

Judged and Found Guilty!

By Dr. Andy Bloom

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Bible Text: Jeremiah 23:13-22
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Central Baptist Church
1714 SE 36th Avenue
Ocala, FL 34471

Website: www.centralbaptistocala.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/centralbaptist

Take your Bibles and turn to Jeremiah chapter 23 and beginning tonight with verse 13. And this will be the last message in this... I don't know if you would call it a series or not, but I felt led to preach this far in it and that is it, just this one chapter and it is a past message that... and a passage and chapter that puts the preachers in their place, ok? And so that is a passage that we need to pay attention to and look at.

Brother Gary told me this morning, he said, or this afternoon he said, "The preaching you are doing on judgment today," he says, "is just apropos that we have two jury boxes up here."

But nonetheless I thought that was pretty good.

Jeremiah chapter 23 verses 13 through 22.

And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to err. I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah. Therefore thus saith 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 is profaneness gone forth into all the land. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD. They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you. For who hath stood in the counsel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word, and heard it? Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked. 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. 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 should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.¹

Now shall we pray?

Father, it was your will, I believe, to preach this Word and so, Father, we have tried to be faithful in doing that, but, Lord, I realize that my lips are only clay and that it is thy Holy Spirit that must take the message to the heart. I pray that not one person will miss your message for their heart. I pray that you would remove all hindrances at this time that would prevent them from accepting your Word as it is, that it might go forth and accomplish your goodness and your great work. And we ask this in the name that is above every name, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

We view this scene of our text as with a courtroom. We have seen in the context that God is not happy with the preachers, both priests and prophets—or we might say it in today’s vernacular pastors and evangelists—for their sin and for their failure.

As I read this passage and this chapter a verse comes to mind for me in Revelation chapter 19 verse 11.

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.”²

As we enter this trial, let us first see the charges and they are written in verses 13 and 14. In verse 13 he speaks of the Samaritan prophets who prophesied in Baal and called my people and caused my people to err. He is speaking of the 10 northern tribes. He is talking about the northern kingdom of Israel.

When this is written they are already in captivity. This is kind of looking back and what caused their problems. And God is saying, “I have seen.” And God, who cannot lie, as Hebrews six tells us, is now testifying to what he has witnessed and his witness is always true, always.

Perhaps we should be reminded of Revelation chapter 20 verses 11 through 15 at the great white throne as they appear there, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond. And the books are opened and another book is opened which is the book of life and the dead are judged out of those things which are written in the books. Oh, yes, everyone at the white throne judgment is going to that lake of fire.

However, there are things written in the books. It is their life. Every deed, every thought, every word. They wanted to make it on their own record and what did Jesus tell us?

¹ Jeremiah 23:13-22.

² Revelation 19:11.

“He that breaketh the law in one point, just one thing, is guilty of all.”

Guilty of all. And this judgment will merely determine the degree of punishment they have in hell. It will be worse for some than it is for others, but it is bad for anyone who goes. But then there is also the judgment seat of Christ for the Christian. He will be judged for that which he hath done whether it be good or bad. At the judgment seat of Christ it will not determine heaven or hell, but man at the judgment seat of Christ is going to heaven. However, it will determine their rewards. Some will have confidence and they are going to hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant. Thou hast been faithful in a few things. I am going to make thee ruler over many.” Others, we are told, will be ashamed at his appearing.

And the life is passed and there is nothing from that point they can do to change the record. Every one of us shall give an account of himself unto God. Everyone.

Isn't it interesting we...? I was reading an article this week and it was talking about King David and King David sinned. There is no doubt about the sins of King David. But this guy goes on to tell about since David was such a terrible man he caused sin. Solomon's sins were not because of Solomon's bad heart. Solomon's sins were because of David and the rest of the kings.

So what if the Bible says that many wicked women turned Solomon's heart? Now this guy, oh, no, it is David's fault because he was a bad father.

You know, that is Rogarian psychology that says it is not my fault, it is society's fault, it is my parent's fault.

Folks, we have got to make people realize they are sinners, they are headed to hell and they are responsible for their deeds. We have got to make Christians responsible, realize that if they went wrong it is not because their parents weren't good parents. The doctrine of free will reaches into the family because the doctrine of free will is a doctrine of God and a doctrine of God reaches every facet of life. Never forget that.

It says they prophesied in Baal. In other words, it was an ecumenical movement coming together, worshipping together, kind of like [?]. Baal was their chief deity. He is the chief deity of the Phoenicians and the Canaanites. He was the supreme male deity as Ashtoreth was the chief female deity. Baal was the original sun god as Allah is the original moon god. And put in simple terms, false gods because they are not gods.

Baal worship was frequently connected with immorality. Different forms of it were practiced though the ages. We speak of mystery of Babylon in Revelation chapter 17 and 18, but that started back in Genesis 10 and 11. It has changed names through the years and the gods have changed names, but they are the same gods and it is the same idea.

One of the areas seen is in Corinth back during the days of the early New Testament. In Corinth they had a temple there to Aphrodite. In the temple of Aphrodite they had 1000

what they called vestal virgins. They would start a strong musical beat upwards beat driven music. The girls in there, these virgins would begin to dance very sensually until they would get themselves into a frenzy and then they would begin to speak in a gibberish. By the way, that is what 1 Corinthians 14 is warning against in speaking in tongues. That comes out of paganism. And often these dances and this wild stuff would end in orgies.

In old Israel they offered babies to these false gods on their altars. Again, a strong beat driven music would work the people up into a frenzy and when they would get worked up, then they would place those babies on the fire offering their babies. And the loud beat, strong music would basically drown out the cry of the baby and parents who probably loved their children as we do, found that there were spirits involved with that music that were stronger than their will. And they did not resist it.

If one will study old encyclopedias he will find out that beat driven music goes back over 3500 years ago and it had association with the false gods and sensuality all down through history. What I am telling you is, is that religious rock music is not new. It was evil then and it is evil today.

Why did Joshua think that there was a sound of war in the camp? Have you ever been driving down the road and all of the sudden a car comes up to you beside you and you hear this... you know? And you are looking around. What is going on? And there is some little Volkswagen and that thing is just shaking with that. And do you know what? It is that beat. That is all you hear from that car coming is the beat. You just hear a beat.

Joshua thought there was a sound of war in the camp because the drums of war. Certainly God's people wouldn't have the music of the pagans. But they did. They did. And what did that music do to the children of Israel? It led them to drink. It led them to take off their clothes all in the name of liberty. Beat driven music today in the secular world called rock and roll in the religious world called CCM. Different words, same Satan. And it is not new at all.

They caused my people to err.

How does contemporary music along with this religious psychology and philosophy with this twisted Bible, how do those things get into a church? Let me tell you. Most often it is introduced through the pastor. He allows it in. Any time you hear, as we said this morning, "This is what you must do to win them," that is a witness against the Holy Spirit, against the Holy Spirit saying, "Holy Spirit of God, you no longer have the power to convert souls with the Word. You no longer have the power to convert souls with truth. You need sensuality. You need something extra sensual in order to get them.

And as one has—and I don't know who it was—said, "What you win them with is what you win them to."

We are not out to win them. We are out to change them. If any man is in Christ he is a

new creature. Behold old things are passed away and behold all things are become new, all things. God holds the pastors and evangelists accountable who will not speak up against these things. Is it not true that the interpretive dancing, the religious rock music and the multitude of Bible versions that have increased across this country has increased at the same time we have seen the moral fiber of America slouching towards Sodom.

Now any of you guys that are over 50 years old here tonight, you have seen it. You know what the music in the church used to be and you know what the morals in America used to be. And as that has gone down this way, guess what has gone up this way? That immorality, the terribleness of this country has gone up. Godliness has gone down. There is a tie.

As a matter of fact, our own president may soon, if what I have read in several publications is true, may very soon in the next six to eight months begin advocating gay marriage. He has already stopped defending the domestic marriage act in man and woman is what a marriage is. And after seeing this weekend how the New Yorkers celebrated their gay friendly new laws, he may be emboldened to do it sooner rather than later.

You will notice verse 14. It is not just the northern kingdom, but it is in Jerusalem also as Judah.

I want you to listen to David Sorensen's comment on the description of these creatures. He says, "The clergymen of that day, the liberal apostate and false prophets were adulterers and liars. They encouraged left wing radicals of the day who were an abomination to God. The apostate clergy of the day gave moral support to the ungodly philosophy which prevailed in the land in the name of religion and respectability. Again, we call that today contemporary worship. They commit adultery, that is, in both ecumenicalism as well as physically. It is shame to have those who call themselves fundamental and yet they want to be friends with the new evangelicals who are running down those fundamentalists who still stand by the old book and still walk the old paths. They use the name of the holy God and then they wallow in all manner of fleshly indulgence, in all manner of ungodly gratifications, telling people they had the liberty to do so. God calls it a horrible thing. He says it is filthy. They call it grace awakening, but that is not what God calls it. He calls it filthy, a horrible thing. They encourage the laity, as they say, 'Surely we may do as the prophets do. We are no better than our shepherd.'"

And so he goes on to say, "They walk in lies."

You know, the word "lies" here in verse 14 means a sham. One who lies or deceives to make other think something that is wrong is right, that is what the idea is here. They try to make somebody think something that is wrong is right or all right. And we see that today. Immorality, homosexual pastors, homosexual deacons ordained in the churches. The change to say, "Well, it is all right to drink as long as you don't get drunk." Divorced pastors of churches, churches filled with people who have active leadership

roles in the church and yet they are living with someone without the benefit of marriage, living in adultery, but singing on the platforms.

And do you think that with the decisions recently made against Israel by our government and the crude growth of immorality, debauchery, filthy language in entertainment, do you really believe that that is overlooked by our holy God? No, it is not. Do you think the financial crisis, the tornados, the droughts are merely coincidences?

Jeremiah chapter 18 verses seven through 10.

At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.³

You know, those verses tell me there is hope for this country. But the repentance must be radical.

Don't call it coincidence, but God says, "It is a warning to us."

The next charge is that they strengthen the hands of the evil doers if none doth return from his wickedness.

They have strengthened the hands of the evildoers by saying, "Don't be a Legalist. Aha, you are a Legalist. There is liberty to do these things."

You see, it happened back then, just like it does today. They think they have discovered a new truth when the reality it is, it is just the old lie. It led to destruction then and it is going to lead to destruction today.

By the way, notice it says that "none doth return from his wickedness."⁴ How can they turn from wickedness if preachers are telling them they have the liberty to do so? And that means in our language today when he says that they did not turn from their wickedness is that none did repent. They quit preaching and calling the people to repent and we, as preachers, are to call them back from the sins of carnality.

And, my friend, there will be no revival in this country without it. God blames preachers and if they don't preach and the people don't repent, God's judgment, 100 percent sure, is coming in this country. No doubt.

The final charge of verse 14 tops them all.

³ Jeremiah 18:7-10

⁴ Jeremiah 23:14.

“They are all of them unto me,” that is unto God, “as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.”⁵

History tells us that homosexuality had gained an acceptance in that day. We are talking about Israel, Jerusalem. The houses of the Sodomites had been rebuilt just as in Sodom and Gomorrah. Not everyone in Sodom and Gomorrah was a homosexual, but they tolerated it in the name of toleration and liberty. Records show they legalized marriage in Sodom and Gomorrah.

Does fire reigning from heaven tell us what God thinks about it? Whether the religious crowd of today like it or not, it caused the northern kingdom to go into captivity and then about 150 years later Jerusalem fell.

But let us not limit the sins of Sodom. Ezekiel chapter 16 verse 49 says, “Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.”⁶

Fullness of bread speaks of whatever the heart’s desire is to eat, while the abundance of idleness shows that they were working less and less in the week with more and more leisure and recreation, leading to adulterous relationships in her daughters, the young women, the mothers who had extra time on their hands beginning to run around and party.

Girls night out is not a new thing. They were doing it then, too. Let it be family night out. I think that is better.

Men or women, by the way, don’t need to be leaving the home for their night out. Build your home, don’t run from it.

Christian psychology disagrees with much of what I have just said, but the Bible fully agrees with it. And people they have to decide do they want to follow Jim Dobson or do they want to follow Jesus Christ? As far as I am concerned, I am following Jesus Christ.

She didn’t strengthen the hand of the poor and the needy. Now think about that. What is the hand for? Isn’t it to work? The hand is for work. Instead of giving them everything, the idea is they didn’t give them the wherewithal to work.

I remember living in Arizona, and as they drove me by one of the Indian reservations, my host told me, he said, “You know, the average lifespan here is late 30s to early 40s.” He said, “They are subsidized fully by the government and therefore they don’t work. They sit around. They drink and do drugs. And most of them die in their late 30s and early 40s.”

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ezekiel 16:49.

That is not strengthening the hands. We need to strengthen the hands to work in this country. And so those are the charges and now we see the verdict in verse 15.

He says, “Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets.”⁷ This is God speaking. “Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall: for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land.”⁸

When you look at verses 21 and 22 we find that God had not sent them. You always measure every preacher in what he says by the Word of God, always. In verse 21 it says, “God did not send them.” He did not send these positive only turning the grace into lasciviousness philosophy preachers, those preachers that condemn the fundamental Bible beliefs. He didn’t send them.

And in verse 22 he said, “But if they had stood in my counsel,”⁹ had they preached the Word, had they stood and lived by and been willing to suffer and die for the standards and principles of his Word, making people hear God’s warning each time they preached, the people might have repented from their evil way.

As it was Jeremiah and a man here and a man there was preaching. But it was the other prophets and preachers that led the people to say, “Huh, this is wrong. Those Legalists over there, don’t pay attention to them.”

Preachers are held responsible for what they preach. And they are held responsible for what they don’t preach and should.

Wormwood and gall are metaphors declaring that the judgment to be poured out would be bitter upon these preachers. These are moderates. These are apostates that have turned from the fundamentals.

And he says, “From the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land.”¹⁰ He is speaking of spiritual, moral corruption across the land as a result of preachers failing to call the country to repentance.

What is that like? It is as some who would laugh me to scorn to preach about movies, about smoking, about cussing, about immodesty, about irreverence in the house of God. They think it is preference and it has nothing of evil or the flesh in it. They actually think that God doesn’t care about any of those things. Why? It is because the preachers have quit calling sin, sin. They have been calling what is right legalistic. And all aspects of the holiness of God is far from their understanding.

⁷ Jeremiah 23:15.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Jeremiah 23:22.

¹⁰ Jeremiah 23:15.

Now we will see the congregation's personal responsibility. In verse 16 they are told not to hearken. Again, you always measure by the Word of God.

Acts 17 verse 11.

Those at Berea were more noble than those in Thessalonica. Why? Because they searched the word to see if those things were so. And that is the secret. Search the Word. Make sure what they are preaching is the Word of God.

It says, "They make you vain."¹¹

Do you know what that means? It means they speak in such a way to build up your self esteem. Building up your self esteem is the opposite of meekness and humbleness. It is about making you feel good without repentance.

It was a problem 2600 years ago and it is still a problem today.

Verse 17. They despise God when they despise the commands of this precious book, especially as it concerns righteousness and holiness. The imagination of their own heart deals with their stubbornness and their unwillingness to repent. And what does verse 18 show us that it is all about? It is about the Word of God.

"For who hath stood in the counsel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word, and heard it?"¹²

The Bible must be a daily part of our lives. So many new versions of the Bible out there. Satan can't keep us from it, then he will corrupt it.

We must continue in sound doctrine even if the world thinks it is crazy.

Verse 19 shows us that when God begins to pour out his judgment on a nation or a church, it is grievous. Grievous is defined as painful, painful as in child birth. It means spinning with no control. And the idea behind it is this. Once God begins to outpour judgment, you can't stop it.

And in verse 20 we read that the anger of the Lord shall not return until he hath executed, until "he hath performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly."¹³

He lets us know that this is going to be considered again in the latter days. The latter days, according to the Hebrew lexicon, has the idea of the latest part of the age.

¹¹ Jeremiah 23:16.

¹² Jeremiah 23:18.

¹³ Jeremiah 23:20.

You see, this passage is not only addressing what was happening in Israel at that day. It is addressing our day today, the latter part of the age.

He says, "Consider, not just knowledge. Rather, its perception that sees the situation, that evaluates the situation and acts wisely as a result of it."

Instead of observing man and what he thinks is joy, you better look to God and see what he is getting ready to do. And act accordingly. And the bottom line, the judgment in this chapter it is seen that it is going to come upon the preachers more so than the members of the Church. And yet people have personal responsibility.

One thing that we have that the people of Jeremiah's have didn't have, we have the written word in our homes. We have it ready at our hand. We have it much more available than they had. And the challenge tonight is to pray for repentance. Pray for repentance in our churches across this land. Pray for repentance in those churches and those institutions that at one time were fundamental.

In connecting back to this morning, I will say it again. Christians must quit cussing. Get foul language out of your vocabulary. You need to quit being immodest. You need to get rid of that beat driven music out of your cars as well as out of your house. Quit watching the filth on television and going to the movies and watching it there. Stop social drinking. Stop any immoral relationship in which you may be involved even if you say, "Well, it is only pornography."

The photos sent on the cell phone by the congressman, to many people they are saying, "Oh, man." Had no idea.

Let me tell you something. That is going on in Ocala, not just one or two. There are multitudes doing it. Not just in Ocala, all across this country, multitudes, multitudes, multitudes.

And understand Christians aren't to be a part of that.

Secondly, be daily in the Word, not only pray for repentance, but be daily in the Word. Be daily in the Word to know it. That means you will think on it. That means you will obey it as they sang just a little while ago the [?]. Great job, trust and obey. I like a family singing together, don't you? Trust and obey for there is no other way. Obey it. Share it with the brethren. Share it with the others. Be a witness.

Then, thirdly, pray for revivals in our churches. Pray for revival among preachers to once again preach the truth, to call right right, to call sin sin. And, folks, let's make that commitment. Make that commitment tonight. Don't make it to me. It doesn't mean a thing if you make it to me. Make it to God. Make it to God. Make it to God.

You know, at this time of year people want a patriotic sermon. But, really, we need to hear from God. One of the most patriotic things that you may be able to do for your

country is repent and get right with God and start working to get your country right with God. And your country begins getting right with God when our home gets right with God. You may have one child that goes out from your home and they are a godly man. They are a godly lady. Another one goes out and they fall into the things of the world. They made a choice. It doesn't mean that you are a bad dad or a bad mom. I don't think God was bad because Adam fell. The Bible says that Adam was the Son of God. I mean, the Bible says that. If the Bible says it, I guess it is true, don't you? I mean, if it... if the Bible says that Adam's father was God, then isn't that logical that Adam's father was God?

And so if you are going to use that logic, boy, God must have really failed as a father.

Now wake up and smell the coffee. Ok? Quit trying to blame everything on people. Take responsibility and say, "As for me and my house, we are going to server the Lord. When they walk out from my door, they may not serve the Lord, but they will know how to serve him if they decide to."

Will you pray for the repentance? Will you pray for the revival of America before it is too late?

Let us bow our heads.

Now, Father, as we prepare to sing Living for Jesus, hymn 372, I pray, Lord, that you will just help us to get that heart that looks within and allows thy Holy Spirit to be the light that shows us ourselves and there will be personal repentance, repentance from the carnal, repentance from our spiritual failure. And then, Lord, I pray that if the Word of God is not a daily part of our lives, that we will get back to that. And then may we have a heart that wants to see revival in the churches across this land. We realize, Lord, that that is the salvation of America. And I pray that it will take place and start, start in this place tonight in Jesus' name. Amen.