

## 2102 - AMEND YOUR WAYS - Jer 7:1-4

PRELIMS. Good King Josiah was now dead. Wicked Jehoiakim began to reign. Israel, the northern Kingdom of the dived Covenant People, had **already** been **removed** by **Assyria** in **judgment** (and as **prophesied!**) Author of [2 Kin 7:23] ...*the LORD removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day.*

### **JEREMIAH'S ROLE AS PROPHET**

Jer was raised up by God to **warn/advise** Judah of God's impending judgment - even although Jer was told they would **ignore** his message [27] - and that they would even **fight against you but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you** [1:19]! True prophets received their messages **from** God. They were **sent** by God!

**APP** The **Church** is God's 'sent' messenger today to the nations to speak **His Words** to the 'powers that be'! The Church has God's **written word** in the Holy Scriptures **from which** they are to speak! Jesus: *I have given them the words that You gave Me* [John 17:6].

Jer was told to deliver his message *in the gate of the Lord's house* [2]. Jer was **banned** from entering the Temple - because they did not like his messages! So he had to stand outside! **APP** God's servants are very often '**banned**' from stating God's Word in **public places**! So we must **devise novel** ways of getting the Word across to the people! The internet/social media are still open to us, we must maximise!

God wanted his **worshipping people**, more than the general public to hear His Word! *you men of Judah who enter these gates to worship the Lord* [2]. This was because God's people are the **means** God uses to change the world. They are the **salt of the earth**...the **light of the world**. Xns must be alert/aware of opportunities to spread the Word!

### **GOD'S COMPLAINT**

**1. They were trusting in a False Hope!** *Do not trust in these deceptive words* [4a]. **What were** these deceptive words? *This is the Temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple the Lord* [4]. The temple **building** was **sacrosanct**! As long as they **worshipped**

in **that** temple, they believed God would always protect and love them! Their trust was in their **external relationship** with God. There was no **spiritual affinity** with God - they did **not know Him!** They had **no** personally experience of God. It was a legalistic **tradition!**  
**APP** The same can happen re a **denomination!** 'This church'!!

**2. Sins re Social Care & Justice!** *execute **justice**...do not oppress the **sojourner**, the **fatherless**, or the **widow**, or shed **innocent blood** in this place...do not go after **other gods** [6]. 'Do not make life difficult for oppressed people'! Its a amazing how often the prophets condemned Israel/Judah for their **failing to care** for the **needy!** Taking **advantage** of those in a **weak position!** Not **protecting** the **vulnerable!** It is easy to **exploit innocenc/ignorance!** Governments!*

How many of us consider having clean drinking water piped into our homes a **luxury!** Yet it is in **Calcutta!** 50% of the Third World lack clean drinking water, and 75% of them have **no sanitary facilities!** With our advances in transport and technology, as a nation, have we not a **global responsibility** to help impoverished nations?

We might think social responsibility is **not spiritual!** Very wrong! Listen to the most spiritual of Jesus' disciples: *But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, **how does God's love abide in him?** Little children, let us not love in word or talk but **in deed** and in truth [1John 3:17].* How spiritual is that? And the Apostle James says the exact same!

As usual, **Jesus** is the **perfect example** to us. He had *no place to lay His head!!* He **never complained!** 'He taught from a borrowed **boat**, rode into Jerusalem in a borrowed **donkey**, spent His last evening in a borrowed **room**, and was buried in a borrowed **tomb!**' Vital we do!

**3. They Were Rationalistic and Humanistic!** They walked in their **own counsels** and the stubbornness of **their evil hearts** [24] They cooperated with **public opinion** and the practises/culture of the day! They **disagreed** God's Word. God thru Jer said: *walk in all the way that I command you, that it may **be well** with you. But they did not obey or incline their ear [23,24]* It was **not only** swearing, stealing and murder, and adultery, but '**simple**' things like **making cakes** - but it was for the **queen of heaven** [9,18]! One of the **other false**

**gods** of the nations round about! It was nothing, **everyone did it** for it was just a **local celebration!** They **blended in** to the pagan culture - **without realising** they were offending God, like many Xns today!

**4. They Led a Double Life!** *Will you steal, murder, commit adultery ... and **then** come and stand before Me in **this** house which is called by My name...**only to go on doing** all these abominations?* [9,10] It would seem that they may have indicated they would stop returning to their sinful ways - but no, they **continued as usual!**

It is disappointing how many professing Xns live a double life! One foot in the church and one foot in the world. This is what James calls being **double-minded-** He says that such a person is **unstable!**[J 1:8]. Happy in the Church but equally or even more happy in the world!

We need to be **single-minded** - we can only have **one God!** We can have more than one **interest** and **enjoyment** - but **only one God** who has **priority/preference/supremacy** over **all things!** **Chiefest joy!**

## **THE IMPENDING JUDGMENT**

Jed was told to **stop praying!** *As for you, **do not pray** for this people, or lift up a **cry** or **prayer** for them, and do **not intercede** with Me, for I will **not hear** you* [16] That had **greater consequences** than the common Israelite thought it had! **APP** They, like our generation would not be too upset about that! Many today would not be alarmed in any way if the church stopped praying for the nation!

The **judgment:** *because you have done all these things, declares the Lord ...**I will do** to the house that is called by My name and in which you trust...**as I did to Shiloh. I will cast you out of My sight*** [13-15]. It was **not removal** to Babylon (yet), but rather **destruction!** That's what happened to **Shiloh** - it **no longer** was the **sacred** place it was. It was the great place where Samuel met with the prophets! A place where God was. **But...** *they provoked Him to anger...He was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel: So that He forsook the **tabernacle of Shiloh**, the tent which He placed among men; And delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the **enemy's** hand* [Psa 78:58-62]. **Imagine!** God giving His people over to the enemy because of their disobedience! Later on *I will make this house like*

*Shiloh, and I will make this city a curse for all the nations of the earth [26:6]. As with others, Amos: do not seek Bethel, and do not enter into Gilgal or cross over to Beersheba [Amos 5:5] - Bethel, Gilgal, Beersheba were great places where God met His people - but now the **glory has departed APP** Today re **churches/denominations!***

## **The CALL to REPENTANCE**

***Amend your ways and your deeds** - Your lifestyles and practises!  
Now **why** no mention of **faith**? Don't they need faith? Yes, of course but they **are** the **Covenant** people who publicly **professed** faith - **they said** they had faith- and when someone professes faith and does not live up to the standard, he is called to **repent** - and that is what Isaiah/Jeremiah etc did - they called the Covenant people to **repent!***

*Jer **adds** an important word **truly** amend your ways...**truly** execute justice [5]. He **detects** that there is not the **genuine** faith and repentance there! He knows we must get to the **root** of our sins - dealing with the **symptoms** does not heal, we must go to the **causes!** They were **not** changed in **heart!** Jer later: *the **heart** is deceitful above all things and **desperately wicked!*** Jer already said to Israel: *her treacherous sister Judah did not return to Me with her **whole** heart, but in **pretense** [3:10] all the house of Israel is **UNcircumcised in heart** [9:26c] Prophet Hosea said: *They do **not** cry to Me **from the heart** but they wail upon their beds; for grain and wine they gash themselves [Hos 7:14] For **material** things they cry **earnestly!*****

**Why**, if Jer was told **not to pray** was He commanded to call Judah to repent? Because there was **still hope** for them **IF** they repented! And, the knowledge that Jer **had stopped praying** for them may have **shocked** them into **realising** the actual state of things! God uses **means!** \*\*The **Overall** messages of Jer, as it is for all of us, whether in **politics/business/family/private** life is: 1. **Learn the lessons of History!** *Go now to My place that was in **Shiloh** ...see what I did to it because of the **evil** of My people Israel[12]!* 2. The **heart** is vital.

Paul **contrasted** unbelievers with himself and the Cors by saying *but...God...has shone in our **hearts** to give the **light** of the **knowledge** of the glory of God in the **face of Jesus Christ** [2C4:6]* Has Christ changed your **heart**? Then pray that He will!