

Jeremiah 23 Caving to the Culture

J.D. Farag

Chapter 23, and we're going to pick it up where we left off last week in Chapter 22, but I think you'll see why, here, we're only doing one chapter tonight in a moment. So why don't we pray?

We'll ask God to bless our time together in His Word.

If you would, please join with me. Loving Heavenly Father, would You just settle us and quiet our minds, and enable us by the Holy Spirit to focus our attention on You and not all of the business of our day and week and lives. And Lord, we want to be able to concentrate. We don't want our minds to wander. We don't want to miss anything that You have for us tonight, especially in this chapter that's before us tonight.

Lord, we know that You have a word fitly spoken for us here in Your Word, and we want to have ears to hear what it is that You're going to say to us as Your church, as Your people. Lord, if it's an encouragement or even rebuke, or correction or instruction or whatever it is, Lord, we want to receive it with open hearts.

So Lord, thank You! Thank You that this chapter is in our Bibles! It's going to be tough in a couple of spots, but it's a good tough. So Lord, thank You! We love You so much! In Jesus' name, amen and amen.

All right, so the chapter before us tonight, those of you that read ahead to stay ahead, you may already see what's ahead, but it is arguably one of the most scathing indictments in all of Scripture, rivaled possibly by only Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 23, ironically enough, when Jesus rebukes the scribes and the Pharisees.

I think this is probably right up there on that level. It is brutal, and it's specific to pastors, leaders, and even more specifically how it is that spiritual leaders cave to the culture of the day, and bend and bow to popular opinion, and acquiesce to the pop culture of the day.

And as we're about to see, the consequences are far-reaching. And the result is that people profane the Lord, forsake the Lord, and what always ensues is this walking after the dictates of one's own heart.

Now, this is chiefly directed at the political leaders, the business leaders, certainly the spiritual leaders, first and foremost; however, and this is important, the reality is that the people were complicit in this worldly carnality. And I say that that way for a reason.

See, they were accountable because they had a Jeremiah, but they rejected Jeremiah as a prophet and went after these other false prophets with a false message of false peace.

And like I mentioned, it's going to get kind of brutal here and tough, but we can do this, right?

Verse 1, "Woe [Cursed]. How's that for... (Chuckling) oh, it gets worse. "Woe to the shepherds..."

Now, if you have a King James Bible, that word "shepherds" is pastors, the shepherds, the leaders, the kings in that day who would shepherd the people of God.

"...the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of [Notice] My pasture!" says the Lord. Therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel against the shepherds [Pastors, Leaders] who feed My people: "You have scattered My flock, driven them away, and not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for the evil of your doings," says the Lord."

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Does this give you kind of an idea of what we're in store for tonight?

Well, it's a sanctified strength, would you agree?

And it's a sanctified strength as it relates to those shepherds, those leaders who scattered the flock, the flock of God, and did not attend to them. And that's exactly what they were doing.

Verse 3, "But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds, and they shall be fruitful and increase.

I [Verse 4] will set up shepherds over them who will feed them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking," says the Lord."

The inference here is that they were in fear, they were dismayed, and they were lacking, and they were starving because they were not being fed. If this brings to mind Peter and his exchange with Jesus, that's a good thing because Jesus querying him and restoring him three times asks him, **"Peter, do you love Me?"**

And the litmus test by which Peter would be measured as it relates to his love for Jesus was **"Feeding My sheep, feed My sheep."** You can tend to them, you can tend to their wool, you can shear them, you can put oil on them, but if you don't feed them, they're going to die. They're going to starve. And that's what shepherds do, loving shepherds, good shepherds: They feed the flock.

"Behold, [Verse 5] the days are coming," says the Lord, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness. A King shall reign and prosper and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days [Verse 6] Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely.

Now this is His name, by which He will be called: [And it's one of the many names of God that we have in Scripture] [This one is] THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." [Jehovah Tsidkenu, the Lord is our righteousness]

Now this almost seems sort of out of place, parenthetical at best, because we just got done with this declaration and this pronouncing of a curse to those shepherds, those leaders who scattered the flock, didn't feed the flock, didn't tend to the flock, and then all of a sudden, we got this parenthetical prophetic passage about the coming Messiah.

Why?

Answer: Because this would rise to the level - what they were doing, Judah would rise to the level of being so serious because of what was at stake.

What was at stake?

Oh, theirs would be the lineage from which the Savior of the world would come.

And they're messing with that?

God has to intervene, interrupt because of what's at stake here. See, He has made a covenant and made a promise that He cannot break.

What is that promise?

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That the Savior of the world would come from Judah, from the line of David, the root of Jesse, a branch of righteousness. And you guys are doing everything you possibly can to mess that all up, so I've got to come in, come back in and straighten it out.

So this is what I'm going to do despite you. I have to. You can try and thwart it all you want, but you will not. He will come the first time as the suffering servant and the second time as the conquering King of kings.

So again, why do we have this kind of inserted here?

Because Jeremiah is speaking to the people, and God, through him, reminding them of what's at stake here. The Savior is going to come from you.

Verse 7, "Therefore, behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "that they shall no longer say, 'As the Lord lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,' but, [Verse 8] 'As the Lord lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them.' And they shall dwell in their own land."

Okay, wait, (Chuckling) the Exodus was pretty big. And that was kind of the reference. **"The Lord God, who delivered you out of the land of Egypt."** The Lord God who delivered you from slavery in Egypt. Well, no longer is that going to be the reference. Now, instead of that, in lieu of that, the reference is going to be the Lord God who brought you up out of the north country, Babylon.

Well, wait a minute. So it's not Egypt anymore? I was really getting used to that. I got it memorized, and now you're switching it on me? Now it's going to be the Lord God who delivered you out... So again, we have a "why" question, don't we?

Why?

Oh, interesting, interesting, very interesting; don't miss this, please. Think about this: Those in Egypt that God delivered out of Egypt were born in Egypt and knew nothing else. They were not in slavery in Egypt because of their sin and wickedness and rebellion. And God delivered them.

So would you agree that this is a grander and more glorious deliverance by the Lord and the hand of the Lord?

These people deserved to be taken into captivity. When the children of Israel were in Egypt, they weren't there because of their rebellion, whereas the captivity in Babylon, they were there because of their sin and wickedness.

This and the previous verses, beginning in verse 5, speaking prophetically of the coming Messiah, the branch of righteousness from David, have this common denominator. It's the goodness of God, no matter how evil man is.

It reminds me of David, and one of the takeaways for me personally when we went through that study in *1 and 2 Samuel*, we got to know David very well, maybe too well. There was some information I would have liked to have not known about David.

Like I could have totally gone without the whole Bathsheba part. If I were God, I would have left that out. God, didn't; He put that in. And then to make matters worse, He also records with graphic detail about what David did and plotted, to kill her husband, to try to cover it up.

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I really didn't want to know about how he had Uriah come home from the battlefield so he could try to get him to go into his wife. And then, oh, she's pregnant. Congratulations, Uriah! But he didn't. And now David's got a bigger problem.

So what does he do?

He pens a letter, seals it, gives it to Uriah to give to his military commander. Unbeknownst to him, he has his own death sentence in his hand, and it's carried out, and then the instruction is "put Uriah on the front line, pull the rest of the troops back, and that way he's killed."

That's exactly what happened. And it's very interesting. This again, I could have gone the rest of my life without knowing this particular detail. But when Uriah is killed exactly as David had planned, and it was carried out, the word gets back to David.

You know what David's response is?

Well, it's the casualties of war.

I don't want to know that. I want to know about the sweet psalmist of Israel. Okay, now we're talking. I want to know about this man who had a heart after God's own heart. We're good.

But David, the adulterer, David, the murderer? What's up with that?

Oh, I'll tell you what's up with that. It's not recorded for us to show us how bad David was, though it does. But it's to show us how good God is despite how bad David was. And that should give every single one of us hope here tonight. God is good, no matter what, no matter what.

Yeah, but I've been really bad.

Have you talked to David lately? You want to talk about bad? I mean, what he did? And yet God forgave him, and God blessed him. And interesting, when David wanted to build a house for the Lord, and God says, you know, David, I appreciate it very much. This is a very loose paraphrase; you'll forgive me. But I appreciate it very much. But you got way too much blood on your hands. You will not build Me the temple. Your son will build Me the temple, and Solomon would.

But what did David do?

Oh, he had all the resources. God had prospered him abundantly, exceedingly abundantly. So he purchased all of the materials and wanted so much to be able to build a house for the Lord.

And what was the Lord's response?

You're not going to build Me a house, David. I'm going to build you a house. See, in the Middle Eastern culture; we miss it in our culture because it's the house of, the house of Wahid, the house of JD, the house of David, the house of Jesse. I'm going to build you a house, your lineage, and the Savior of the world is going to come from you.

Then fast-forward, again, this is why I'm not God, this is why you're not God either because you'd probably do the same thing. After David did all this, I would have said, deal - no deal. I'm going to find somebody else. I was going to have the Savior of the world come from your lineage, but after what you did, forget about it. You're fired.

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He doesn't do that. He makes good on His word, does not go back on His word. It is a covenant. Here's another example, and I don't want to get too far into this, but it's very important, and I think you'll see why here in a moment.

You remember when God cut covenant with Abraham?

That's where we get the modern-day expression of "cut a deal." Here's how they would cut covenant and make a deal, so to speak, in that day, in that culture, at that time. They would take animals, and they would literally cut them up and spread them out, I mean, bloody and...

And they would walk, the two parties agreeing to this covenant would walk in the midst of those cut animals, and they would vow to each other if they broke that covenant, may what was done to these animals be done to me. They have a word for that, "deterrent."

Are we good?

Deterrent? Okay. I ain't breaking this thing. I'm not going to go back on this thing because I don't want to be cut up like these animals. It was called "cut covenant."

So God has Abraham cut the animals, get ready, we're going to cut covenant, and here's Abraham: Okay, ready.

And then here comes God, and what does God do?

Oh, He puts Abraham into a deep sleep.

Sounds good, doesn't it, to have a deep sleep?

But I mean a deep sleep, and then God walks through those cut animals and cuts covenant.

And then Abraham wakes up and goes, Wait, what?

We're done. We're done here.

Wait, I didn't walk.

You don't have to. You're not making a covenant with Me. Let's be honest. You would break it anyway. And God's not going to be party to our disobedience.

So it wasn't a covenant between God and Abraham. It wasn't a covenant between Abraham and God. It was a covenant from God with Abraham. He didn't sign it. He didn't cut the deal. He didn't approve to it, approve of it, or agree to it.

So you can't break something you didn't agree to. The point is: God in His goodness is going to make good on His covenant despite how bad we are.

Well, *verse 9*, now this is where it gets - oh, this is hard. This is Jeremiah now. we get another glimpse into this weeping prophet's heart. He says, **"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."**

You see what's happening here?

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Jeremiah, true to form, and we're getting to know him. And we love this about Jeremiah. He's a very kind-hearted, soft-hearted man, very loving. And things like this really hurt him, so much so that he's staggered, and he's stunned.

I mean, look at this imagery, this idea [Verse 9] **"My heart is broken within me."**

He's in anguish mentally, emotionally, physically even because it affects you physically, psychologically. His bones shake. He's like a drunken man. He's just staggering, just cannot get his mind around how evil they've become. Who's become evil?

The other prophets. Because of these prophets, the wickedness of these prophets.

And the land is full of adulteries?

Let that sink in. The prophets were adulterers. And everyone was committing adultery, and the land is cursed, and the wickedness is great. And it's evil. And it really affects Jeremiah. And notice the effect that it has on Jeremiah. He's not angry standing in the street corner condemning them.

No, he's heartbroken over them. Oh, would to God that this would be our response when we see people like this. I think about what Jesus said. **"I didn't come to condemn. I came to seek and save that which was lost."** That's God's heart for people.

You know, I know I've shared this before. Maybe it's appropriate to just share it briefly again, but God's done a powerful work in my own heart in this regard. You know, it used to be that I would just get all worked up and riled up and upset and angry and just kind of - oh, I would always frame it in terms of righteous anger.

Oh, no, not really. And then the Lord just got a hold of me and allowed me, in His grace, to see those people who were the objects of my ire and anger through His eyes. And it changed everything. And instead of being angry at them, I just began to feel so sad for them.

I mean, if you really think about it, if the rapture were to happen - do you ever ponder this?

I do; I tell you, it's heavy. But if the rapture were to happen, and they're left behind, do you realize the significance of that and what they're going to experience? And who's to say that they're going to give their life to Christ during the tribulation, be numbered among those of whom we affectionately refer to as the tribulation saints?

I like how one said it. If you're not going to live for Christ before the tribulation, what makes you think you'll die for Christ in the tribulation?

That's a game-changer, isn't it, how you see people?

You don't get angry at fellow Christians, or if you're a pastor, you don't get angry at fellow pastors. It's heartbreaking. That's the heart of God.

Verse 11, now we get some more of a detailed explanation as to what was going on. **"For both prophet and priest are profane. [Hang on to that word "profane" for a moment] Yes, in My house I have found their wickedness," says the Lord."**

"Therefore [Verse 12] 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.

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So just kind of bear with me here for a moment. We need to talk about this word “profane” because when you hear the word “profane,” you might connect it with another word that comes from that word, which is “profanity.” And sadly, that doesn't even come close to explaining what was happening by their profaning.

To profane is to make the sacred common with the secular. It's to, as one said aptly, by their worldliness, they're secularizing the house of God. This is what I mean by “caving to the culture.” We're going to make the sacred more palatable, more plausible, more amicable.

We're going to kind of - yeah, we're just going to soften the edges on this a little bit and, you know, not be so like that. Because after all, this mindset - and it's profane - it says this: We want to reach the world, so we're going to become more like the world in order to reach the world.

Well, then there's a problem with that because then there's no distinction. There's no difference. You have profaned the sacred. You've brought it down to the level of the secular.

And I'm having a really hard time here trying to figure out, well, wait a minute, oh, you're culturally right according to pop culture, popular opinion. Oh, you're culturally correct, if I can say it like that. But at what expense? What did you have to do in order to make it more appealing to the world?

Now we're going to see very, again, graphically, for lack of a better word, what happens when that happens, and it ain't pretty.

Verse 13, “And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria: They prophesied by Baal and caused 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 [*Listen very carefully*] They also strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns back from his wickedness. [*It's okay*] All of them are like Sodom to Me, and her inhabitants like Gomorrah.”

A horrible thing. This horrible thing? Horrible thing?

It's horrible. This thing is horrible. That's what a horrible thing is; it's horrible.

Well, it's alive and well today.

How so?

Well, compromising leaders lead others into compromising. Look at verse 14 again with me. **“They also strengthen the hands of evil doers.”** You're strengthening them in their evil. They continue on even stronger than before in their evil because of you. What did you do to strengthen them in their evil?

Ah, you just kind of blew it off, turned a blind eye. You might have, even in your caving to the culture, endorsed it. Because can you imagine if a well-known religious leader or spiritual leader says it's okay, well then, hey, what's the problem? They're strengthened in their resolve, as it were. And this kind of explains it even further, **“So that no one turns back from his wickedness.”**

Why would you? You told me it was okay. You've already profaned the sacred. You've gutted out the Word of God, as we're going to see in a moment. So why would I turn from wickedness when

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you're up there in your wickedness? You're compromised. How would I not also - that's the thing about leaders.

I know this might be an oversimplification, but you know what leaders do?

Deeply profound: They lead. In order to lead, that means that people are following your lead. So they're the leaders. They're leading people in to this. They're leading people into compromise because they're the leaders, and people are following these compromised leaders. They're wicked because the leaders are wicked. They're doing evil, evil doers, because the leaders are evil doers.

(Heavy sigh)

Verse 15, we got to keep moving here. **“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 [There it is again] has gone out into all the land.’**

“Thus says the Lord of hosts: [Verse 16] “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 [Verse 17] 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 [befall you or] come upon you.’”

It's all good. Peace! Here's Jeremiah over here, “Repent!”

These prophets, “Relax, why are you so uptight?” I know Jeremiah is over there saying, 'Doom, gloom, judgment.' Nah, relax. Nothing evil is going to come upon you. It's not going to happen.

Peace, peace. When there's no peace. They're misleading the people. They're lying to the people.

You know what's sad? This is what's heard from many a pulpit today. Again, I just would kindly ask that you bear with me on this. These who do this want people to like them.

Why else would a pastor say, Hey, it's okay, relax? I know there's this guy on the windward side of Oahu that is telling you that it's coming, this is it, this is the end. Relax.

And I'm up here screaming and yelling and spitting on everybody in the front row.

You got to know, and we're going to see that here shortly, but you got to know that Jeremiah is just - he's alone. He's alone. There are some who estimate how many of these false prophets there were, but whatever number you come up with, it was that number to one. So let's just say 5000.

Well, isn't that a high number?

Not necessarily. 5000 of these other ministries are saying the same thing. Oh, you shall have peace. No evil shall come upon you. 5000, and you're the only one getting up there and saying, No, it's coming, it's coming, this is it! Only one.

Well, *verse 18*, **“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? Behold, [Watch this] 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**

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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.”

Now, this is not speaking about the last days. This is speaking about, in the end, Judah, you'll realize, oh, wow! But here's the problem: It'll be too late. There's such a thing as too late. There's a time called “too late.” And when you realize that, too late. Because see, what they said would not come will come. And not only will it come, God's fury, that they told everyone, no, it's not going to come.

No, it will come, and it will come violently and swiftly as a hot whirlwind. And you'll see, but it'll be too late by the time you do.

Verse 21, “I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran. [They ran with it, as we would say] I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.

But [Verse 22] 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.”

That comports with what we just read. They would not turn from their evil and turn from their wicked. Had these false pastors and shepherds and prophets and priests just declared the Word of God, they would have turned. They would have turned and been saved, but you didn't.

You didn't tell them what they needed to hear. You told them what they wanted to hear. And you ran with it. **“They would have turned from their evil and from the evil of their doings.”**

“Am I [Verse 23] a God near at hand,” says the Lord, “and not a God afar off?

Can anyone [Verse 24] 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 prophesy lies in My name, saying, 'I have dreamed, I have dreamed!' [Write a book. Write a book] [Do a YouTube video. Do a YouTube video]

[Sorry]

How long [Verse 26] will this be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies? Indeed they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart, who try [Watch this] to make My people forget My name by their dreams, which everyone tells his neighbor, as their fathers forgot My name for Baal.

“The prophet [Verse 28] 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.”

Oh, that's interesting. You know what chaff is, right? It's all fluff and no substance. That's what this is. Oh, the vision, the dream, the - Hey, look, let me share with you this. Where's the beef? Where's the wheat? Where's the substance?

This is all fluff. It's chaff. Here's the problem with chaff. You can eat a lot of it. You will never be nourished. You'll die because it has no nutrients.

Wheat does. That's the Word.

“Is not My word [Verse 29] like a fire?” [Oh, yes, it is] says the Lord. [Oh, yes, it is isn't in the original; that was the JDV]

“Is not My word like a fire?” says the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?”

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You know what God's saying through the Prophet Jeremiah here? My word is like a fire.

What does a fire do?

Oh, it can burn or warm, consume or refine. That's how powerful fire is, and His Word is like that fire. Sometimes we need to be burned. Sometimes we need to be warmed. Well, God's Word does that. How about a hammer?

Think about this. You can either break or build with a hammer. Sometimes that's what God's Word needs to do. It needs to break our pride and build us up in the Spirit. It's like a hammer.

So they were not speaking the word faithfully, and as such they were robbing the people of the power of God's Word as a fire and a hammer to warm, to refine, to build.

Ah, one more thing real quick on this. So if you've been attending this church for any length of period of time or watching online, you've probably noticed this by now. I know this is a firm grasp of the obvious, but we teach the Word here, again, I know it's a firm grasp of the obvious, verse-by-verse, book-by-book, chapter-by-chapter, verse-by-verse, the whole counsel of God.

And do you know what has happened as a result of the fire of God's Word and the hammer of God's Word and the wheat, the nourishing wheat of God's Word?

Oh, wow! Oh, wow!

And you want to rob people of that?

Let me ask you a question. Let's just say that you've got a fluff and puff, splash and flash - (Chuckling) that all rhymed, didn't it - message. You know, that's just real, you know, relax, God loves you. It's all good. Peace. Peace. Because we want you to come back.

Well, what are you going to do about the person that's sitting under that and listening to that, who is dealing with a life-and-death situation? And you're up there -you'll forgive the strength with which I say this - but you're up there with your cotton candy Christianity.

They need the Word of God to be like fire. They need the Word of God to be like a hammer.

Yeah, but they're going to get up and walk out.

Fine. The wounds of a friend are faithful, but an enemy multiplies kisses. They might resent it initially, but they'll so appreciate it eventually.

And conversely, if you don't do that, they might appreciate it initially. Thank you, Pastor. But eventually: Why didn't you tell me?

They're going to resent you.

You must not love me. Well, you love yourself; that's called self-love because if you really loved me, you would have fed me. You would have spoke the truth to me.

We speak the truth in love, but we speak the truth because we love. If you did love someone, you wouldn't bother, would you? Am I right? Don't look at me like that. Am I right?

You're going to tell someone the truth, why?

You're going to risk the relationship, why?

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Put it in jeopardy, why?

Because you love them enough to tell them.

Listen, if I don't love you, I'm not going to tell you, Hey, you got spinach on your teeth. I'm just going to laugh at you and let you go on your merry way.

(Chuckling)

No, but I love you enough. Hey, you got spinach on your teeth.

I know that's a horrible illustration, but whatever. This is why I should have more notes.

But you're going to tell someone the truth if you really care about them. If you really love them, you'll speak truth to them. I know my wife really loves me. Boy, does she speak a lot of truth to me. I don't want to hear it. But it's right.

And initially, I'm like (Exasperated face).

And then eventually I'm going, Thank you, thank you so much!

So we don't want to tell people the truth of God's Word.

By the way, Sunday's Prophecy Update, whew! That's all I'm going to say: Whew! That's it!

Verse 30, "Therefore behold, I am against the prophets," says the Lord, "who steal My words every one from his neighbor."

What? How is that happening?

Oh, they're stealing the affection, the attention, the devotion away from My word, and they're putting it on them, their dreams, their visions, their book, their idols.

"Behold, [Verse 31] I am against the prophets," says the Lord, "who use their tongues and say, 'He says.'

Now this is a - (Heavy sigh) this is a tough one because it's basically saying this, and this is one of those places where you just really have to understand the meaning in that culture. Let me see if I can frame it and explain it this way. It would be like saying, "Well, they said" when they didn't say it.

And they're going around telling everyone, using their tongues, speaking for you, saying, "Well, that's what he said." I didn't say that. I didn't say that. That's misrepresentation at best and deceit at worst. You're speaking and prophesying in My name. I didn't say that.

"Behold, [Verse 32] I am against those who prophesy false dreams," says the Lord, [Keyword, false] "and tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies and by their recklessness. Yet I did not send them or command them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all," says the Lord.

"So [Verse 33] when these people or the prophet or the priest ask you, saying, 'What is the oracle of the Lord?' [Oracle is a prophetic utterance] you shall then say to them, 'What oracle?'"

This is a mocking. Oh, what's your Prophecy Update this week? What's your oracle? What's the oracle?

It's a mocking. And then listen to the Lord.

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He says, **"I will even forsake you,"** says the Lord.

"And [Verse 34] as for the prophet and the priest and the people who say, 'The oracle of the Lord!' I will even punish that man and his house. Thus every one of you [Verse 35] shall say to his neighbor, and every one to his brother, 'What has the Lord answered?' and, 'What has the Lord spoken?' And the oracle of the Lord you shall mention no more. For every man's word will be his oracle, for you have perverted the words of the living God, the Lord of hosts, our God."

You've made a mockery of it. You profaned it, you perverted it. That's it. No more. I'm not going to cast my pearls before swine.

I'm going to shake the sand off of my slippers. Don't call it flip flops, please. I made that fatal mistake when we first moved here.

Flip flops? Where do you come from, boy?

We call them slippers around here. I digress.

Verse 37. "Thus you shall say to the prophet, 'What has the Lord answered you?' and, 'What has the Lord spoken?'"

But [Verse 38] since you say, 'The oracle of the Lord!' therefore thus says the Lord: 'Because you say this word, "The oracle of the Lord!" and I have sent [That I - and I - okay, let me try this again]

It's actually the rest of the chapter is kind of like this. It's hard to read, let alone understand. But we're going to do our best here with the help of the Holy Spirit.

"The oracle of the Lord!" and I have sent to you, saying, "Do not say, 'The oracle of the Lord!'" Therefore, behold, [Verse 39] I, even I, will utterly forget you and forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, and will cast you out of My presence. And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten."

The end; let's pray. Not yet. I would love to. Cannot. Okay, we got to deal with this. What? What? Here's what was happening. They're making a mockery out of these prophetic utterances. 'The oracle of the Lord,' the prophetic utterance, the burden of the Lord. Here God has put on your heart, burdened your heart with this message, this burning like fire.

And you proclaim it, and it's met with mockery and ridiculing. It's kind of like the apostle Peter. He said this is what's going to mark the last days. There's going to be these scoffers, and they're going to mock, and they're going to mock you. What are they going to mock you about?

Oh, they're going to mock you about the prophecy. What prophecy, what oracle, what prophetic utterance, what burden?

When you get into Zachariah, depending on what translation you have, sometimes that word "burden" is translated "prophecy." **"The burden of the Lord," Zechariah 12.**

The prophecy of the Lord: It's a burdensome thing. And it is a burdensome thing. It's heavy, man! What heavy thing you got for us this week, Jeremiah?

Mock, mock, mock. Oh, I know; wait, don't tell me. Jesus is coming. The Rapture can happen at any time. Ha-ha-ha, you've been saying that every week for how many years, dude? Mock, mock, mock.

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And the Lord says, Oh, really? That's how you're going to be?

Well, I'm going to have the final word on it. I will utterly forget you.

Forget you.

Was that bad?

I felt that one all the way from my toes, actually. Forget you.

That's how you're going to be? You're going to mock Me?

You're going to mock My prophet who's been faithful at great cost and sacrifice. And he's being faithful to the burden, the prophecy, the utterance, the oracle that I put on his heart to speak. And this is how you're going to respond?

Well, here's how I'm going to respond. Here's how I'm going to respond to how you respond. I'm going to cast you out of My presence.

You want to reject this? I reject you.

Oh, but the Lord will never leave you or forsake you.

Oh, yes, He will. You leave him and forsake Him; He'll forsake you. He's not going to force Himself on you.

You reject the message? I reject you.

You mock this? I mock you. I'm the one who has the last laugh.

(Exasperated sigh)

You know, this is how the chapter ends. And you know my heart on this. I wish it didn't, but maybe it needs to. Maybe it needs to.

Isn't it fitting, by the way? This fits, right, with this whole chapter we just studied tonight?

This is hard! It needs to be hard because it's a hammer.

I need it (Pounding podium) to be hammered home. I need it to break me. I need it to burn me and turn me. That's a turn-or-burn. Maybe so. So be it. If that's what it takes.

One last thought, and we'll close. You know, I was thinking about this just today, in fact, in anticipation of the Update on Sunday.

You know, it could be argued that, hey, relax, right? I mean, man, you don't have to wear a mask anymore when you go to the store. Relax. Peace. It's all good.

It's like this - in fact, they've made shirts out of it. I love this. Normal isn't coming back. Jesus is. But that's the problem, isn't it?

See, if things are kind of getting good again and normal again, then doesn't that just kind of lessen the burn?

So all of a sudden now, I'm kind of okay. No worry. No hurry.

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But boy, when everything was in full swing, we're like, Oh, Lord!

That was good. That was good.

But now it's kind of like, okay. We're cool. It's good.

But, boy, when we were - I want to - I probably shouldn't, but can we say a year ago, at this time a year ago, September of '21, maybe not even that long, long back.

Well, especially here in Hawaii, what was it, May? The rest of the nation? Anyway.... I don't want to go there.

So you know, May things start kind of loosening up, opening up. We're like, oh, praise the Lord! But January - a little different story, and it brought people to the end of themselves and to the Lord.

But now? Not so urgent anymore. Not so urgent anymore.

We need the hammer. We need the fire. It is coming like a whirlwind. Kapono, why don't you come on up?

Please stand. We'll close in prayer.

(Heavy sigh)

Man, makes you want to cry a little bit, doesn't it?

You see what's coming, and everybody just goes on their merry way. That was the mocking in Peter too. Everything goes on as it always has. Relax, relax. Not repent, not turn. Relax.

Father in heaven, I thank You again for this being in our Bibles. It's good, tough, but good, and we need to hear it. And, Lord, it's true. It's true. It was true in Jeremiah's day. It is certainly true in our day. It is coming. It will come swiftly, even violently. And Lord, You told us prophetically that it would.

So Lord, please, as we bring this time together in Your Word to an end, I just (Heavy sighing) pray that it would be a fire and a hammer and wheat, not chaff. That it would have its much-needed effect on our lives, Lord, as hard as it might be. Thank You, Lord, so much. We love You so much.

And Lord, Maranatha, come quickly, Lord Jesus. Oh, Jesus, come, come quickly, in Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.