



4th Quarter 2015 – Jeremiah: Lesson 3

Jeremiah is considered one of the “major prophets”. What is a prophet? Do his/her prophecies have to “come true” for the prophet to be genuine? Are their prophecies accurate 100% of the time? How do we discern between true and false prophets? Do we have a “prophecy” to deliver? What is it?

1. a person who speaks for God or a deity, or by divine inspiration.
 - a. a person chosen to speak for God and to guide the people of Israel: *Moses was the greatest of Old Testament prophets.*
 - b. (*often initial capital letter*) one of the Major or Minor Prophets.
 - c. one of a band of ecstatic visionaries claiming divine inspiration and, according to popular belief, possessing magical powers.
 - d. a person who practices divination.
2. one of a class of persons in the early church, next in order after the apostles, recognized as inspired to utter special revelations and predictions. 1 Cor. 12:28.
3. **the Prophet**, Muhammad, the founder of Islam.
4. a person regarded as, or claiming to be, an inspired teacher or leader.
5. a person who foretells or predicts what is to come:
 - e. *a weather prophet; prophets of doom.*
6. a spokesperson of some doctrine, cause, or movement. Source: dictionary.com

SABBATH

“He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me?” (Jeremiah 22:16, NIV).

How eloquent.

How many times, during Old Testament history did God try and reveal Himself to his children this way? How many times did He try to reveal His Natural Law of other-centered-giving and contrast it with the pagan worship practices of the time? Has anything really changed here in the 21st century?

We can see genetics and epigenetics at work here in this lesson with “...visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.” Ex. 20:5.

We also see the Law of Worship at work here? Any specific examples?

From Sabbath’s lesson:

“One after another, these men [Judah’s Kings] seemed totally unrepentant for their actions, even as it became clearer and clearer that their actions were bringing the calamities that the Lord, through Jeremiah, had warned would come.”



I'm not sure it became "clearer and clearer" to those involved. And, isn't that just the nature of sin? To cloud reason, dull discernment, and sear conscience? To the "wicked" their way seems the correct way [Prov. 14:12, 16:25].

SUNDAY

Under the Rule of Josiah.

Read Eccl. 10:16. How do we understand this verse in light of Josiah's history?

He was at driving age when he started to "seek God", and in his 20's when he began purging the kingdom of its idols, and repairing the Temple.

During the reconstruction of the Temple, the Book of the Law was discovered and Josiah used it as it was intended – AS A DIAGNOSTIC INSTRUMENT. He was convicted of Judah's sin and the **natural** consequences of living outside of "the Law", and he witnessed to his subjects by reading the book of the Law and endeavored to follow the commandments [even knowing that destruction and captivity would eventually be come about].

The lesson makes a nice point about leading by example. Do we need any of that in Christianity today?

Josiah's death marks a troubling departure from his life of following God's commandments [see 2 Chron. 35:20-24]. Any insights on this?

MONDAY

Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim: Another Descent

Jehoahaz was 23 at the time of his succession to the throne. Has anyone done the math on this? Josiah's reign was 31 years starting when he was 8. $31 - 23 = 8$. Did Josiah father Jehoahaz at 8 years old? If so, might this explain some things?

Jehoahaz only reigned 90 days, and was replaced by his brother for political reasons. Any contrasts between God's Kingdom and Earthly kingdoms noted?

Following are some selections from Jer. 22.

3 This is what the Lord says: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place. 4 For if you are careful to carry out these commands, then kings who sit on David's throne will come through the gates of this palace, riding in chariots and on horses, accompanied by their officials and their people. 5 But if you



do not obey these commands, declares the Lord, I swear by myself that this palace will become a ruin.”

13“Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his own people work for nothing, not paying them for their labor.

14 He says, ‘I will build myself a great palace with spacious upper rooms.’ So he makes large windows in it, panels it with cedar and decorates it in red.

15 “Does it make you a king to have more and more cedar? Did not your father have food and drink? He did what was right and just, so all went well with him.

16 He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me?” declares the Lord.

17 “But your eyes and your heart are set only on dishonest gain, on shedding innocent blood and on oppression and extortion.”

This sounds suspiciously like a “liberal” political argument. Any contrast between “Natural Law” and “imposed law”?

TUESDAY

The Short Reign of King Jehoiachin of Judah

We can see in God’s Words through Jeremiah, that his anger [turning away, letting go, giving up, discipline, etc.] has a purpose for ultimate restoration. God told the Jews that their exile had a finite time period, and if they submitted and conducted themselves as good citizens, they would prosper and be returned from exile. This was Truth.

Contrast this with the experience of Saul meeting Satan in the cave of the witch of Endor [see I Sam 28: 16-20]. Satan told Saul the “truth” as well, didn’t he?

How are we to discern Truth from truth?

WEDNESDAY

At the End of the Dead End

Consider this passage:

15 The Lord, the God of their ancestors, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, **because he had pity** on his people and on his dwelling place. 16 But they mocked God’s messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets **until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy.** 2 Chron. 36:15, 16. [emphasis added]



Here we have a clear OT reference to God's wrath and his Character of Love. He tried "again and again" to reach his children "because he had pity on his people..." His wrath was aroused because "there was no remedy." Any parallels for the Day of Judgment?

From the lesson:

"There they were, hundreds of years after the Exodus, hundreds of years as the covenant people who were to be a light and a beacon to the nations (Deut. 4:5–8), and yet they were still so caught up in the prevailing culture, so caught up in the cultural and religious environment of their neighbors, that they were doing "all the abominations" of the pagans. Might there be a message there for us?"

Excellent question. Consider this:

Through the long centuries that have passed since Elijah's time, the record of his lifework has brought inspiration and courage to those who have been called to stand for the right in the midst of apostasy. And for us, "upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Corinthians 10:11), it has special significance. History is being repeated. The world today has its Ahabs and its Jezebels. The present age is one of idolatry, as verily as was that in which Elijah lived. No outward shrine may be visible; there may be no image for the eye to rest upon; yet thousands are following after the gods of this world—after riches, fame, pleasure, and the pleasing fables that permit man to follow the inclinations of the unregenerate heart. **Multitudes have a wrong conception of God and His attributes, and are as truly serving a false god as were the worshipers of Baal. Many even of those who claim to be Christians have allied themselves with influences that are unalterably opposed to God and His truth.** Thus they are led to turn away from the divine and to exalt the human [emphasis added]. PK 177.

THURSDAY

The Dark Years

From the lesson:

"Everything that God had warned them would happen to them is exactly what happened."

Who determined Israel's & Judah's destiny? Who determines ours? [see Matt. 12:37 & Luke 6:45].

This lesson asks us to look at Jeremiah 23. This should give us some pause [especially those of us "leading a flock"].