of faith. Today, in these United States and, indeed, throughout the world, we see men proclaiming "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus" in almost every sentence – but who have no earthly idea Who the Lord Jesus Christ is – and who are really just total and complete Baal worshipers — wholly ignorant of the Word of God...

XI

6 Then the LORD said unto me, Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them.

~ The children of Israel promised they would do them; and they did for a while, but, it wasn't long before they forsook God's commands. The reforms Josiah made seemed wonderful for a short period of time — until the spiritual drunkenness began to wear off. That's when they began to return to their old ways; they missed the high places and groves. That's when Josiah made a grave blunder which has always baffled me. He went out against Pharaoh Necho, king of the Egyptians, at Megiddo for no reason whatsoever. Well, old man Necho killed Josiah. Josiah died at a very young age. That disturbed Jeremiah tremendously; because Jeremiah respected Josiah. I'm sure he wondered why God would allow this to happen. A very bad king was next in line; and Jeremiah knew the people would now sink

down even *FARTHER* into idolatry and Baal worship. Immorality, worse than they had ever been in before, was on the horizon – and, of course, is exactly what happened....

2 Chronicles 35: *20 After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him. 21 But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not. 22 Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. 23 And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded. 24 His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had; and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. 25 And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah ~*

So, this is all going to bring about another message from Jeremiah; and if you thought the first three messages from God through Jeremiah were ugly – Jeremiah was just getting warmed-up. Remember, Jeremiah was run out of his hometown of Anathoth by this time. Josiah would have protected Jeremiah – but Josiah is dead. Jehoahaz proceeding to the throne was extremely bad news for Jeremiah. Jehoahaz was, actually, just an uncle of Josiah – but he was pure evil; whose mother’s name was Hamutal. From here forward, *ALL* of the kings of Judah were totally given over to iniquity and evil doing of the worst kind. Interestingly, we shall see that Pharaoh Necho actually assumes control of who reigns in Judah from this time until the captivity.

Pharaoh Necho eventually sets Jehoiakim on the throne. Jehoiakim taxed Judah to pay tribute to Egypt and became more corrupt than any king before him; and that would bring in Nebuchadnezzar to defeat the Egyptians and take Judah away captive. Jehoiakim remained in power until he rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar; something Jeremiah specifically

warned him against doing. It's somewhat of a complicated history; but it is important to understand because this brings a very dark time for Judah – and the only light remaining in Israel is an insignificant man named Jeremiah.

Alright, so after good King Josiah is killed, and evil men begin to rule in Judah, I just happen to know that Jeremiah had what every honest Christian will admit to having: doubts in his mind and in his heart. Dark thoughts and disturbing questions are going to come to the genuine child of God, friends. There will be times when you wonder why God permits certain things to happen to you — and to others. Every pastor, preacher, evangelist, missionary and Bible teacher that has ever stood for the things of God has asked the Lord why He does not intervene on behalf of suffering saints. Troublingly, it seems only the best saints really suffer. David saw the wicked spread themselves like a green bay tree. The wicked and lost man seem to flourish and prosper in this world; while the upright have more trouble than anyone. If you are reading this report, then you know what I am teaching is true. The artificial beauty queen Christian stopped reading a *LONG* time ago. His sheep hear His voice....

XII

1 Righteous art thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?

2 Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins.

~ Jeremiah had some real questions for the Lord and, honestly, because I always am honest with you dear readers, I have the same questions. I ask God often why He permits awful and evil people to fare so sumptuously and rule the world. Again, just being honest here: I haven't been given that answer! David never got that answer; and neither will Jeremiah. What I do know is that God permits the wicked and rich man to prosper today — and they never seem to have a problem or a care in the world. My readers are not wealthy, friends; I do not appeal to *ANY* rich man. This Spiritual Safari is

not read by those people. I know how to appeal to the rich – but – I would have to be dishonest to get their attention. Why God doesn't judge them I, candidly, have no earthly idea. The only advice I can give you is that you should not let what you don't know disturb what you do know. I think we'll get our answers someday – in fact, I know we will – but maybe not in this day on this earth. God says He knows what He is doing. He just says, "trust Me." Maybe you do not like that answer. I struggle to come to terms with it – but that's the only answer God is giving us right now....

3 But thou, O LORD, knowest me: thou hast seen me, and tried mine heart toward thee: pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter.

4 How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? the beasts are consumed, and the birds; because they said, He shall not see our last end.

~ This passage starts out with Jeremiah saying, "... righteous art Thou, Oh, Lord..." One thing we can know for sure is that whatever God does – it's right. Whatever He permits – it is the best thing that could happen; and that sometimes feels very strange to accept. God wants us to trust Him and rest in Christ; and this is where our true faith is tested, my beloved. I don't really like it much, either. When God tells me to walk by faith and not by sight, I tell Him I want to see. I have always wondered if God would raise up a man in our day like Jeremiah that would not try to curry the favor of politicians or educational institutions – or even the so-called Christian public – but who would just stand up and teach the Bible properly, correctly and completely while demanding holiness and righteousness from the self-professing believer. I think God could use that man and, if He did, it would save these United States from judgment – at least, for the time being. Nothing else – *NOTHING ELSE* – is going to save this country, either, but I digress. Jeremiah is lonely – and things are getting worse for him now....

5 If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?

~ Well, friends, God just said to Jeremiah, *“if you think things are bad now, you ain’t seen nothing yet.”* If YOU are troubled today, then what will you do when things REALLY get bad? Things are going to get so bad that abject chaos will ensue on this planet – probably nuclear wars – on the earth sooner than we might think. All of this should draw us closer to the Lord Jesus Christ, my beloved. He has all of our answers; even if He isn’t telling us those answers immediately. Interestingly and humorously, God continues to tell Jeremiah that Jeremiah is just a speckled bird in verse nine. See, most old crows think their little chicks are the blackest of them all. That presents a real problem here. God told Jeremiah that Jeremiah was all speckled if he stood for the Lord. Well, you can call me, Andrew C. Hunt, a speckled bird, too. If you are actually reading these Bible studies, then I suspect YOU are a speckled bird, also....

6 For even thy brethren, and the house of thy father, even they have dealt treacherously with thee; yea, they have called a multitude after thee: believe them not, though they speak fair words unto thee.

7 I have forsaken mine house, I have left mine heritage; I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hand of her enemies.

8 Mine heritage is unto me as a lion in the forest; it crieth out against me: therefore have I hated it.

9 Mine heritage is unto me as a speckled bird, the birds round about are against her; come ye, assemble all the beasts of the field, come to devour.

10 Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.

11 They have made it desolate, and being desolate it mourneth unto me; the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart.

12 The spoilers are come upon all high places through the wilderness: for the sword of the LORD shall devour from the one end of the land even to the other end of the land: no flesh shall have peace.

13 They have sown wheat, but shall reap thorns: they have put themselves to pain, but shall not profit: and they shall be ashamed of your revenues because of the fierce anger of the LORD.

14 Thus saith the LORD against all mine evil neighbours, that touch the inheritance which I have caused my people Israel to inherit; Behold, I will pluck them out of their land, and pluck out the house of Judah from among them.

15 And it shall come to pass, after that I have plucked them out I will return, and have compassion on them, and will bring them again, every man to his heritage, and every man to his land.

16 And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, The LORD liveth; as they taught my people to swear by Baal; then shall they be built in the midst of my people.

17 But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, saith the LORD.

XIII

1 Thus saith the LORD unto me, Go and get thee a linen girdle, and put it upon thy loins, and put it not in water.

2 So I got a girdle according to the word of the LORD, and put it on my loins.

3 And the word of the LORD came unto me the second time, saying,

4 Take the girdle that thou hast got, which is upon thy loins, and arise, go to Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole of the rock.

5 So I went, and hid it by Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me.

~ To me this is one of the most interesting parables in the Old Testament. Even with as serious as things are in this section of Scripture, I can't help but smile at this chapter. I wonder if Jeremiah was putting on weight or not – personally, I think Jeremiah was losing weight; but, either way, God told Jeremiah to get a girdle and wear it. Of course, a girdle wasn't worn in that day to make a barrel-shaped body into an hourglass figure. No, a girdle, in Jeremiah's day, was worn to hold together all of the garments and to keep them from falling off while one worked. When our loins are "*girded about with truth*," we become ready for service. Remember, the Lord Jesus girded Himself about with a linen cloth when He washed the disciple's feet in the Upper Room. Jesus was preparing *THEM* for service at that time. That brought the disciples into fellowship with Him; and if you have no fellowship with Christ, you cannot serve Him – because that would be impossible. Service *IS* fellowship with Christ. Service just doesn't happen to be preaching a sermon or teaching a Sunday school class or singing a solo – or even teaching the Bible! Service is fellowship with Christ – and doing the things He directs us to do to bring us closer to Him – and it means being cleansed, because God doesn't use dirty vessels.

Anyway, there has always been some question as to whether Jeremiah actually went down to Babylon physically and hid the girdle. I think he did. There was plenty of trade-traffic between nations that would have made it possible. I think he made the trip and, when he came home, people said, "*where 'ya been Jeremiah?*" He would have replied, "*I been down to Babylon.*" They would inquire, "*what did you do down there? Have you been acting as a representative for the king?*" Jeremiah would have answered, "*no, it had nothing to do with that; I went down there and hid a girdle, because God instructed me to.*" And I'm sure they laughed in derision. Believe me, friends, they thought Jeremiah was an idiot....

6 And it came to pass after many days, that the LORD said unto me, Arise, go to Euphrates, and take the girdle from thence, which I commanded thee to hide there.

7 Then I went to Euphrates, and digged, and took the girdle from the place where I had hid it: and, behold, the girdle was marred, it was profitable for nothing.

8 Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

9 Thus saith the LORD, After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem.

~ This signified that Judah had sunk as low as they could go, and God was going to send them into the Babylonian captivity – and that’s *EXACTLY* what God did – and Jeremiah wrote it down. The Jews in Jerusalem did not appreciate the message from God. God uses some very funny things – and some very strange ways in this world today. Well, off goes Jeremiah to hide the girdle. Nightfall over Judah begins as we end this leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God. It’s going to become so dark as we go forward that these people won’t know where to go – or how to get there. They are *ALREADY* lost in the mountains at the time in which we are studying.

Verse nineteen spells out as clear as day what is about to happen. It is literally impossible for any unsaved person to do *ANYTHING* that is good. I don’t care how much time the lost man volunteers, how many little baby orphans they feed, how much money they give, how often they go to church, or even how much they study the Bible. The do-gooder person is not pleasing to God in any way, form, or shape. Until we obey Christ’s commands according to the Word of God, our life is just a basket of rotten apples. The “do-gooder” types do those things for their own self-righteous selfishness, and for the adulation of others. Any learned psychologist can take them apart in a split-second. God can take them apart even faster than that....

10 This evil people, which refuse to hear my words, which walk in the imagination of their heart, and walk after other gods, to serve them, and to worship them, shall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing.

11 For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith the LORD; that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory: but they would not hear.

12 Therefore thou shalt speak unto them this word; Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Every bottle shall be filled with wine: and they shall say unto thee, Do we not certainly know that every bottle shall be filled with wine?

13 Then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings that sit upon David's throne, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with drunkenness.

14 And I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together, saith the LORD: I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them.

15 Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the LORD hath spoken.

16 Give glory to the LORD your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.

17 But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD'S flock is carried away captive.

18 Say unto the king and to the queen, Humble yourselves, sit down: for your principalities shall come down, even the crown of your glory.

19 The cities of the south shall be shut up, and none shall open them: Judah shall be carried away captive all of it, it shall be wholly carried away captive.

20 Lift up your eyes, and behold them that come from the north: where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?

21 What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee? for thou hast taught them to be captains, and as chief over thee: shall not sorrows take thee, as a woman in travail?

22 And if thou say in thine heart, Wherefore come these things upon me? For the greatness of thine iniquity are thy skirts discovered, and thy heels made bare.

23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.

24 Therefore will I scatter them as the stubble that passeth away by the wind of the wilderness.

25 This is thy lot, the portion of thy measures from me, saith the LORD; because thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood.

26 Therefore will I discover thy skirts upon thy face, that thy shame may appear.

27 I have seen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, and thine abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?

XIV

1 The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah concerning the drought.

2 Judah mourneth, and the gates thereof languish; they are black unto the ground; and the cry of Jerusalem is gone up.

3 And their nobles have sent their little ones to the waters: they came to the pits, and found no water; they returned with their vessels empty; they were ashamed and confounded, and covered their heads.

4 Because the ground is chapt, for there was no rain in the earth, the plowmen were ashamed, they covered their heads.

5 Yea, the hind also calved in the field, and forsook it, because there was no grass.

6 And the wild asses did stand in the high places, they snuffed up the wind like dragons; their eyes did fail, because there was no grass.

7 O LORD, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake: for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee.

8 O the hope of Israel, the saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night?

9 Why shouldest thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet thou, O LORD, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not.

10 Thus saith the LORD unto this people, Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the LORD doth not accept them; he will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins.

11 Then said the LORD unto me, Pray not for this people for their good.

12 When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence.

13 Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, the prophets say unto them, Ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine; but I will give you assured peace in this place ~

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