

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

JEREMIAH 8:4-10:25

It's been said, "People don't really care how much you know, until they know how much you care."

How true! Cold, matter-of-fact, insensitive proclamations of the Gospel are not enough. The Apostle Paul said to the Ephesians, "speaking the truth in love." The phrase, "*in love,*" makes all the difference.

It's love the primes the pump of faith. A person is more prone to believe in God's love when they first sense that love... *And Jeremiah was a prophet of God who certainly loved God's people. He was called because He cried, and He cried because He cared.*

Jeremiah reveals His heart for God's people at the end of chapter 8 and in the beginning of chapter 9.

We'll pick up tonight in 8:4, "Moreover you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord: "Will they fall and not rise? Will one turn away and not return?"' God knows there are times in our walk with Him when we stumble.

Temptation draws us away. We get distracted.

But when we fall, God expects us to "*get up.*" When we turn away, the Father calls us and we run back.

God like most fathers, teaches His kids, “It’s not how many times you fall that matters, as long as you get back up one more time than you get knocked down.”

Yet the Jews at the time weren’t your typical kid. Rather than “*rise*” - rather than “*return*” - they stayed in their backslidden state. Verse 5, “Why has this people slidden back, Jerusalem, in a perpetual backsliding? They hold fast to deceit, they refuse to return.”

God’s people were guilty of “*perpetual backsliding.*”

They fell and refused to rise. They turned away and never returned. They discounted God’s mercies, and used their failure as an excuse to wallow in their sin.

Verse 6, “I listened and heard, but they do not speak aright. No man repented of his wickedness, saying, ‘What have I done?’ Everyone turned to his own course, as the horse rushes into the battle.” Like a war horse galloping headlong into the battle, the people of Jerusalem threw themselves into sin and rebellion.

There was *no hesitation beforehand* and *no remorse afterwards*. No one thought, “*What have I done?*”

“Even the stork in the heavens knows her appointed times; and the turtledove, the swift, and the swallow observe the time of their coming. But My people do not

know the judgment of the Lord.” The stork, turtledove, swift, and swallow are all migratory birds. At the first cold breeze of winter, they fly to warmer climates.

But they always return... and this is what Jeremiah can't figure out about the Jews... *why, after tasting the consequences of sin, they don't rush back to the Lord?*

It's not fair to call God's people “bird brains,” since even the birds themselves have more common sense.

Verse 8, “How can you say, ‘We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us’? Look, the false pen of the scribe certainly works falsehood. The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken.” Once you've turned your back on the Lord, you've set yourself up to be taken in by all manner of deception and falsehood.

Jeremiah asks, “Behold, they have rejected the word of the Lord; so what wisdom do they have?” In short, “Once you've fallen from God, you'll fall for anything!”

And it's because of backsliding - not their *occasional backsliding*, but their “*perpetual backsliding*,” that God is going to judge the citizens of Jerusalem.

“Therefore I will give their wives to others, and their fields to those who will inherit them; because from the least even to the greatest everyone is given to

covetousness; from the prophet even to the priest everyone deals falsely.” What an sad scenario. Even God’s representatives, “*the pastors,*” were corrupt.

“For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly...” In other words, they gave a few aspirin to a people who were diagnosed with cancer.

Their cure might’ve made the patient feel better, but it offered no healing. It healed the hurt only “*slightly.*”

“Saying, ‘Peace, peace!’ When there is no peace.”

God had pronounced judgment over a wicked nation. Yet the prophets falsely assured them of peace. *Stick your head in the sand and your problems will pass.*

Verse 12, “Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed, nor did they know how to blush.”

Is this not America today! Previous generations - *biblically informed generations* - would’ve viewed homosexual marriage as a perversion, an abomination.

Today, rather than cause shame, it’s accepted.

Sexual morality no longer exists. It’s anything goes. We no longer know how to blush. If every human impulse is validated as normal, it represses our natural sense of modesty. Our collective conscience is seared.

This is why immorality is not only a sin against the individual, but the society. It compounds the moral decay. This is why God judges the nation as a whole.

“Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; in the time of their punishment they shall be cast down,” says the Lord. I will surely consume them,” says the Lord.

“No grapes shall be on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree, and the leaf shall fade; and the things I have given them shall pass away from them.”” The nation’s prosperity will dry up. God will remove His blessing.

And is this kind of judgment not far for America?

Chapter 8:13 through the end of Chapter 9 is actually read in Jewish synagogues each year on the 9th of Av.

Av is a month on the Jewish calendar. It corresponds with our July / August. And one of the ironies of history is that Solomon’s Temple and Herod’s Temple, 656 years later, were burned and toppled on the same day.

Tisha B’Av is an infamous date in Jewish history, and here’s the funeral dirge sung as a remembrance.

“Why do we sit still? Assemble yourselves, and let us enter the fortified cities, and let us be silent there.

For the Lord our God has put us to silence and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the Lord.” Where are the priests and prophets now, with their *“Peace, peace!”* God silenced them!

One day, God will silence all humanity. Today is the *“Day of Man.”* Mankind is having *his say* and getting *his way* - but the Bible warns us of the *“Day of the Lord”* - when God will have *His say* - *His will be done!*

“We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and there was trouble!” It’s sad, but God’s people were deceived by priests and prophets.

And this is a warning to us! Not everyone who speaks in the name of God, speaks the truth of God.

This is why we need to check out *what we hear* with *what was written*. How does a man’s teaching square with the Scriptures? We have to be discerning people.

This was the case with the believers in Berea. In Acts 17:11 we’re told they cross-checked the teaching they’d heard from Paul with the Scriptures they read.

“They were more noble... in that they received the Word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.”

Some Christians are gullible. They just assume that a so-called “*man of God*” will speak “*the words of God.*”

But that doesn't explain why so many Christians today have bought into false ideas and doctrine. *It shouldn't take long for us to shed our gullibility...*

No, the big reason Christians are duped so often is that we're lazy. We want the teacher to do the work of searching and studying for us. Rather than receive the Word with “*readiness*” and “*search the Scriptures daily,*” we just assume that what we're taught is true.

That's what happened in Jeremiah's day. God's people believed the lies of the priests and prophets, and refused to acknowledge the coming judgment...

Of which verse 16 describes, “**The snorting of His horses was heard from Dan.**” Dan is the northern-most Israel. From their the men of Judah in the south, heard the Babylonian war-horses snorting and stomping.

War was on the horizon. “**The whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of His strong ones; for they have come and devoured the land and all that is in it, the city and those who dwell in it. For behold, I will send serpents among you, vipers which cannot be charmed, and they shall bite you,**” says the Lord.”

The priests and prophets predicted peace, but the invaders were like a serpent that cannot be charmed. There'll be no negotiations or treaties. Babylon won't be satisfied until they take a bite out of God's people.

And how does Jeremiah respond to such dire warnings? “I would comfort myself in sorrow; my heart is faint in me. Listen! The voice, the cry of the daughter of my people from a far country (Judah is about to be taken into exile). Usually a prophet sees into the future, but Jeremiah *hears* into the future. Judah is crying out in remorse and regret. She’s been taken into captivity.

“Is not the Lord in Zion? Is not her King in her?” “Why have they provoked Me to anger with their carved images - with foreign idols?” *While there was still time for deliverance... while her King was in Zion...* the people refused to repent, and followed after idols.

Which leads to one of saddest, heart-wrenching verses in Scripture. Jeremiah 8:20, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!”

Israel has two harvests. The wheat or grains are harvested in the spring - fruits are gathered in the fall.

Grapes are harvested in September, but if you wait until November you lose the crop. The grapes wither on the vine. The grower has a door of opportunity. And if he misses it, there’s no going back - no mulligans.

And the same is true with salvation today. There’s a season in God’s plan for man for people to be saved, but when that season passes the opportunity is gone.

This why Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 6:2, “Now is the accepted time... now is the day of salvation..”

Today, God is holding out hope. *Come to Jesus and all is forgiven... all is forgotten.* But if you wait too late... and pass from time into eternity you forfeit all possibility for change. This is a key feature of eternity.

However you enter the eternal state you remain in that state forever. If you're *in Christ*, you're ***in*** forever. If you're *outside Christ*, then you'll be ***outside*** forever.

There are no second chances. “*The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and (you) are not saved!*”

The worst aspect of hell is the hopelessness - *never mind the fire and brimstone...* The greatest torture is knowing there's no possibility for a change of condition.

Imagine the folks outside the Ark when it started to rain. They're beating on the door, “*open up,*” but the door doesn't open. Their opportunity is over. This will be the case one day. When the harvest is past it's past.

Today, is the day of salvation! Come to Christ today!

“For the hurt of the daughter of my people I am hurt. I am mourning; astonishment has taken hold of me.” Jeremiah grieves. He can’t believe what’s happened.

It was so unnecessary, “Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no physician there? Why then is there no recovery for the health of the daughter of my people?”

Gilead is east of Jordan, and north of Moab. It was the home of the storax tree - from which a rosin was extracted. The gum of the tree had healing properties.

The expression, “*Is there not balm in Gilead?*” is the equivalent of saying, “*Is there no oil in Texas?*,” or “*No peaches in Georgia?*” Texas is known for its oil, as Georgia is for its peaches. And likewise Gilead was known for its medicinal balm. Of course, there is a balm in Gilead, and there is a cure for Judah’s sin...

God is the physician! He’s willing to save, and heal, and help - if His people will just call on His name!

The door of opportunity will close one day, but for the moment God is on the edge of His seat eager to save!

Jeremiah 9, “Oh, that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!”

Jeremiah felt for God’s people. His heart bled. His tears flowed. He cried so profusely, he compared himself to a bubbling fountain. He wept day and night.

Rather than bury his head, the man opened his eyes. He saw people as God sees people. And it's costly to look through God's eyes. Don't ask to see as God sees if you're not prepared for your heart to be broken.

Jeremiah cared and it cost him some sleep.

Perhaps what most characterizes our age is apathy. Modern life is so frenetic. We end up going in a million directions and never focus on what truly matters most.

We calculate through life without *feeling* our way.

Lois Cheney writes of our times, "Feeling blue? Buy some clothes. Feeling lonely? Turn on the radio. Feeling despondent? Read a funny book. Feeling bored? Watch TV. Feeling empty? Eat a sundae. Feeling worthless? Clean the house. Feeling sad? Tell a joke. Ain't this modern age wonderful? You don't gotta feel nothin', There's a substitute for everythin'! God have mercy on us." Indeed, God have mercy!

Music plays in our heads constantly, but when was the last time a song played on your heartstrings? When were passionate enough to be moved into action?

And I'd suggest the first concern that should draw our attention are the souls of the folks around us!

Doesn't the thought of your family, friends, and neighbors dying and heading to hell upset you? When was the last time you wept over another person's soul? Or your concern for their salvation drove you to tears?

It's been said, "A missionary is not just the person who crosses the sea, but who sees across the street."

Listen to this challenge by the late Keith Green, "Do you see, do you see. All the people sinking down. Don't you care, don't you care. Are you gonna let them down. How can you be so numb. Not to care if they come. You close your eyes. And pretend the job's done. 'Oh bless me Lord, bless me Lord.' You know its all I ever hear. No one aches, no one hurts. No one even sheds one tear. But He cries, He weeps, He bleeds. And He cares for your needs. And you just lay back. And keep soaking it in. Oh can't you see it's such sin.

Open up, open up. And give yourself away. You see the need, you hear the cries. So how can you delay. God's calling and you're the one. But like Jonah you run. He's told you to speak. But you keep holding it in. Oh, can't you see it's such sin. The world is sleeping in the dark. That the church just can't fight. 'Cause it's asleep in the light. How can you be so dead. When you've been so well fed. Jesus rose from the grave. And you, can't even get out of bed." Jeremiah ached and hurt and shed a tear for the salvation of Judah.

Verse 2, “Oh, that I had in the wilderness a lodging place for travelers; that I might leave my people, and go from them! For they are all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.” Jeremiah refused to abandon His people, as *much as he was tempted to do so.*

Neither did he whitewash or excuse away their sin.
He loved God’s people enough to tell them the truth!

“And like their bow they have bent their tongues for lies. They are not valiant for the truth on the earth. For they proceed from evil to evil, and they do not know Me,” says the Lord.” The Jews claimed to know God, *but not everyone who says they know Him, really does.*

“Everyone take heed to his neighbor, and do not trust any brother; for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbor will walk with slanderers. Everyone will deceive his neighbor, and will not speak the truth; they have taught their tongue to speak lies; they weary themselves to commit iniquity. Your dwelling place is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know Me,” says the Lord.” Integrity, being true to one’s word, had become a rarity. Dishonesty was now the norm. In Jeremiah’s day no one could be trusted any longer.

There was a day not long ago in America when “A man’s word was his bond.” There was an unwritten code of ethics among people. Folks trusted each other. You could do business on a handshake. But not today.

You’d better get it in writing, and then have a lawyer who can spin it your way in court. The old saying is true, “Trust everybody, but always cut the cards.”

Verse 7, “Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts: “Behold, I will refine them and try them; for how shall I deal with the daughter of My people? Their tongue is an arrow shot out; it speaks deceit; one speaks peaceably to his neighbor with his mouth, but in his heart he lies in wait.” Folks today look for opportunities to take each other to court, and strike a rich payday.

America has more lawyers per capita than any other country. It indicates our lack of ethics and integrity.

“Shall I not punish them for these things?” says the Lord. “Shall I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this?” Of course, God is justified in His judgment.

“I will take up a weeping and wailing for the mountains, and for the dwelling places of the wilderness a lamentation, because they are burned up, so that no one can pass through; nor can men hear the voice of the cattle. Both the birds of the heavens and the beasts have fled; they are gone.” The ravages of war will impact the land, and cause Jeremiah to weep.

“I will make Jerusalem a heap of ruins, a den of jackals. I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant.” Who is the wise man who may understand this? And who is he to whom the mouth of the Lord has spoken, that he may declare it? Why does the land perish and burn up like a wilderness, so that no one can pass through?” The reason for judgment is no secret. God declares it in the following verses...

“And the Lord said, “Because they have forsaken My law which I set before them, and have not obeyed My voice, nor walked according to it, but they have walked according to the dictates of their own hearts and after the Baals, which their fathers taught them,” therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Behold, I will feed them, this people, with wormwood (or bitterness), and give them water of gall to drink.

I will scatter them also among the Gentiles, whom neither they nor their fathers have known. And I will send a sword after them until I have consumed them.”

Verse 17, “Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Consider and call for the mourning women, that they may come; and send for skillful wailing women, that they may come.” In ancient Israel you could call for professional mourners to attend a funeral and weep and wail for the deceased. It added to the angst - heightened the grief.

I'm sure it often turned hypocritical. But it was intended to help the grieving express themselves.

In verse 18 Jeremiah hires these mourners to attend the funeral of God's people, "Let them make haste and take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may run with tears, and our eyelids gush with water." The Jews were cold and hard. They needed help expressing their grief.

"For a voice of wailing is heard from Zion: 'How we are plundered! We are greatly ashamed, because we have forsaken the land, because we have been cast out of our dwellings.'" Zion, that is Jerusalem, will do a lot of mourning - they'll be "*greatly ashamed*."

"Yet hear the word of the Lord, O women, and let your ear receive the word of His mouth; teach your daughters wailing, and everyone her neighbor a lamentation." Rather than hire professional mourning it'll be cheaper for the Jews to teach their women and neighbors to wail. There'll be plenty of reason to do so.

"For death has come through our windows, and entered our palaces, to kill off the children - no longer to be outside! And the young men - no longer on the streets!" What a horrible image. Like a burglar in the night, death creeps in the windows. The playgrounds will be empty of kids... you'll no longer see teenagers hanging out on the streets. They'll both die in war...

“Speak, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Even the carcasses of men shall fall as refuse on the open field, like cuttings after the harvester, and no one shall gather them.’”

Verse 23, “Thus says the Lord: “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches...”

And these are the three traits people today value most - *wisdom, strength, and riches - mind, muscles, and money - academics, athleticism, and acquisition.*

And it’s amazing how little has changed over the last 2500 years. Here’s where people *boast*. Here’s what they value *most*... People like to *file their degrees*, and *flex their pecks*, and *flaunt their wealth*. Yet Jeremiah warns us, beware. “*Glory not*” in these things...

1 John 2:17 tells us, “*The world is passing away...*” It’s fleeting. It’s temporary. The best education becomes outdated. Strength shrivels. Money vanishes. Boasting in wisdom, might, or riches is an empty boast.

“But let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,” says the Lord.” Wisdom, and might, and riches are okay, but it’s the knowledge of God that’s most important.

To receive God's lovingkindness, and to recognize His judgments, and to admire His righteousness this is cause to boast. This should raise our eyebrows, and create an aura of privilege - *when a man knows God!*

Next Saturday, *thanks to my son's invitation*, I'll play golf at Augusta National Golf Club. And if you know anything about golf you realize what a privilege and rare opportunity this happens to be. Everyone I tell, has the same astonished reaction, "*Whoa, really...*"

They're in awe. And this is how we should react to the privilege of knowing God! "*Wow! Whoa! You don't say... Knowing God! It don't get no better that that!*"

Verse 25, "*Behold, the days are coming,*" says the Lord, "*that I will punish all who are circumcised with the uncircumcised (Jews with the Gentiles) - Egypt, Judah, Edom, the people of Ammon, Moab, and all who are in the farthest corners, who dwell in the wilderness.*"

For all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart." The Jews were proud they were circumcised. They trusted in a one-time operation as a get-of-judgment-free card.

Yet God promises they'll be judged with the Gentiles.

Chapter 10, "*Hear the word which the Lord speaks to you, O house of Israel. Thus says the Lord: "Do not learn the way of the Gentiles; do not be dismayed at*

the signs of heaven, for the Gentiles are dismayed at them.” Jeremiah is speaking specifically of the evil of astrology. We worship the Creator, not His creation.

The stars and their orbits don't govern our lives. It's God who governs and determines the path of the stars.

It is interesting though that Jeremiah mentions how the Gentiles were “*dismayed*” at the heavenly bodies.

All the ancient civilizations had an unusual, disproportionate fear of the planets and the stars.

Why fear tiny patches of light in the night sky?

In fact, the ancients even gave names to planets they barely saw - that were almost indistinguishable...

The days of the week were named after the planets.

The ancients had a particular fixation on the planet Mars. The false god, Baal, was tied to Mars... Rome was said to be founded by the god of Mars...

It's fascinating that prior to 701 BC all the ancient calendars had a 360 day year. But afterwards, the calendars were adjusted to account for a change in the

Earth's rotation. Each culture's alteration was a bit different, but they all knew a recalibration was needed.

The Romans added 5.25 days to their calendar. The Hebrews added an extra month when needed. But obviously, something happened to the Earth's rotation.

There is a theory that I've read about that I believe has merit. It's quite provocative, for it flies in the face of modern assumptions about our planetary system.

It's been written about by NASA scientist, Donald Wesley Patten in his book, "[Catastrophism in the Old Testament](#)," and by a colleague of Albert Einstein, Immanuel Velikovsky in his book, "[Worlds In Collision](#)."

Patten believes that at one time in the past the Earth and Mars had orbits that brought them precariously close to one another. Some years within 28,000 miles, or eight times as close to the Earth as our moon.

If this is true, it means when ancient peoples looked into the night sky the planet Mars appeared 230 times larger than the moon appears to us. That would've been a terribly frightening sight. Patten calls these close encounters, "[near fly-bys](#)," and says they would've caused incredible, cataclysmic phenomena.

In fact, according to Patten these “near fly-bys” were cyclical - and thus, known about in advance. Ancient armies used them in the planning of their battles.

Patten suggests these “fly-bys” could’ve been the natural phenomena that God used to set off Noah’s flood, or the confusion at the Tower of Babel, or the destruction of Sodom, or the long day of Joshua.

This might even be the phenomena that causes the cataclysmic events of the Revelation, in the end times.

Jonathan Swift wrote Gulliver’s Travels in 1726, and in his story he mentioned the two moons of Mars - *and amazingly, their approximate distance from the planet.*

The scientific community didn’t discover these moons until 1877 - over 150 years later. They were spotted through the lens of a high-powered telescope at the United States Naval Observatory in Washington.

How did Jonathan Swift know? Perhaps he was drawing from ancient legends inspired by these fly-bys, during which the moons of Mars had been visible.

One thing is for sure, if these fly-bys had occurred it would explain verse 2 - *why the Gentiles were afraid of the planets.* It’s strange they came to worship objects they wouldn’t have been able to even see. Astrologers tried to chart their future through their alignments.

This is one explanation for how astrology came to hold such an evil grip on the ancient world.

People allowed fear to overcome their faith. They worshipped the creation, rather than the Creator.

God always wants us to live *by faith, not fear*.

Verse 3, “For the customs of the peoples are futile; for one cuts a tree from the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. They decorate it with silver and gold; they fasten it with nails and hammers so that it will not topple.” Every now and then at Christmas some well-meaning Scrooge reads this verse and claims Jeremiah 10 forbids Christmas trees.

Not so. Jeremiah is describing the idolatry of his day.

These trees were cut into phallic symbols and used in the worship of the Babylonian fertility gods.

Of course, it is true that in the past the yule log, or Christmas tree, did have pagan origins, as do many other of our Christmas and Easter customs.

Yet just because a practice was pagan in the past, doesn't mean it can't be redeemed and reinterpreted today. As far as I'm concerned a Christmas tree has nothing to do with paganism. It represents the Christ.

It's evergreen... which speaks of everlasting life.

The lights... are reminders of Jesus, the light of the world, and the fact we too should be lights for Him.

Even **gold garland...** seems fitting for a King.

Paul told the Corinthians they could eat meat that was sacrificed to idols - as long as in doing so, you didn't cause another believer any confusion. Meat is meat. God created it - there's nothing evil about it - just make sure no one equates your eating with idolatry.

And that principle applies to a Christmas tree. A tree is a tree, God's creation. And I doubt anyone who sees me setting up my Christmas tree thinks I'm sacrificing to idols. They assume I'm putting up a Christmas tree.

Verse 5 continues to talk about the pagan trees the Jews were turning into idols. **"They are upright, like a palm tree, and they cannot speak; they must be carried, because they cannot go by themselves."**

Why would you want to serve a God who can't speak and has to be carried wherever he needs to go?

"Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, nor can they do any good." In essence, these idols are powerless. They can't do evil, and they can't do good.

Of course, that doesn't mean *idolatry* is harmless.

In 1 Corinthians 10 Paul says, though the idol and its sacrifice, is nothing - the worship of it is something.

By worshipping or sacrificing to an idol you're connecting with the demon behind that idol. Take the idol out of the context of its idolatry and it's just a stick of wood, but in the hands of the demon behind it that idol is an evil thing, that we should avoid at all costs.

This gives us insight on how to handle ouija boards and tarot cards, and seances, and horoscopes.

Yes, these are just inanimate objects or people getting together, but the goal is to use these things to circumvent God and tap into satanic power. Thus, that makes them evils a Christian should avoid at all costs.

“Inasmuch as there is none like You, O Lord (You are great, and Your name is great in might), Who would not fear You, O King of the nations? For this is Your rightful due. For among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like You.

But they are altogether dull-hearted and foolish; a wooden idol is a worthless doctrine. Silver is beaten into plates; it is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz, the work of the craftsman and of the hands of the metalsmith; blue and

purple are their clothing; they are all the work of skillful men.” Their idols had to be decorated and spruced up by the work of men’s hands.

“But the Lord is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth will tremble, and the nations will not be able to endure His indignation. Thus you shall say to them: “The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens.”

Verse 11 is interesting, it’s the only verse in the book of Jeremiah that was written in Chaldean, the language of the Babylonians. Jeremiah wanted Babylon - as well as all nations - to take heed to this judgment!

Jeremiah continues to describe the magnificence and sovereignty of his God. “He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, and has stretched out the heavens at His discretion.” Imagine, God unrolled galaxy after galaxy.

The vast expanse of space... God “stretched out.”

“When He utters His voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens: “And He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth. He makes lightning for the rain, He brings the wind out of His treasuries.”

The wind is a mystery. Even modern meteorologists have a difficult time understanding the wind currents.

Jeremiah says God brings it out of His storehouse.

“Everyone is dull-hearted, without knowledge; every metalsmith is put to shame by an image; for his molded image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them.

They are futile, a work of errors; in the time of their punishment they shall perish.” Idols are impotent, silly.

“The Portion of Jacob is not like them, for He is the Maker of all things, and Israel is the tribe of His inheritance; the Lord of hosts is His name.”

Verse 17, “Gather up your wares from the land, O inhabitant of the fortress! For thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will throw out at this time the inhabitants of the land, and will distress them, that they may find it so.” Pack your bags, the invasion is about to start. God will uproot His people from the land He gave them.

And how does Jeremiah feel about it, “Woe is me for my hurt! My wound is severe. But I say, “Truly this is an infirmity, and I must bear it.” My tent is plundered, and all my cords are broken; my children have gone from me, and they are no more.” Jeremiah saw the Jews as his children. They’ll soon be hauled off to Babylon.

“There is no one to pitch my tent anymore, or set up my curtains.” Verse 21, “For the shepherds (or the leaders of the nation) have become dull-hearted, and have not sought the Lord; therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered.

“Behold, the noise of the report has come, and a great commotion out of the north country, to make the cities of Judah desolate, a den of jackals.” Here’s the warning, *“The Babylonians are on their way!”*

“O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.” You think you’re *the captain of your own ship - master of your own fate - shaper of your own destiny* - you’re not!

God positions people. We’re pawns on His chess board, and God alone moves the pieces.

Proverbs 16:9 puts it this way, “A man’s heart plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.” Here’s the shorter version, “Man purposes, but God disposes.”

This is why we need to be both *faithful and flexible*. God can, and will, and often does - change our direction in midstream. He tests us to see if we’re really following Him. We need to be ready to adjust and go!

Verse 24, “O Lord, correct me, but with justice; not in Your anger, lest You bring me to nothing.” Jeremiah knew God could bring him to nothing, and would be justified in doing so. He was leaning on God’s mercy!

“Pour out Your fury on the Gentiles, who do not know You, and on the families who do not call on Your name; for they have eaten up Jacob, devoured him and consumed him, and made his dwelling place desolate.”

Jeremiah 10:25 is often quoted annually by Jews at their Passover Seder. This verse ends what’s come to be called “The Temple Discourses” (Chapters 7-10).

And it was these blistering judgments that turned the religious establishment against the Prophet Jeremiah.

They’re out to get him. Next time the plot thickens!