

Jeremiah

Sunday 10/17/2004

If you have your Bibles this morning, we have had a good time singing and praising the Lord. Let us go to the book of Jeremiah this morning and continue on as we come through the Word of God, helping us to grow and put the book together. As you know, we started last week the third section of the Old Testament. I showed you how the Old Testament is broken down into three sections, and we started the last section last week with the book of Isaiah. That last section, or the third section, is called the Prophets.

Last week we saw the book of Isaiah, and this week we are going to look at the book of Jeremiah. Both of these men preached right before the destruction of Jerusalem and right before Nebuchadnezzar came down and took them into captivity. They both wrote to the book of Judah. In fact, these men are two of the greatest prophets of Judah that preached in Judah's darkest times. There probably has never been, and it is hard to understand it from just reading the Bible, but when you go back and look at the accounts of history, when you go back and look at the material that is in the rest of the Bible, you can put it in perspective because you get somewhat of an understanding of how God works and how these times were. There were no darker times in the history of the world than this particular time.

No nation went through more bitterly what Israel went through, but at the same time, it was because of their own disobedience to the Word of God. Therefore, as I said last week, the writings of the prophets are all books that are very negative. But I must say this, there is no more negative book in all the Bible than the book Jeremiah writes. He writes two books: Jeremiah and Lamentations. We are going to look at Lamentations next week. Just because Isaiah has 52 chapters and we are going to take quite a while this morning with it, and Lamentations only has five, do not get your hopes up next week. It does not mean anything. The content of Lamentations is incredible, and we will have to look at that. But certainly, there are no more negative books in all the Bible than the books of Jeremiah and Lamentations.

I. The Book of Jeremiah: Context and Themes

The name Jeremiah means "cast out," and you will find that that phrase "cast out" is found 13 times in that book. You will find that the context of the book of Jeremiah, as we saw last week of all the prophets, is built around the second coming of Christ. That phrase, "the day" or "that day," is found 75 times in 52 chapters.

You will find terms throughout the book of Jeremiah that will help nail in for you the context. You will find it called the day of trouble, the day of desolation, the day of slaughter, the day of affliction, the woeful day, the day of evil, the day of vengeance, the day of calamity, and the day of spoil. All those references will be to the Tribulation period going into the second coming of Christ, and it is just filled throughout this book. This book is just filled with the downside of everything that is going to befall the nation of Israel.

You will find a couple of words showing up for the first time in your Bible here in the book of Jeremiah. In Jeremiah 2:19, you will find the word "backsliding" showing up for the first time. In

fact, you will find it 13 times in the book of Jeremiah because Israel is a backsliding nation. We use that term in Christianity today, and unfortunately, it is really not a term that is given to the church, though it somewhat seems appropriate in the way we talk about people and things sometimes, somebody being backslidden. But that term dynamically in the Bible is used for the nation of Israel, and Israel backslides from God.

It is impossible for a Christian to really backslide. It is one of those terms that really does not mean anything to a Christian, but we associate things with it. It is like the term in the world when somebody says, "Well, he had a nervous breakdown." We all know what that means, but if you take that term "nervous breakdown," if that is true, and your nerves really break down, you die. If your nerves break down, you are dead. But we use that term as a catch-all. It is like when you are sick, and the doctor says you have the flu, it is just a virus. The word "backslidden" is like that. A Christian cannot backslide. You are in Christ; He is in you; it is impossible. But we use the word, and I am not trying to change your concept on it; I am just trying to give you information so you know where these things come from.

II. Jeremiah: The Weeping Prophet

Jeremiah himself is a very interesting man to study. He is called the weeping prophet, and he is a prophet with a broken heart preaching a heartbreaking message. He is bringing to the nation of Israel, whom he deeply loves, the message of God's coming judgment because of their ungodliness and because of their sin. He is the only man in the Bible commanded not to marry, and he is told that in Jeremiah 16:1. He is to stay a virgin, and the reason for that is because Jeremiah, the book of Jeremiah, being a picture of the Tribulation period and the second coming of Christ, Jeremiah is a type of the 144,000 in Revelation 7 who are told to be virgins.

He is called the man child in Jeremiah 20:15, and that itself is one of the most elusive titles in all of the Bible. It connects him someplace with Christ in the Tribulation period. I have never been able to figure the thing out as far as Jeremiah, the man child in Christ, but I do know this: when it comes to the Bible, the common, ordinary men in the New Testament knew more about the Bible than any ten Bible scholars you could find today. They understood things about the Bible that we do not know.

I have been asked in Bible study many, many times about the Mount of Transfiguration when the apostles are standing there, and they are seeing Christ transfigured before them in Matthew 17:1. They know who Moses and Elijah are, standing on each side of Christ, and I have been asked many times, "How do they know that?" The average Christian thinks that they are standing there with a copy of the New Testament in their pocket, looking it up as they go, and that is not true. There was no New Testament written. The reason why they knew it was Moses and Elijah is because they knew their Old Testament, and they knew that the Bible said in the Old Testament many, many times, but particularly in the book of Malachi, that Moses and Elijah were going to show up with the Lord when He comes back as the two witnesses. They knew that. So when they see these two men with the Lord, and the Lord is glorified, they know who He is.

Scholars have a tough time with that because, first of all, they do not believe that everything in the Bible is there by divine appointment. They believe that the Bible, any translation of the Bible, is just a mixture of the message of God without really the truth of God. They believe that you cannot rely on everything in the Bible as being absolutely accurate, that you have to rely on them to lay it out for you because they have the mystical, magical power to look deep within the originals and come up with the nuggets that you and I need because we are so stupid we cannot figure it out for ourselves. God has entrusted the body of knowledge to a group of intellectuals about the Bible who will tell us what the Bible really means. Of course, they always have a tough time with that. If you saw Thursday night, you saw how even the punctuation in the Bible, the spelling in the Bible, it is all important.

I say all that to say this: Jeremiah is a strange character, and I do not fully understand it. I know he is connected with a man-child over there in Revelation 12 and Isaiah 66. The man-child is Christ in Revelation 12 and in Isaiah. No question about it. I am not sure of the connection, but I do know this: the book of Jeremiah figures into the Tribulation period and the second coming of Christ, probably like no other book in the Bible.

I also know this: in Matthew 16:14, one time Jesus was asking common, ordinary people who people said that He was. Some of them said, "Well, you are John the Baptist." Some of them said, "You are Moses or Elijah." Some of them said, "You are the Christ." And then one guy said, "And some people say you are Jeremiah." Now, the scholars would have you believe that that is just stupid people trying to throw out guesses at who it was. I am telling you right now, that is not true. I am telling you right now that a common, ordinary man in the Old Testament knew more about the Bible and Bible prophecy in the coming of Christ than any of the scribes and Pharisees put together. When that man back there in Matthew 16:14 says, "Somebody says it is Jeremiah," I am telling you right now, that is a key for anybody that is paying attention that Jeremiah is going to figure in something in the Tribulation period by coming back and being part of that like Moses and Elijah. How that figures into the man child, I do not fully understand, but I know that it does. It is an incredible concept to study Jeremiah himself when you look at him, and then you better understand why he writes.

The entire book of Jeremiah, doctrinally, as I have already said, is a picture of the Tribulation period. Jeremiah is typified as a type of the 144,000 going around that time preaching, and all of the things that are going to be taking place during that time you find in that great book.

III. Structure of Jeremiah: Three Prophecies

Now, we are going to follow the format like we did last week, because that format, I was kind of asking myself as I was coming through the other books in the Bible, "How am I going to do the prophets?" Because the prophets have so much information. The prophets so much all go together, and I could spend 20 hours just giving you the doctrinal application, weaving it all together, showing you how it worked in the Tribulation and Second Coming. But the problem with that is that these prophets, even though they have things that are written to the Jew that we need to know, there were a lot of inspirational concepts that we need to understand.

Last week, I think I hit upon the way to do it, and that is to come through and show you doctrinally key phrases, key concepts to give you the basic understanding of the chapters, and then come back and pull it together the same way, inspirationally. So, when you leave, you basically can step back at this book and see the divisions in it, see what those divisions represent, and then go back and put together an inspirational pattern for your own life of great principles. That seems to be the way the Lord is directing us to do it. So, we are going to follow with that.

Before we really jump into this, let us ask God's blessing, and we will get started this morning in His Word. Father, we do thank You and praise You for all that You do for us. We love You so much. We ask You today, Father, to open up our hearts, give us wisdom and understanding in all that we do. We will thank You and praise You now in Jesus' name, for His sake we ask it. Amen.

Now, the book has three divisions in it. More appropriately, there are really three prophecies, and they are all built around the coming destruction.

1. Chapter 1 through chapter 33: He gives a prophecy dealing with the destruction of Judah. Judah being the two southern tribes, and remember, this is who Isaiah and Jeremiah are writing to and preaching to.
2. Chapter 34 through chapter 45: Deals with the destruction of the city of Jerusalem itself, because Jerusalem was a city that was located within Judah that is the capital city for the nation of Israel, and it gets destroyed. So, chapters 34 through chapter 45 deal with Jerusalem's destruction, the city.
3. Chapter 46 through chapter 52: Deals with the Gentiles' fate. He goes through in each chapter and lays out and shows you how and what He is going to do and deal with the Gentiles at the second coming of Christ.

Now, each of these, in each case, shows us what is going to happen historically. Historically, this whole time element of the book of Jeremiah falls into the time period right around 606 BC. In your Bible, it will be the last of the book of 2 Chronicles, and you will find that this is taking place right before God's judgment falls by bringing Nebuchadnezzar down and destroying Jerusalem and taking the southern tribes into captivity.

Doctrinally, what you have here is a picture of exactly what is going to take place right before the Tribulation period, right before the second coming of Christ, right during the Tribulation period, as God again brings the Antichrist this time (who Nebuchadnezzar is one of the 18 types of) in to destroy Jerusalem because of Jerusalem's sin and because they are turning away from God.

With that in mind, it brings up tremendous inspirational applications because the parallels between the time of the nation of Israel and God's judgment parallel the time that we are living in, because both the nation of Israel and us as the church are living in the time right before the coming judgment of God. So the parallels are absolutely overwhelming here, and that is what we want to try to hit on. I want to try to give you an overview using the same format: doctrinally, historically, inspirationally, so you can kind of figure out where you are at so that when you come to the book of Jeremiah in your own personal study, you know what you are looking for, you know what you are reading for, and you begin to pull it all together and put it all together.

IV. Prophecy One: The Destruction of Judah (Jeremiah 1-33)

In Jeremiah 1-33, we are dealing with him writing to Judah. In Jeremiah 1 and 2, we begin to see Jeremiah lay out for us what the real problem is here with Israel. There are places in the Bible where God just simply clears off a little spot and makes it very clear, very direct, and very understandable what the problem He has with the nation of Israel and why they are in the mess that they are in. In Jeremiah 1 and 2, we see that in the verse I want to look at, or you can just look it up later if you want to try to run through some of these with me, that is fine. It is Jeremiah 2:21, and it shows you the real issue between God and the nation of Israel. Here is what He says in Jeremiah 2:21:

Jeremiah 2:21

Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?

This is the story, and in that one verse, you have everything you need to know of what God is doing here. When you go over to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and you find when Christ shows up the first time after the 400 silent years, when He shows up at the First Coming, you find the nation of Israel rejects Him again. When they reject Him, we know that the kingdom of heaven goes into parables. In Matthew 21:33, you have one of those parables that actually, in those places where God just puts a parenthesis, goes back from Genesis right up to the time we are and beyond, showing you what has happened, why it has happened, what God intended, and how Israel responded and why Israel has gotten in the mess that they are in. That is what you have in Jeremiah 2:21.

God intended Israel to be His choice vine. God intended Israel to be put in a place, Jerusalem, where she would bear fruit, and the world would eat of that fruit. That fruit in time is going to become the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Old Testament was a plowing of the field, sowing of the seed. He plants Israel as a nation, just like a man would go out in his garden and plant a vine tree, a vineyard, an olive tree, or whatever. He plants that nation of Israel in that land, and then He does what a good gardener does: He fertilizes it, He cultivates it, He takes care of it, He prunes it, He does everything that He is supposed to do. But in spite of that, this plant that God intended to be the lifeblood to the world turned against God and rejected God. Now, we find them in the book of Jeremiah where God is getting ready to judge them.

God had a mission for the nation of Israel. God had a plan for the nation of Israel in a national sense, in a literal sense, that literally was going to impact the world. You have a glimpse of it under Solomon and David, especially Solomon, where the Bible says all the world comes into Jerusalem to worship at Solomon, where all the religions of the East and all the great religions of the world take a backseat to the God of Israel and the God of this world. God, through the nation of Israel, was going to interact that plan to reach the world. Of course, Israel was that plant that was planted in Jerusalem to bring forth fruit from which in time all of the world would partake of and find God through that plant, the nation of Israel. The devil comes in and destroys it. In fact,

he destroys it in such a way that here we are in Jeremiah 2. God is telling us what God intended, His plan, His mission, and now God is going to come down and destroy them.

In Jeremiah 3, you see how the nation of Israel, doctrinally, has lined up with the Antichrist. Historically, we know that she went with other gods. In Jeremiah 3:3, it says this:

Jeremiah 3:3

Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed.

That "whore's forehead" can be only one thing when you understand Revelation 13:16, which talks about the mother of harlots, the great whore, Babylon, mystery, religion. The nation of Israel has embraced a whore's forehead. That simply means, from what we know from the book of Revelation, that in the Tribulation period, every man, every woman, is going to be forced to take the mark of the beast either on their right hand or on their forehead. Israel has embraced the Antichrist and has taken up the whore's forehead. That will show you exactly how the nation of Israel was going to make an alliance with the Antichrist, or he with them, in the first three and a half years of the Tribulation period.

Then we have Jeremiah 4-9, which deals with a total apostasy of the nation of Israel. Once they come to the place where they line up with the Antichrist, they are gone. In Jeremiah 4:30, God asks them, "What are you going to do?" He says, "You have decked yourself with ornaments of gold. You have painted your face. You have taken on all of these things." Yet, when you see the ornaments of gold and painting your face, how can one who knows the Bible not be remembering Proverbs 5 and Proverbs 7, the great harlot, the great whore, who stood on the street corner, who seduced men and seduced the nation of Israel by what? Painting her face, making herself look like a harlot, and then embracing the nation of Israel as that young man and destroying him. That is exactly what is taking place in the nation of Israel.

In Jeremiah 6:9, it talks about the fact that they shall glean the remnant of Israel as a vine. You compare that with Romans 14 and Romans 11, and you see the gleaning of the Tribulation saints at the end of the second coming of Christ. In Jeremiah 7:31, he says, "They built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire." This shows you the depravity of the nation of Israel. It shows you where it goes when men and women forsake the Word of God and step to such incredible depths.

In a literal sense, who here would think of taking your child? When you come down through here, it says "the high places of Tophet." Tophet means "drum." It talks about Hinnom, that is Gehenna, the south end of Jerusalem, where the dump was. That is where Molech, in Jeremiah 32, that is where Molech, the great god, where the children of Israel brought their little babies down, and they offered their babies as a human sacrifice to the god Molech, where those babies were burned up in a fire. This is what you find in the Bible when God tells them not to let their children pass through the fire. It is the fire of Molech that they were actually taking their children down. Men and women who claimed to be following God, taking their children down and

delivering them into the hands of this brazen god by which would consume their children and destroy their children through the fire.

It is hard for us to believe today that any mother or father could ever do that to their children. That is the difference between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven. Nobody does it today, literally. You would not find any mom or dad on this planet that would literally take their baby down and put it in the hands of a false god that would devour that. That is unthinkable. It happened literally in the Old Testament. Men and women who claimed to believe God offered up their children for sacrifice to the god of this world. Yet, we would not even think of doing that literally today, but let me tell you something: God's people do it all the time spiritually. They live one thing at home, they live something else, and when they wake up in the morning after 20 or 30 years, and their kids are out in the world and lost their kids to the world, they scratch their heads and say, "What happened? What took place? What transpired?" It is simple. Just as the Old Testament Jew believed they were following God, lied to themselves, forsook the Word of God and the principles of God, and delivered their children down to the hands of that pagan god, we do it today spiritually with our children by not setting the concepts that we need to have and them going to the world, just as sure as they took them down in the Valley of Gehenna back in the Old Testament. The parallels are incredible.

In Jeremiah 10, we see it continue. This is all dealing with the problems they have. In Jeremiah 10, we find the great picture of what we call Christmas, and we find the great Christmas tree being cut out of the tree, out of the woods, put in the house, and then putting silver balls and gold and decking it all over the place. We understand the ramifications of that in the Bible, how that it had nothing to do with Christ's birthday. Christ was not born on December 25th. He was born in the Feast of Tabernacles in September 20th through 24th, if you know your Bible. You know that all this has to do with Christianity when Constantine brings it in. Old Chris Kringle and old Saint Nick, that is the Roman Catholic patron saint for children. We find in Zechariah 2:6, the Bible covers all the bases. Zechariah 2:6, you find a guy coming down and saying, "Ho ho," who comes down from the land of the north, all connected with what we have when we have Christ mass, which we call Christmas. It all comes into Christianity, and the nation of Israel is told not to be deceived like the pagans.

Now, you know me, and I know you, and I am telling you right now, I am not telling you that so you will abolish Christmas in your home. I am not telling you that so you will not have a Baal pole inside your house. I am not telling you that so you will not sing Christmas carols and have eggnog with booze in it and get everybody drunk so you can get more presents out of it. I am not telling you that at all. What I am telling you is, understand what is going on in the world. I do not care if you partake in it or you do not. I am not a Jehovah's Witness. I do not forsake Christmas. I like getting presents just like everybody else. Everybody does. I am not fighting it. I am not one of these guys that gets up and takes that kind of stand. You are an idiot in the world today if you try to do that. All I am trying to get you to do is understand where it comes from. I just want you to understand where it comes from. We grew up. I used to drop stuff like Santa Claus with my kids. I do not need as much padding now as I would do it as I did back then, but I did it. They knew the difference. It was not like, "You are deceiving your kids." Let me tell you something:

some of the parents that talk about you who do this fun thing for your kid, deceiving your kids, are the biggest deceivers of their kids you ever saw on this planet. Kids need to know the truth. It was tough for me when I was 12 years old, found out there was not an Easter bunny. I wept for days. But I got over it, I think.

You find it all through here, Jeremiah 11-33. You find Israel's judgment during the Tribulation period. In Jeremiah 16:13, they are cast out of the land, and they are being hunted by the Antichrist. In Jeremiah 20, you find how Israel hates Jeremiah because of his negative message. They want to put a positive spin on everything that Jeremiah does. Of course, Jeremiah has one thing that he says, and that is, God's judgment is coming. No matter how you want to dress it up, how you want to paint it up, how you want to clean it up, it is still far short of what God expected, and God's judgment is coming. In Jeremiah 21-33, you find the end of the first prophecy. You find the sin that leads to Israel's demise and her total captivity is one of walking away from God, walking away from God's Word, bringing in all the false gods, doing everything in their Christian lives that has nothing to do with the Bible, and forsaking God and the things of God for their own prosperity and for their own goodwill.

V. Prophecy Two: The Destruction of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 34-45)

Then you have the second prophecy. This prophecy is to Jerusalem, Jeremiah 34-45. In Jeremiah 34-36, you find that the Bible says this in Jeremiah 34:1, "the word that came from Jeremiah." Jeremiah preaches a number of sermons in the book of Jeremiah. They are great sermons. You can go back and bracket them. You ought to see how many there are. It just goes through, and you can get sermon after sermon after sermon. This boy is preaching his heart out to the nation of Israel, and he has a message from God. It says in Jeremiah 34:1, just one of the many places, "the word that came from Jeremiah." You see in these passages how they hate God's Word, and they burn it up in Jeremiah 36. They cut it up, and they try to get rid of it.

Jeremiah 37-45, you find the religious apostasy that replaces God and His Word, and you find a new title in the Bible that shows up. It actually shows up in Jeremiah 7, but it is defined in Jeremiah 44. This new title is part of their new religion. You see, the nation of Israel never, there was not a case where, and you have to understand this because this highlights the parallels, it was not a thing that they turned their back on God and said, "We are all atheists." It was not a thing where they said, "We are not going to believe in God anymore, and we are going to do our own thing, and we are going to go into Satan worship." It was not that way at all. They never lost their concept of a higher being. They never lost their concept of a supreme God. What they did was dump His Word so they could make their own concept of God, who they wanted Him to be. Although they tried to maintain their religious appearance and maintain their religious church services and maintain all the things that give the appearance of being godly, they were so far away from God, so far into the depths of sin, religious apostasy, that it is hardly recognizable from what God wanted them to be.

When you come to Jeremiah 44, you find a new term that shows up in Jeremiah 7. They have had a new dimension to their religion now. She is called "the Queen of Heaven." We now have a female deity being introduced into the nation of Israel. This female deity is typified back a little bit farther by Jezebel, and she represents for us the Queen of Heaven that we all know and love so well today, that we have in our own world. She has been different people down through history as different religions always want to add a female deity to a male deity, as all the heathen nations do. So we see in Jeremiah 34-45, in the second prophecy, we see Israel's apostasy as she replaces God, as she replaces God's Word, as she begins to add to her religion all of the things from her own heart that she wants to believe.

VI. Prophecy Three: The Fate of Gentile Nations (Jeremiah 46-52)

Then we come to the third prophecy, and this prophecy is on the Gentile nations. This is Jeremiah 46-52. It all deals with Nebuchadnezzar coming down and scattering the Jews. Then those nations that line up with him, this is very important, they justify themselves and they say, "Because the Jews turned their backs on God, because the Jews..." This is unsaved nations now. The unsaved nations had it figured out more than the nation of Israel did. They are looking and they are saying, "Because this nation rejected God, we are justified in coming down and judging them."

They say in Jeremiah 50:7:

Jeremiah 50:7

All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, even the LORD, the hope of their fathers.

It was the Roman Catholic Church all down through the Dark Ages, all down through up to the middle 1800s. It was the Roman Catholic Church that justified the killing of Jews, taking their land, taking their valuables, casting them out of their nations. It was the Roman Catholic Church and some of the Puritan groups who persecuted the nation of Israel, and their defense for doing it was, "They are Christ killers. They killed Christ, so we have every right to persecute them because they have killed Christ." That is exactly what you have right here.

Then in Jeremiah 52, you find Nebuchadnezzar coming down in 606 BC. When he comes down in 606 BC, I cannot even describe to you the bloodbath that took place when Nebuchadnezzar came down. I cannot even tell you the debacle, how this was. It makes what Adolf Hitler did to them between 1938 and 1945 look like a Sunday school picnic. When Nebuchadnezzar comes down, he literally tears that place apart. He butchers them, he hangs them upside down, he does some of the most unbelievable atrocities you have ever seen or heard in your life. It is absolutely a bloodbath. I am telling you, when you come through and you look at it doctrinally and historically, you find that historically it actually happened, it actually took place, and you are going to find that doctrinally it is going to happen again.

We are seeing the scenes right now unfold all around this world. We are seeing, as I said last week, in our own political environment, the groundwork in America for us turning our backs on the nation of Israel. We are seeing right now, it was just in a newspaper last week or on the news, that Joseph Lieberman, who is a Jew, he is a Democrat, and he likes Bush simply because of the fact that he does not agree with everything, and he is surely not going to vote Republican. But the one thing he likes about Bush is the fact that Bush is pro-Israel. The one thing that he wanted a clear statement on from Kerry is this: "If you get president, will you continue the national policy toward the nation of Israel?" Kerry would not give him an answer. I would give you the answer for him if you would like, but I am telling you what, this thing is going to turn. This thing is going to turn, and the next two weeks, next three weeks in America, the next 28, 21 days, are going to be the determining factor. You better get your sideline seat on election night, get some people over, pop some popcorn, get some pop, order a pizza, sit down and watch with great fervor the beginning of the destruction of the end of America and the end of the world, and get a front row seat because it is going to be a show. I am telling you, this thing is going to change. This thing is going to change, and if it does not change this time, it will certainly change next time, but it is going to be tough. We have an election on that one, whenever night it is, the second or the third, whenever night we get on, and the next morning you always find out who the president is. You are not going to find out who the president is the next morning. This thing is going to be tied up in the courts and legal things for the next six months. I am telling you what, it is going to be a knockdown drag out. I am telling you, you live in exciting times. I am always looking for those things when you have all the presidents standing there, and he is talking to your friend in the United Nations, and all those people standing around. I am always looking for that little guy that might be the Antichrist in there someplace, just kind of walking back there, just kind of checking things out, waiting his time, buying his time, carrying a baby as he walks by and gives you that look and then keeps on going. I am always looking for him anyway.

VII. Inspirational Applications for Today's Church

That is what you have doctrinally and historically, but I have to say to you, the inspiration to this book is incredible. It is incredible because of the parallels. We are living in a time of the church where the church had a mission just like Israel had a mission, and the church has failed in that mission just like Israel has failed in that mission, and they failed for the same reasons. They had their mission; we have our missions. They went into their apostasy; we are in our apostasy. In both cases, it started with a rejection and turning your back on the Word of God. So when it comes to the book of Jeremiah, I know of no other book in all of the Bible that really shows you the negative slant to modern Bible Christianity.

You are told today, and you are given all the positive spin, that this is a great time in Christianity. I hear people say all the time that, "Oh, God is getting in control, and God is doing some great things." The truth of the matter is, God is not doing anything. God, my friend, has turned His attention to the nation of Israel. We saw that as we come through the books of the Bible. What you are seeing around America today called Christianity is just like you would have seen back in 2 Chronicles when you walked down the street of Jerusalem and walked into the church there in Jerusalem, and everybody was saying, "Oh, God is doing such great things," when the reality is,

God was not doing anything. Jeremiah is filled with it, and we do not have time to get into all of it, but we want to look at some of it today. The first thing I want to show you is found in Jeremiah 1:4-10, the greatest passage as far as I am concerned in all the Bible on God calling men to preach and to pastor. He says this:

Jeremiah 1:4-10

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

Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.

But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.

Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.

See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.

Ladies and gentlemen, that is one of the greatest passages in all the Bible that shows you the power of the preaching of the Word of God. I do not know if you picked it up in this passage when I read or not, but we are not talking about winning people to Christ here. He did not make one reference to anybody getting saved or anybody becoming a Christian. No, no, no. He is talking about somebody as a preacher overthrowing nations. Overthrowing nations. And he does not overthrow nations by getting politically involved. Did you notice that? No moral majority here. No Christian coalition here. No bunch of Christian preachers and everybody getting around the bandwagon, getting politically motivated to get people out to vote. No, no, no. This passage is telling you that if you want to change the world, and God wants us to change the world, but if you are going to change the world, you have to do a number of things. The first thing you have to realize is that you are a child, and you have no power of your own, no education, no great aptitude, no great IQ. You are a child, and if God does not touch your lips with His hand and put His words in your mouth, you do not have anything to say. But when He does, when He does, when a man stands up in a pulpit with the power of God in his life and the Word of God in his hand, and God has touched his lips with the Word of God, look what takes place.

This is the job of a pastor. He says in Jeremiah 1:10:

The Pastor's Role

- 1.) To root out*
- 2.) To pull down*
- 3.) To destroy*

4.) *To throw down*

You have to have a negative message first before you can have a positive message. People have to understand what the problem is before they can fix it. He says, this man stands there, and the first thing he does is he roots out. You do that by preaching. When you root it out, then you pull it down. When you pull it down, you hold it up for what it is, and you destroy it. Then you throw it out, and then when you get that kind of ungodliness out of people's lives, then and only then can you build and you can plant.

I do not know why it is so tough. Anybody that ever went in the army, anybody ever went in the Marine Corps, anybody ever went in the military service knows that they follow a basic Bible 101 plan to make you a soldier. They tear you down. They root you out. They knock you down. They throw you down. When they take you down so far and tell you you are absolutely the worthless, most slime thing in the world, and they root out, tear down, pull down, throw down, and destroy everything about you, when they get you to that point, then they build you up the way they want you and send you forth as a United States Marine, as a US soldier, as a US sailor or US airman, whatever the case. Then they send you out. It is the only way that it works. That is the job of Jeremiah. God called Jeremiah to go to the nation of Israel, to root out, to pull down, to destroy, not to get hung up by who he was, but to realize that he was a child, just like Jesus said. He had to depend. God said, "Do not be afraid of them. Do not be afraid of their faces. I will be with you." When I give you and touch and put My words into your mouth, you speak to them My words. Brother, there is nothing like the power of the Word of God. I remember one time in the New Testament when they were coming to take Jesus, and a whole band of them was walking, led by Judas. Jesus just spoke some words out of His mouth, and they all fell back on the ground, the Bible says. That Word has power. The reason why the church does not have any power is because the church does not have the Word.

I will tell you something else. It shows up for the first time in the book of Jeremiah. You better get this down. It is the word "pastor." You find that in Jeremiah 2:8. There are nine times in your Bible where you find the word "pastor." Eight of them are in the book of Jeremiah. You find it eight times in the book of Jeremiah when it is only nine times in the Bible. Do you know why? Because Jeremiah was sent to be a pastor. You find out what kind of pastor he was versus the kind of pastor the other guys were. It is great. It shows you the two kinds of pastors you are going to have back in Israel right before God's judgment. If you want to put an inspirational slant on it, it shows you the two kinds of pastors you are going to have today, right before God's judgment falls. Because in Jeremiah 2:8-13, it shows you what the pastors did then and now.

Jeremiah 2:11 says that they changed God's glory. Jeremiah 2:13 says, God says, "My people have committed two evils." One, they have forsaken God. Two, they have taken the Word of God, and they have forsaken God and His Word like a bubbling brook. Then the Bible says that they have made their own cistern. Now, a cistern is something that holds water. God says, "I have two problems in the nation of Israel." One, they changed My glory. Two, they took My Word, and they made My Word, which was to them the water of life, and they made man-made wells, man-made cisterns that do not hold water. I am telling you, my friend, He is telling you very clearly and plainly that back then they denied God and His Word. Today, God's men, God's

pastors, have denied God and His Word. We have a bunch of Bibles running around today that just simply do not hold any water. They just simply do not work. They are man-made. They are man-devised, they are man-put-together. They have no power in them whatsoever. You begin to see as you come down through this great book from a practical standpoint, oh, how great.

Then we get to Jeremiah 6:16. He says:

Jeremiah 6:16

Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.

When I contemplated that we were going to start a church again, and we were going to look at what God would do, Mark May and I were studying the Bible together. Mark said, "You know what?" He gave me a verse, and he showed me this verse right here. I said, "You know what, Mark? That is a great verse." I cannot think of the day and age that we are living in and where we are at and what we are faced with. If you want to, churches call themselves everything today, and I am not against whatever you call it. I have never been very good at church names. I have told you that before. If somebody is going to really put their name to what the Bible says, you have to call it "In Your Face Baptist Church." That is more appropriate to where we are supposed to be at, but people would be offended at that. But when I saw that verse, I thought to myself, "We are living in a Laodicean church period. We are living in a time where pastors have denied the Word of God. They are trying to teach people at a man-made cistern that does not hold water. They are wondering why the people are dying, and people are messed up spiritually, and people are having all kinds of problems." I am telling you what, this world needs to get back to the old paths. That is what it needs. I thought to myself, "That is going to be the name of our church: Old Paths Baptist Church." A church that stands for the old way, a church that is not going to be very popular, a church that probably will not build a lot of people, but a church that will stand for the good way and walk therein in a place where if you believe what the Bible says, in a world of turmoil, in a world of uncertainty, in a world of topsy-turvy and mess, you can find rest for your soul. Ah, but they said, "We will not walk therein." They do not want any part of it. They did not want any part of it then, just like a lot of God's people do not want any part of it now. Do you know why? Because they were playing church back then, just like they are playing church now. They had their big buildings then, just like they have them now. They had all the notoriety and being somebody big and popular and famous and rich and having all the accolades of all the things. They wanted that over what they wanted the Word of God. Oh, it is so clear the parallel between these great books.

Then you get into Jeremiah 16:11-18. My, my, my, what a great chapter this is. What a great chapter this is on showing you the storyline of the history of the nation of Israel. In Jeremiah 16:13, God says, "I am going to cast you out of the land." He did that in 606 BC. Then you come on down through there, and he says a great story. He said, "I am going to cast you out of the land." That happens. But he said, "I am going to do the next thing. I am going to call for the fishers." Yes, "I am going to send fishers after you." Somebody said, "What is he talking about?"

Talking about the Church Age. Jesus said we are to be fishers of men during the Church Age. We are fishing for Jews. We are fishing for them with everybody else. We are winning them to Christ. So he says, "I am going to cast you out of the land." But then in a little while, "I am going to send the fishers after you, and I am going to send forth the fishermen that they win you to Christ." But then there comes a time when the fishing stops, and He sends the hunters after them. That is, my friend, the Tribulation period. The Church Age, He sends the fishers. Tribulation, He sends the hunters. Let me tell you something: the Antichrist will get them out of the rocks, get them out of the caves, get them out of the hole, just like the SS troops got them out of the Warsaw Ghetto during World War II. They will hunt them down. They will kill them. They will find them wherever they can. They will hunt them day and night. They will never rest. They will never stop until God comes in and intervenes. They will be hunted, and they will be hunted, and they will be hunted. But right now, we are still fishing for them. Right now, we are still fishing. Right now, we are to be fishers of men. God says, "I will cast them out of the land." But then he says, "I will send the fishers, and then I will send the hunters."

Jeremiah 17:9, probably one of the greatest verses in the Bible to show you and me how rotten we are. This is why people do not like the Bible. We like to think of ourselves as being good. We like to think of ourselves as being better than we are. We delude ourselves. We all follow the line where we think it is easy for us to read our own press releases and think how good we really are. Yet the Bible says in Jeremiah 17:9, a great verse, one of the greatest verses in all the Bible talking about your heart. For it says, my friend, that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. And who can know it? It asks the question. It says, "Your heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it?" Then the answer comes in Jeremiah 17:10, the next verse: "I the Lord search the hearts."

Jeremiah 17:9-10

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.

The Bible says in Hebrews 4:12 that the Word of God is a sharp two-edged sword. Do you know why men do not like the Word of God? Do you know why Christians want to get rid of the Bible? Do you know why preachers and pastors want to get rid of the Bible? Do you know why we are living in a day and age where you cannot find a Bible, where nobody has a Bible, where you could not find a Bible for the Word of God if your life depended on it? The same way it was back in Israel. They wanted to get rid of it back there because nobody likes the book that tells you your heart is dirty. We like to hear the good things. That is why when you go to Baptist churches today, that is why when you go to this, you go to that, all you hear are the good things. All you hear are the marshmallow things. You do not hear anybody preaching on sin anymore. You do not hear anybody preaching on religious apostasy anymore. It is all about the good things. Because we want to believe that we are basically good when the Bible says we are basically wicked and our heart is deceitful, and we deceive ourselves, and we want nothing to do with a book. We want nothing to do with a book that points out how rotten we really are when

we are striving so hard in the day and age that we live to be what we think we ought to be. We do not want to really deal with reality. Reality is the missing word in a 20th century, 21st century Christian's life. There is no reality. It is a dream world. It is a bunch of fun times where everybody just thinks that God is here and God is there when God is nowhere.

I have told you before, you cannot trust your feelings. That is why the Bible is so important. That is why it is so absolutely important. I am going to show you in a minute, this thing is going to even get more detailed here. You cannot trust your feelings. Your feelings will give you the wrong value system every time. Your feelings will give you the wrong concept every time. Why? Because your heart basically is wicked, and you need to have God's heart. The only way you can get God's heart is to get God's Word. When you get God's Word, then you have the absolute defining concepts. You may not like it. You may not want it. You may turn your back on it. But the bottom line is, you have the bottom line, and that is what we need in our lives. You will find that this great chapter goes along with Romans 8, how God searches the hearts, how the Spirit of God searches our hearts. That is why many times we do not get the prayers answered the way we should. That is why any time the things in our life do not go the way we want them to, we cannot understand why, because our heart is a long way from God's heart. We do not understand what God is doing because we are so out of tune and untouched with God, it is unbelievable.

Interesting story in the New Testament. I have seen it many, many times, and I have thought about it many, many times. I am not remembering for sure where it is at, but it is a story where Jesus was just a little child. He is going with His parents on a trip somewhere, and they are walking down the road, and He has His brothers and sisters along there, and they are going down there. Kids are probably out running around and doing all those things that kids do. The Bible goes and says that after two or three days, parents look around and say, "Where is Jesus at?" He was not anywhere to be found, and they finally find Him teaching somewhere in the temple. But do you know what the moral of that story is? His own family lost Him for two and three days and did not even know He was gone. Let me just tell you something: if Jesus' family, who walked with Him, fed Him, talked to Him, clothed Him, put Him in bed at night, if they can lose Him for two or three days and not even know He is missing, how much more can we as children of God think He is in our life when He slipped away a long time ago, and He is no longer walking with us, and we still think He is? I am telling you, there is only one thing that keeps you where you know God is still in your life. I am not talking about being saved and lost. I am not talking about after you are saved, being in fellowship and having His hand in your life. There is only one thing, and that is His heart versus your heart. You have to get the value system in your life where you understand what that Word says, and you make it part of your life and everything that you do.

Then the next thing, Jeremiah 18. What time I can spend on this, the great message, the great story found in Jeremiah 18:2, where it simply says, "Let us go down to the potter's house." That great picture, that great story of how you and I are just a piece of clay, like on a potter's wheel, and how the Master Craftsman takes a lump of clay that is worthless, that is shapeless, that is formless, and because of the majesty of the Master Craftsman's hands, He puts that lump of clay on a wheel. That wheel turns around, and He takes those hands and He applies it to that clay, and He takes that old ugly lump of clay and fashions it into a vessel fit for the Master's use. What a

picture of God's hand in your life and my life. That is what God wants to do. God wants to take you and me, and the Bible teaches all through the Word of God that clay is a picture of our human bodies, our frailties. Clay looks beautiful. Clay can be painted to look majestically, but clay is very fragile, and you drop it, and it will break and shatter in a million pieces.

When you see that story there, that story is a picture of God wanting to mold the nation of Israel. Absolutely. But it is also a picture of God wanting to mold your life and my life. It is a picture of you and me as just a piece of clay that God found out of this old earth, and God thought enough of you to put you on that potter's wheel, and God wants to mold you and make you fit for the Master's use. The Bible says in 2 Timothy 2:20-21, "in a great house," He says, "there are vessels of honor and there are vessels of dishonor." Romans 9:21 talks about vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor. The bottom line is this: God can only work with what we bring Him. If you totally give yourself to God and you say, "God, make me to use me the way You want me to be. Take my whole body," Romans 12:1-2, "and make me, complete me," then God will put you on that wheel, and God will mold you and make you exactly what He wants you to be, and you will be fit for His use. If you just give Him part of you, you just give Him some of you, or give Him none of you, He has nothing to work with.

Do you know what Christianity is? It is so simple. It is so basic. The elementary stories in the Bible make becoming a strong Christian so easy and understandable. It is simply this: God will make you whatever you will allow Him to make you to be. You do not become a strong Christian by just waking up some morning. You become a strong Christian because you allowed the hands of the Master to mold you and to make you the way He wanted to. You give Him everything. You do not hold anything back. You give Him everything. He has your finances. He has your job. He has your family. He has your wife. He has you. He has everything. There is nothing left that He has. Everything is on the potter's wheel, and God molds it and makes it, and I promise you, when He is done, it will be a lot better than if you would have just stayed as a lump of clay. God will mold you and make you. What a great story that is.

Then Jeremiah 22-28. Probably the greatest verse in all the Bible that deals with the deity of Christ. I want to read for you here. It says in Jeremiah 22:28-30:

Jeremiah 22:28-30

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?

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

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.

Do you know what? Most people who read that do not know what they are reading. That verse right there is the greatest verse in the Bible that proves that Jesus Christ had to be eternal, that He could not have a human father. That was the last great prophecy given concerning the nation of Israel. That prophecy simply says this: no man of earthly descent will ever sit on the throne of David ever again. God had it with the nation of Israel and this man, Jeconiah. Jeconiah means

"Jehovah will establish," but he is so wicked. He has turned his back on God's Word so much in the things of God. God despises him and hates him so much. He says he is a broken vessel, and Coniah, his name gets changed to Coniah. Coniah means "despised, broken idol." When God looks at him, He says, "I am going to bring an end to the nation of Israel. I am going to bring an end to them, and I am going to bring in the time to the Gentile." But before I do, I am going to give a prophecy. That prophecy is going to fix once and for all that no man from planet earth, no earthly human being, can ever sit on the throne of Jerusalem again. So He gives the prophecy about Coniah that no man of his seed will ever prosper sitting on the throne of Judah again. There never will be another human man that will sit on the throne of Jerusalem. The next one will be the Lord Jesus Christ. This signals the end of the kingdom of heaven. He says, "O earth, earth, earth," He wants the whole earth to know that there is not going to be another human Jewish king on the throne of Jerusalem, that Coniah, Jeconiah, now changed to Coniah, is going to be the last one, that God is ripping the kingdom of heaven from their hand, and He is going to take Jehoiachin, change his name to Coniah, "despised broken idol," and fix that no earthly man will ever sit on the throne again.

Now when you come down through the genealogies, you will find that Coniah is in the line of Joseph. So when you come to Matthew 1 and you find the kingly line that deals with the king, you will find Christ's genealogy coming through David as the son of David. But when you find His human line in Luke 3, it does not come down through Joseph; it comes down through Mary because of the fulfillment of this prophecy that His seed could not run down through Joseph because that line was cursed as far as the throne was concerned. It now has to come through His mother. Do you know why? Because Jesus did not have an earthly father. He is God's Son. God planted that seed in that virgin's womb, nurtured that seed, and brought forth the man child that was going to rule all nations. He has no earthly father. He has no human bloodline. Acts 20:28 says the blood that flowed through His veins was the blood of God, God's blood. That is why when John saw it back there in the Gospel of John, he said water and blood came out, and he testified to that. When you go back to 1 John, you find what the water and blood represents. He could not have had an earthly father. He was not of Coniah's seed. The difference between Him is He may be in the king's line, but He is not in the human line because He is the divine Son of God. Incredible prophecy.

Then in Jeremiah 23, you find the great contrast between a preacher with the Word of God and a man without the Word of God. He says in Jeremiah 23:20, watch this very carefully or at least listen to it if you are not going to turn to it: "the anger of the Lord shall not return until he have executed, until he have performed, the thoughts of his heart." That is what the Word of God is. That is all the Bible is. The Word of God is a recording of the thoughts of God's heart. That is what the Bible is. That is how you get the heart of God. That is how you overcome your deceitful, wicked heart. You let God's heart be your heart. You take what He loves versus what you want to love. You hate what He hates. I have said it many, many times, hundreds of times, that you take the Word of God and make what He loves what you love, what He hates, His opinions, your opinions, because the Bible says the Word of God are the thoughts of His heart. Now watch this. In the latter days, you and I, the Church Age, latter days, in the latter days, you and I, shall consider it. Consider what? The heart of God. Perfectly. Do you know why? Because

you have a perfect book that is a perfect record of the heart of God, that in the days that we live right now with so much turmoil, so much uncertainty, so many lies, so many false messages, so many false concepts, that you and I can have a book that contains the very thoughts of God: thoughts of God about His return, thoughts of God about His judgment, thoughts of God about His love, the thoughts of God about everything. In the latter days, the Church Age, we can consider it perfectly. His heart versus our heart.

Jeremiah 23:20

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.

Look at Jeremiah 23:25-26:

Jeremiah 23:25-26

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

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;

He just told you in Jeremiah 17 that the heart was deceitfully wicked above all things, desperately wicked. Do you know what the difference is today? The difference is clear, and it is real simple. You are either going to have a pastor that has God's heart, or you are going to have a pastor that has his own heart. It is as simple as that. You have God's people falling into two categories. It is not complicated. It is not hard. I told you before, this whole issue on the issue of all the translations, it is much more complicated than it is. You only have two. One is God's, one is the devil's. You only have two. There may be 25,000 translations out there. You have two Bibles. One of them is God's, the rest of them are the devil's. It is the same with man's heart. You either have a pastor that has the heart of God, or you have a pastor that follows his own heart. That is what it says. You either have a Bible that is the thoughts of God's heart that you can consider everything in the latter days perfectly, or you rely on somebody that gives you vain lies and prophesies lies who are prophesying after the deceit of their own hearts. How much simpler can I get?

If that was not enough, at the time we get to Jeremiah 36. Oh, this is my favorite chapter in Jeremiah, Jeremiah 36. Somewhere along Jeremiah 36, if you have a wide margin Bible, you do not have to write it in now, but put it in your brain to write this in. This is one of the great monkey wrench chapters in all of the Bible. The Bible is a toolbox. Do you know that? That is what it is. The Bible says you and I are to be a workman. When you and I are to be a workman, you have to be a workman unless you have tools. The Bible is your toolbox. I have found this to be true in the 30-some years that I have studied the Bible. I have found that there are a number of tools in the toolbox. But there is one tool that is in here many more times than anything else, and that is a monkey wrench. My expression is simply this: God has a monkey wrench that will offend any nut in this world. God is famous for throwing monkey wrenches in the middle of theological organizations. I am telling you, that is what I love about the Bible, because I heard so

much growing up as a young man. What this chapter deals with is one of the greatest controversies, if not the controversy, in Christianity today. That controversy is over the original manuscripts.

How many times I have heard growing up, somebody talk about the fact, "Well now, correct my Bible by saying, 'Well, the original manuscripts do not say that.'" How many times I have heard preachers say, "We believe the Bible is the absolute infallible Word of God." When you ask them, they say, "Well, we believe that in the original autographs." Let me just say this to you. First of all, nobody has ever had the original autographs. The word "Bible" means "book." There was never a time in the history of the world where the original autographs were ever in one book. So what you are saying then to me, Dr. Fine, Dr. Howard, Dr. Fine, is that the book that you are talking about, the Bible, which contained the original manuscript, never existed. No one has ever read it. It has never been found anywhere on planet earth, right? Do you think that when Paul wrote the New Testament, he had the original book of Moses? Now here is the deal. In this thing of Bible Christianity, we are into mysticism. We get on the Roman Catholic Church because the priest gets up there and says, "Fee, fi, fo, fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman," and turns the water and wine into blood and bread. But the same Baptist scholars get up, and they will talk about the mystical originals, which they have, that they look into that nobody has ever seen to tell you what the Bible means.

Jeremiah 36 is the monkey wrench that fits that. Let me just make a blanket statement. God cares nothing, absolutely nothing, about the original manuscripts. There is not one verse in the Bible anywhere that says the original manuscripts are inspired. The Bible says, "All scripture is given by inspiration." Certainly, you are not so dumb to think that the original manuscripts were scripture. They were not. There is not any place in the Bible anywhere that God puts any emphasis, even mentions the originals, other than here. When He mentions it here, He mentions it to show you how little He cares about it. Because look at the problem you have, the originals. Oh, how many times I have heard it. "Well, the originals." How many times those young boys coming out of Bible colleges bought into that hook, line, and sinker. "Well, you have to have the originals, the originals." Every new translation on the market says, "Compared with the originals," which nobody has ever seen.

Now here is what you have. This is God's monkey wrench, my favorite chapter. I call this the story of Dr. Jehudi and the originals. In Jeremiah 36:1-4, God said to Jeremiah, "Get a piece of paper and write down My words." Jeremiah faithfully writes down the words of God as God gave them to Jeremiah. I have already told you that Israel hated Jeremiah, and they hated God, and they hated God's Word. Watch the parallels. So Dr. Jehudi, PhD Bible scholar of the great Jerusalem Conservatory of great understanding, Dr. Jehudi down there in Jeremiah 36:23-24, he gets a copy of Jeremiah, and he says, "Yes, the words of God." The Bible says that he takes a penknife and cuts out what he does not like and takes what he cuts out and throws it into the fire. The only problem is, he did not like any of it. By the time he was done with it, there was not any book left. There goes the first set of originals out of Jeremiah. So when a man tells you that the book of Jeremiah and your new translation, or he studied the originals, the originals went in the fire with one of his brethren, Dr. Jehudi.

Now let us continue on as the plot thickens. In Jeremiah 36:32, Jeremiah takes another roll in the book, and he writes another set of originals of Jeremiah. But, oh my goodness, what has happened here? It clearly tells you this set of originals does not match the last set of originals. It says it has "many like words." It is not the same. Do you know why it is not the same? Because God did not give a flip about the originals. Never intended anybody to have them. Never held them up as some holy thing. God gave you a book that has exactly what He wants you to have and everything He said translated in the language of the day, the universal language of the world, exactly the way God wants you to have it. The originals do not ever figure into it. Now you have a second set. Now you have a second set, but they do not match. Oh, now what do we have? Jeremiah 51:60-61. The second set gets thrown in the river. Now we get a third set. So when somebody comes to talk about the originals, the original riddle, God has already showed you that the book of Jeremiah has three sets of originals that we know about. The first two do not even match this myth about the mystical, magical originals of God being so important. It is nothing but a farce. The great monkey wrench is, my friend, God does not want you worried about some dead original someplace held over there and held up in some mystical, magical way in some formula. God gave you a book in the language of the people that has the very pattern and the hearts and the thoughts of God's heart in it, and do not change it one bit. It is just the way God wants you to have it.

Then we move into Jeremiah 46-52, and we come into the last section here. This is the Gentiles' fate. In Jeremiah 46-52, we see the enemies of Israel being judged by God. Jeremiah 46 is Egypt. Jeremiah 47 is the Philistines. Jeremiah 48 is Moab. Jeremiah 49 is the Ammonites. Jeremiah 50, 51, and 52 are Babylon, Assyria, and the Chaldeans. The Bible says:

Jeremiah 51:60-61

So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon, even all these words that are written against Babylon.

And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, When thou comest to Babylon, and shalt see, and shalt read all these words;

He closes out the book on the judgment of the Gentile nations who go against His people, showing you clearly that God is going to protect the nation of Israel, and God is going to restore them.

But I have one last thing I want to say. We have talked about pastors today. We talked about pastors that had the heart of God versus pastors who preached their own heart. We talked about pastors that changed God's glory and hewed out cisterns that did not hold any water versus the man that gave you the Word of God. We have made the parallels and showed you how that is the way the leaders were in Israel, and that is the way the leaders are today. But the last thing I want to give you today is found in Jeremiah 48:10. This is probably the greatest verse given to any man that ever preaches the Word of God. This is probably the greatest verse, the greatest commission we saw in Jeremiah 1, how Jeremiah was told to root up, tear down, pull down, throw down, and then build and plant. Well, here is what you do. When you get into the pulpit to preach, here is what you do. When you open up the Word of God, here is what you have in mind,

because here is what he says. This is the greatest condemnation on 20th century preachers and pastors the world has ever seen. It will come to pass at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It says:

Jeremiah 48:10

Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood.

The Bible says the Word of God is like a sharp two-edged sword. That is how you use it. When you step into the pulpit and you preach the Word of God, you do not hold back your sword. You preach the Word of God. You give them the truth of God. You give it to them just the way God said to give it to them. You give it just the way Jeremiah did. You will not be popular. They will lie about you. They will connive everything in the world to get rid of you. But when God has His hand on you, and God touches your mouth and gives you the words to say, just simply preach the words that He gives you. Do not ever, do not ever in any situation, hold back your sword from blood.

That does not mean you get up and act like an idiot all the time and shoot everybody to the ground. There are ways that you do it. But the bottom line is, learn how to use truth and use it rightly. You do not flaunt your knowledge. Do not get up to the place where you want to show everybody how smart you are by making somebody else look bad. You learn how to use the knowledge that you have. But there is one thought in your heart, one thought in your mind. I do not care if it is Thursday night Bible study. I do not care if it is preaching on Sunday morning. I do not care if it is teaching guys in Joplin. I do not care if it is working with people one-on-one. You never shortcut what the Word of God says. You never sugarcoat its point. You always allow the Word of God to do what God intended the Word of God to do, and that is to draw blood. You draw blood with it. You make people go home and say, "Ouch, that hurts. I am going to think about it."

I do not do you any good, and I love you all. There is nobody in this world who loves you more than I do. Nobody. There is not a pastor in this world that loves people more than I love my people. I would do anything in the world for you. But because I love you, because I would do anything in the world for you, I do not do you any good by just always telling you how nice you are. The issues are the issues, and we have to deal with it because it is by dealing with them that we grow. You may not like everything I say. It may hurt you. You may get mad about it. There have been people in my life that I hurt preaching one time, and they never came back again. It was not because I am not a nice guy, because I am a nice guy. It was not because I do not have a congenial personality. I am the most congenial person in my life. I love everything and everybody. I love birds, bees, dogs, cats. I am not anybody. It was because of the truth of this book that you just do not like what God says, and you do not have enough nerve to go out, rip your clothes off at night in the full moon, get naked, throw it out there, and scream at God, "You are going to take it on poor little me!" when all I am doing is preaching what the book says.

That is what my job is. I am a prophet. If you are ever going to take a stand for God, you are going to become one. You are not a prophet where you are going to go out and split the Red Sea. You are not a prophet where you are going to go out and call fire down from heaven. You are not

that kind of a prophet. You have a book that contains the prophecies, and you preach those prophecies. But when you open up the book, everything in the back of your mind, everything in your heart, everything you say is designed for a purpose: to make somebody think about God, look at God, consider who they are, and understand that in this whole world, everything that I am doing, every place I am going, all the things I am thinking about are going to mean absolutely nothing when it comes to God, and get their focus back. Poor Israel needed their focus back, and certainly the church and God's people need it back today, and that is on God and the Word of God. That is our job in everything that we do.

You would not think that having a Halloween party for kids would be drawing blood. I mean, we are not going to stand out there and pass out tracts, beat people over the head, and have Brother Cook over here make some really hot chili, and that guy would save guys eating over there saying, "Hot, is not it hot? Well, where do you go to hell, buddy? You think that chili is hot?" That is not what we are all about. That will not work. That is not what I mean by holding back your sword from blood. I do not mean over there, "Hey, smoke coming out of your ears. Hey, let me tell you something. What is it going to be like when you are in hell, buddy?" You use wisdom, you use knowledge, you temper all that with a love for people, but that love for people does not cancel out the truth of the Word of God, and you learn how to take the truth and present it in a way that people say, "Yeah, you are right."

Let me tell you something. You give me anybody one-on-one, and I will stick them so many times with the Word of God that they will bleed like a stuck pig, and you give me the right person, and they will walk out of here, and they will feel good about it. Do you know why? Because you have to learn how to use that book. It is not a matter. Some guys think all you do is get up, scream, yell, jump down, throw things around a place, and tell everybody they are dying and going to hell, and, "Boy, you did a great job." Let me tell you, that does not work for everybody, and there is a time for it, and there is a time not for it. There is a time when you have to be able to take the Word of God. The Bible said that the Word of God is a sharp two-edged sword. It has two edges to it. Yes, I will give it to you. The one side, the one edge, is like a cavalry saber where you just slash and cut, and you just take that thing and just slash and cut and slash and cut. The other side is like a fine surgeon's scalpel, and you have to go in, and you have to cut right on the dotted line. You have to cut that thing right perfectly. There is no margin for error. There is no error in it whatsoever. You have to do it right where it needs to be done. Right, finely cut it, define it, lay it out, and that is what you have to do, and that is the ability of a young man or a young lady to be able to use the Word of God. That is what I call when I talk about a working knowledge of the Word of God.

Jeremiah, one of the greatest books in the Bible that shows Israel and why they got the judgment of God, but at the same time, shows us why we have the judgment of God coming. It is the same parallel on both ends. We are living, inspirationally, the time that Jeremiah lived, a time when Christianity has fallen apart, just like Israel fell apart, a time when they have forsaken everything about God, a time when they have a form of godliness but denied the power thereof, and you and I have to learn how to use the Word of God. We have to learn how to discern, to use the Bible to touch people's lives. We have to love people, we have to be open to people, we have to listen to

people, we have to put up with things that people do, but the bottom line is, you never, never draw back your sword from blood. That is your job. You destroy, you tear down, you root up, and then you plant and you build. Building people's lives is what it is all about. Let us pray.