

Journey through Jeremiah Part 26 Lying Prophets, Good and Bad Figs

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney, Th.D. – Wednesday, June 07, 2017

† Jeremiah 23:1-20, Jeremiah 24:1-10

We pick back up tonight where we left off in our last study, by looking at the prophecy of the lying prophets. Last week we covered the first 20 verses and we talked about the scattering pastors and we began into the lying prophets which starts in verse 9 of this chapter. In verse 9 Jeremiah stated that his heart was broken because of the prophets and his bones shake. He said he was like a drunk man whom wind hath overcome, because of the holiness of the LORD. Then in verse 11 the LORD said “both prophet and priest are profane; yea in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the LORD.”

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

God said he wasn't the one that sent these false prophets. He didn't send them, yet they ran to the people quickly to declare that they had received the Word from the LORD and then they spouted their false claims. False prophets always try to get their claims out there first. It makes it appear that they are on top of things and doing their job. That is one reason you see so many false prophets dealing in the end of times prophecy and making predictions of when the LORD will return. Harold Camping made a career out of being a false prophet, claiming God had shown him when the rapture of the Church would happen, first in 1994 and then in 2011, of course neither prediction was right. So, God didn't tell him these things after all... Look, if any man comes telling you that God has revealed to them something that is not revealed in the Bible, you better put a great distance between yourself and that man. If it does not align with Scripture then it's fake. Fake news, not Good news.

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

They did not take his counsel from the LORD like Jeremiah did, because if they had, they would have been warning people to turn from their sin and wickedness before it is too late.

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

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

Here the LORD is saying: Do you think I can't see what you are doing? Am I not a God at hand and not far off? Do you think I'm off on vacation somewhere? Do you think you can hide from me and I won't be able to see you? You better think again, because I am Omniscient, and Omnipresent (all knowing and everywhere all at once).

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

The LORD used to work in the hearts of his preachers by revealing things in their dreams. If you remember, both Joseph and Daniel was given the gift of interpreting dreams. Those were dreams God had given men to reveal a great truth. But these false prophets were claiming they had dreams from God but they were making it up.

(26) How long shall *this* be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, *they* are prophets of the deceit of their own heart; (27) Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal. (28) The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What *is* the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD.

These false prophets telling their fake dreams as if they were from God, has caused the people to believe these lies and they have gone after Baal and forsook the God of Heaven. The LORD is saying, “Okay, these prophets that are dreaming these so-called prophetic dreams, let them tell these dreams and let them suffer of their own deceit. But the true prophet, that prophesies the true Word of God, let him speak faithfully and I will separate the real from the fake like separating the chaff from the wheat.

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

Another great and powerful verse of Scripture. The LORD says that his “word is like as fire and a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces.” The fire represents the swiftness and purification, the hammer represents the powerful force behind it. The Hebrew writer puts it in a way that is easy to understand: **Hebrews 4:12: For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.**

(30) Therefore, behold, I *am* against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour. (31) Behold, I *am* against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. (32) Behold, I *am* against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD.

The LORD is against these false prophets concerning everything that they have done:

1. **Steal my words every one from his neighbor** – This is most likely means that they took some of the words from the true prophets and intermingled them with their false prophecies and used them to declare that they had received it from the LORD. – Friends, watch out for those people that claim “God told me this, and God told me that.” If it's not in the Word of God then God didn't tell it to them.
2. **Use their tongues, and say, He saith** – Again, these false prophets claiming that God told them the things they are prophesying about.
3. **Prophecy false dreams, tell them, and cause people to err** – That is the worse part about false prophets, they tell lies that cause people to believe them which causes the people to sin.

(33) And when this people, or the prophet, or a priest, shall ask thee, saying, What *is* the burden of the LORD? thou shalt then say unto them, What burden? I will even forsake you, saith the LORD. (34) And as for the prophet, and the priest, and the people, that shall say, The burden of the LORD, I will even punish that man and his house.

Then the LORD instructs Jeremiah. When these false prophets, the people that have believed their lies, the false priests, come around mocking him and asking him “what is the burden of the LORD?,” just say to them “What burden?”

You see, Jeremiah has been preaching and prophesying the real Word of the LORD all along, but the people refused to listen to his message because it was a “burden” to them, so instead, they clung to the message of the false prophets.

That word “burden” was also used in [Isaiah 13:1](#) [The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see](#). So, it had become the norm for the people to refer to the prophet’s message as a “burden.” They were coming to Jeremiah in a mocking way and saying things such as “*what’s this burden you are preaching about?*” It was like people today saying “there goes the preacher again, always preaching gloom and doom and hellfire.”

The LORD told Jeremiah to reply back “[what burden?](#)” You see, they had their chances but now it’s too late. They should have listened at the beginning. But instead, God tells Jeremiah to say: “[I will even forsake you, saith the LORD.](#)”

God will severely punish those that mock His Word. It says in verse 34: [I will even punish that man and his house](#). Listen, one thing you never want to do is mock the Word of God. God will punish those that do, not only will he punish you but it says here the house will be punished as well. So, that means your family will be punished for your behavior.

[\(35\) Thus shall ye say every one to his neighbour, and every one to his brother, What hath the LORD answered? and, What hath the LORD spoken? \(36\) And the burden of the LORD shall ye mention no more: for every man’s word shall be his burden; for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the LORD of hosts our God. \(37\) Thus shalt thou say to the prophet, What hath the LORD answered thee? and, What hath the LORD spoken?](#)

The LORD tells them that from now on they will address the Prophet Jeremiah the right way. They will show the respect that he deserves because he is His messenger. If they want to know what the LORD has to say they must come Jeremiah and ask it the right way and stop the sarcastic comments and way of asking.

[\(38\) But since ye say, The burden of the LORD; therefore thus saith the LORD; Because ye say this word, The burden of the LORD, and I have sent unto you, saying, Ye shall not say, The burden of the LORD; \(39\) Therefore, behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, and cast you out of my presence: \(40\) And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.](#)

If they continue to treat Jeremiah and the Word of God with such little respect then God will “utterly forget” them and will forsake them and the City of Jerusalem and bring eternal reproach on them.

Jeremiah 24:1-10

[\(1\) The LORD shewed me, and, behold, two baskets of figs were set before the temple of the LORD, after that Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, with the carpenters and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon. \(2\) One basket had very good figs, even like the figs that are first ripe: and the other basket had very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad. \(3\) Then said the LORD unto me, What seest thou, Jeremiah? And I said, Figs; the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.](#)

In this vision Jeremiah sees a basket of figs. In this basket are both good and bad figs. Sometimes we buy fruit and put it in a bowl on the counter. Every now and then some

of the fruit on the bottom goes bad. You’ll dig down to get what you think is a nice juicy apple, and as soon as you grab it you know it is rotten, not fit to eat.

That’s what Jeremiah sees before him, only it’s not apples, it is figs. Now the question is, what do these figs represent? The LORD gives the interpretation in the next verses.

[\(4\) Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, \(5\) Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good. \(6\) For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up. \(7\) And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.](#)

It seems rather odd that the good figs are the ones that were carried away into captivity into Babylon, but that’s exactly what God has done. In His sovereignty God has chosen a remnant to save and the way He is going to save them is by having them led into captivity. There they will stay and be protected and he will bless them. At the end of the 70-years of captivity, He will allow them to come back to Jerusalem and live in peace.

But, as for the bad figs... they aren’t so fortunate.

[\(8\) And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil; surely thus saith the LORD, So will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt: \(9\) And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them. \(10\) And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers.](#)

The bad figs are those that are allowed to stay behind in Judea and those that fled to Egypt. They are not blessed for this, in fact, they are cursed. They will die from sword, famine, and pestilence. Life will be miserable for them and God is going to cause them to be a reproach to the rest of the world. People will be going around saying things such as “destroyed like Jerusalem,” or “somethings rotten in Jerusalem.”

† All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version of the Bible