

STRENGTHENING the HANDS of EVILDOERS

Jeremiah 23:9-29

"But if they had stood in My counsel and had caused My people to hear My Words, then they would have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their doings." Jeremiah 23:22

At a recent meeting of military veterans, one person asked, how, with all the Transformation prayer rallies, Angus Buchan Mighty Mens' Conferences and prayer events, could things in our country have continued to deteriorate so badly?

The Crisis That Confronts Us

Just how did we descend to such a disastrous situation that litter, pollution, deforestation and degenerate Hollywood entertainment could be considered normal? That corruption could be endemic, dysfunctional families the norm, most state schools failing, student riots, rampant rhino poaching, canned lion hunting, legalised abortion, "gay pride" parades, legalised perversion, transgenderism and gender fluidity disrupting sports and infiltrating schools and so-called homosexual "weddings"! How could perverts be called pastors? How could Europe so abandon its Christian heritage that it could be hijacked by secular humanism and endangered by an Islamic invasion? How could South Africa have been hijacked by corrupt criminals who have looted this country into power failures, water shortages and violent crime?

Wickedness Within the Church

*"My heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake. I am like a drunken man and like a man whom wine has overcome, because of the Lord and because of His holy Words. For **the land is full of adulterers**; for because of a curse **the land mourns**. The pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up. Their course of life is evil and their might is not right. **'For both prophet and priest are profane**; Yes, in My house I have found their wickedness,' says the Lord."* Jeremiah 23:9-11

Recognise the Tactics of satan

We need to recognise the tactics of the enemy: *corrupt and conquer* and *confuse, divide and conquer*. We need to learn the lessons of history, recognise the tactics and strategies of satan, as well as the disastrous consequences of idolatry and immorality, compromise and cowardice, passivity and neutrality, neglect of God's Word and silence in the face of evil.

Wickedness and Weakness

God's Word makes it clear that it is not primarily the wickedness of the wicked, but the weakness, compromise and cowardice of religious leaders who purport to speak in God's Name that has led to the disastrous situation that confronts us today.

Strengthening the Hands of Evildoers

*"Therefore their way shall be to them like **slippery ways**; in the **darkness** they shall be driven on and fall in them; for I will bring **disaster** on them, the year of their punishment,' says the Lord. 'And I have seen **folly** in the prophets of Samaria: They prophesied by Baal and cause My people Israel to err. Also I have seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem: **They commit adultery and walk in lies; they also strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns back from his wickedness**. All of them are like Sodom to Me and her inhabitants like Gomorrah."*

Jeremiah 23:12-14

Causing God's People to Err

We can see the slippery ways of those who walk in lies, strengthening the hand of evildoers and causing God's people to err. Foundational Biblical doctrines are undermined by the teaching of

Evolution, even in theological seminaries. Even institutions which claim to be Christian Universities, teach Evolution and the tenants of secular humanism. Antinomianism, hostility to God's Law, further erodes the foundations of the Church. Many are distracted by Rapture fever, date setting, end times obsessions. As a result, many of our churches have become corrupted by *cheap grace* and *easy believism*. By failing to Evangelise and educate, many churches have become more like social clubs, failing to be salt and light, people-pleasers, sinner-friendly, non-confrontational and comfortable in compromise with the world. Many people live in comfortable homes, travel in comfortable cars, to air conditioned shopping malls and to comfortable congregations, to hear comfortable messages. As Francis Schaefer observed: *"The gospel of personal peace and affluence!"*

Promoting Child Sacrifice

Prominent church leaders such as Bishop Desmond Tutu have gone on record promoting the largest abortion provider in South Africa: Marie Stopes Clinics. We have seen the large pull out banner at the Marie Stopes Abortuary in Bree Street, Cape Town, with a picture of Bishop Tutu and his quote enthusiastically endorsing the work of this, the largest provider of abortion in the country! The May 2019 edition of JOY! Magazine published a full-page article entitled: *"Mmusi Maimane's Stance on Christian Values."* In this interview Errol Naidoo described the DA leader as: *"An outspoken Christian with pastoral training and a history in ministry."* No mention of the pro-LGBTQ GayGB agenda, Pink Inquisition, pro-abortion policies of the DA in that article! Judas could have also been described as *"an apostle of Christ, chosen to be Treasurer of the Twelve!"* but that would be misleading.

The Fruit of Failure

One can see the fruit of failure: *"They also strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns back from his wickedness..."* The fruit of a false prophet is that people fail to repent from their wickedness. Most Christians in South Africa voted for pro-abortion, pro-GayGB policies of the DANC, COPELESS, GOOD FOR NOTHING political parties. For more people attend Angus Buchan's *Mighty Mens Conferences* and prayer rallies than vote pro-life!

Worthless Words

"Therefore thus says the Lord of Hosts concerning the prophets: 'Behold, I will feed them with wormwood and make them drink the water of gall; for from the prophets of Jerusalem profaneness has gone out into all the land.' Thus says the Lord of Hosts: 'Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless; they speak a vision of their own heart, not from the mouth of the Lord. They continually say to those who despise Me, the Lord has said, 'You shall have peace'; and to everyone who walks according to the dictates of his own heart, they say, 'No evil shall come upon you.'" Jeremiah 23:15-17

False Prophets Encourage the Immoral and Idolaters

Profaneness, drunkenness, blasphemy, immorality and idolatry have spread throughout the land. Yet how many religious leaders continually offer false security and say to those who despise the Lord: *"The Lord has said you shall have peace and to everyone who walks according to the dictate of his own heart, they say, no evil shall come upon you!"* A true servant of God comforts the afflicted and afflicts the comfortable. People-pleasers make traitors. You cannot please God and man at the same time. We need to fear God, not man!

God's Servants Must Instruct, Correct and Rebuke

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17. For the servant of God to be thoroughly equipped for every good work, they need to be taught doctrine, reproof, corrected and instructed in righteousness.

Our Solemn Duty Before Almighty God

"I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His Kingdom: Preach the Word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching." 2 Timothy 4:1-2. In the presence of God and our Lord Jesus Christ who will judge the living and the dead, we are commanded to preach the Word of God. The whole counsel of God. We need to be prepared, in season and out of season, whether well received or opposed, whether popular or politically incorrect, it is the duty of a servant of God to convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

Itching Ears

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers and they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables. But you, be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an Evangelist, fulfil your ministry." 2 Timothy 4:3-5. There is a pervasive intolerance for sound Biblical teaching. Most choose fables over fact, myths instead of missions, ear-tickling over eye-opening, trivialities over truth, Hollywood instead of Holiness, Judaism instead of Justice, Evolutionism instead of Creation, politically correct instead of Biblically faithful, friendship with the world instead of faithfulness to God's Word, approval of man instead of approval from God.

Who Has Stood in the Counsel of the Lord?

The Word of the Lord comes to us today: ***"For who has stood in the counsel of the Lord and has perceived and heard His Word? Who has marked His Word and heard it?"*** Jeremiah 23:18. Have you stood attentive in the counsel of the Lord? Have you studied God's Word, clearly heard it, perceived its significance and marked it? Have you read through every Book, chapter and verse of the Bible? How can you know the will of God until you have studied the Word of God?

God Will Bring Judgement

"Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord has gone forth in fury - a violent whirlwind! It will fall violently on the head of the wicked. The anger of the Lord will not turn back until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart. In the latter days you will understand it perfectly." Jeremiah 23:19-20. God is a Holy God. He is a God of Justice and Truth. He cannot bless that which is built upon lies, theft, deceit and perversion.

The Word of God is Powerful

"For the Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Hebrews 4:12

The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom

We dare not censor God's Word and lie to people in order to receive their approval. It is not loving to fail to warn people of imminent danger. God is a holy God. His Judgment will inevitably fall. Those who fail to repent will experience His wrath. What we sow is what we shall reap. Those who violate God's Laws and pervert His Word will experience His wrath in Judgment.

Presumption is Not Faith

"I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran. I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in My counsel and had caused My people to hear My Words, then they would have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their doings." Jeremiah 23:21-22. It is a serious sin to claim to have 'a Word from God', to claim to speak for God and yet to effectively encourage people in the sinful desires of their own hearts. To fail to faithfully proclaim the Law of God is a serious sin.

They Prophecy Lies in My Name

"Am I a God near at hand,' says the Lord, 'and not a God afar off? Can anyone hide himself in secret places, so I shall not see him?' says the Lord; 'do I not fill Heaven and earth?' says the Lord. 'I have heard what the prophets have said, **who prophecy lies in My Name**, saying, 'I have dreamed, I have dreamed!' How long will this be in the heart of the prophets who prophecy lies? Indeed they are prophets of **the deceit of their own heart**, who try to make My people forget My Name by their dreams which everyone tells his neighbour, as their fathers forgot My Name for Baal. 'The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream; and **he who has My Word, let him speak My Word faithfully**. What is the chaff to the wheat?' says the Lord. **'Is not My Word like a fire?'** says the Lord, **'and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?'**" Jeremiah 23:23-29. Why give people poisoned popcorn when there is milk and meat of the Word of God? Why wield styrofoam when God's Word provides sharp steel for this spiritual world war of worldviews?

Back to the Bible for Reformation and Revival

Many are feeding God's people sweetened sawdust and straw, instead of the Bread of Life. What is chaff to wheat? God's Word is like a fire and it is like a hammer that breaks the rocks in pieces. We need to get back to the Bible. We need to work for Biblical Reformation and pray for Spiritual Revival. We need to invest in Christian education, Christian radio stations, Christian literature, Christian books and Christian magazines. We need to utilise social media and produce Christian films, supporting ministries that are faithful to the Word of God and effective in fulfilling the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ. **"Cursed is he who does the work of the Lord deceitfully and cursed is he who keeps back his sword from blood."** Jeremiah 48:10

Where Your Loyalty is Proved

As Reformer Dr. Martin Luther declared: *"If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition, every portion of the Truth of God, except precisely that point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, then I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Him. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved; and to be steady on all the battlefield besides is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point."*

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all, to stand." Ephesians 6:10-13

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