

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

JEREMIAH 22-23

My wife loves jigsaw puzzles. She can tie up the dinner table for days working on a complicated puzzle.

The name “jigsaw puzzle” came from how the puzzles were originally made. Maps were glued to a sheet of wood, and then cut into pieces with a jigsaw.

According to the people at the Guinness Book of World Records the jigsaw puzzle with the most pieces was assembled in September 2010 by college students in Vietnam. It contained over over 550,000 pieces.

Well, in Jeremiah 22 we have a jigsaw puzzle of sorts. The chapter contains some technical, prophetic details that when put together solve a divine puzzle.

Chapter 22:1, “Thus says the Lord: “Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and there speak this word...” For 40 years Jeremiah warned Judah of coming judgment. Five kings presided over Judah’s last days. Here’re the last kings and their timeline...

The good and godly, King **Josiah** reigned from 641 - 609 - 31 years. He died in battle against the Egyptians.

His son, **Jehoahaz**, reigned just three months.

He was succeeded by another of Josiah's sons, his brother, **Jehoiakim**. He ruled 11 years, from 609 - 597.

Jehoiakim was succeeded by his son, **Jehoiachin** (sometimes called **Jeconiah** or **Coniah**) who reigned in Judah three short months, before being taken captive.

Then the last king of Judah, **Zedekiah**, who was Jehoiachin's uncle, reigned 11 years, from 597 - 586.

All five kings heard God's warning, yet remained cold and callous. All the while they tested God's patience His anger was boiling. Now in chapter 22 it spills over.

In verse 2 God tells Jeremiah what to say to the house of David, to the Davidic kings, **“Hear the word of the Lord, O king of Judah, you who sit on the throne of David, you and your servants and your people who enter these gates! Thus says the Lord: “Execute judgment and righteousness, and deliver the plundered out of the hand of the oppressor. Do no wrong and do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, or the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place.”**

God has always been, **“The God of the Underdog.”** He shows pity on the poor and underprivileged. Here God mentions **“strangers”** - or perhaps undocumented immigrants. Regardless of the country's immigration policy, the Church should be

kind to the stranger.

If we want to express God's heart to the world we'll show compassion to the disadvantaged and displaced.

Benevolence shouldn't be an afterthought. It should be front and center in the mission of God's people.

“For if you indeed do this thing (that is *“do no wrong to the stranger...”*), then shall enter the gates of this house, riding on horses and in chariots, accompanied by servants and people, kings who sit on the throne of David.” A kingdom known for its compassion will be preserved. God will see to it the heirs of David remain on the throne. They'll ride in and out of royal courts.

“But if you will not hear these words, I swear by Myself,” says the Lord, “that this house shall become a desolation.”” And this a stunning warning. *“This house”* was the house of David - the Davidic dynasty of kings.

If you were a Jew waiting on the coming of Messiah, this prophecy would make the hair stand up on back of your neck. In 2 Samuel 7:11 David is told, “The Lord tells you that He will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and your rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish His kingdom. He shall build a house for My name (that

was Solomon), and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.” And it’s these last words that stand out. An heir of David and Solomon will sit on the throne of Judah forever.

The Jews understood the Messiah to be this eternal king. Yet if God makes good on His threat, and terminates the Solomonic dynasty. In other words, *“this house becomes a desolation,”* what will happen to the promised Messiah? *How will He ever sit on the throne?*

I’m sure Satan must’ve snickered to himself. He assumed that God in His anger was about to shoot Himself in the foot. He was about to cut off the promised Messiah and ultimately our hope of salvation!

Verse 6, *“For thus says the Lord to the house of the king of Judah: “You are Gilead to Me, the head of Lebanon; yet I surely will make you a wilderness, cities which are not inhabited.”* Gilead was and is one of the most fruitful areas in northern Israel, yet if His people continue to sin, God can turn it into a wilderness.

“I will prepare destroyers against you, everyone with his weapons; they shall cut down your choice cedars and cast them into the fire. And many nations will pass by this city; and everyone will say to his neighbor, ‘Why has the Lord done so to this great city?’

Then they will answer, ‘Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord

their God, and worshiped other gods and served them.” Weep not for the dead, nor bemoan him; weep bitterly for him who goes away, for he shall return no more, nor see his native country.

For thus says the Lord concerning Shallum the son of Josiah, king of Judah, who reigned instead of Josiah his father, who went from this place:” At the time the world’s superpowers were headed for a showdown.

Babylon was on the rise. Egypt and Assyria had allied oppose Babylon’s advance. It all came to a head on the Syrian frontier, at a place called “*Carchemish*.”

But to get there Pharaoh Necho moved his troops north through Judah. King Josiah tried to help Babylon and went to oppose Necho. He was warned, but didn’t back off. Josiah died in battle in the valley of Megiddo.

This “*Shallum*” was another name for Josiah's son, Jehoahaz. He took the throne in his father’s place, but he was as anti-Egyptian as Josiah. Thus, Jeremiah writes in verse 11, “He shall not return here anymore, but he shall die in the place where they have led him captive, and shall see this land no more.” Pharaoh Necho unseated King Jehoahaz and took him to Egypt as a prisoner. He ruled in Judah only three months.

And in his place, Necho put another of Josiah's sons, Jehoiakim, on the throne. Jehoahaz' brother reigned 11 years, from 609-597 BC... And it's King Jehoiakim who becomes the subject of the next few verses...

Verse 13, “Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness and his chambers by injustice, who uses his neighbor's service without wages and gives him nothing for his work...” There was nothing wrong building a palace... *as long as you pay your workers.*

But here, King Jehoiakim is in big trouble! For God is a union boss. Leviticus 19:13 laid down the Law, “You shall not defraud your neighbor, nor rob him.” And the context of the prohibition is that of paying wages.

Verse 14, woe to Jehoiakim, “who says, ‘I will build myself a wide house with spacious chambers, and cut out windows for it, paneling it with cedar and painting it with vermilion (which is a brilliant red).’ “Shall you reign because you enclose yourself in cedar?” Living in a large, beautiful palace doesn't establish a king's reign.

“Did not your father eat and drink, and do justice and righteousness? Then it was well with him.” King Josiah had been obedient to God. He did justly and rightly. That's why Josiah had reigned for three decades.

“He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. Was not this knowing Me?” says the Lord.”

Ultimately, Josiah’s righteousness stemmed from the fact that he knew God, but his knowledge of God was revealed by his compassion to the “*poor and needy.*”

This is what we’re told in 1 John 3:17, “Whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?” Jesus cares about a person’s *stomach* as well as their *soul*. Here, the king’s performance is measured his compassion toward society’s neediest.

Verse 17, “Yet your eyes and your heart are for nothing but your covetousness, for shedding innocent blood, and practicing oppression and violence.”

Therefore thus says the Lord concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah: “They shall not lament for him, saying, ‘Alas, my brother!’ or ‘Alas, my sister!’ They shall not lament for him, saying, ‘Alas, master!’ or ‘Alas, his glory!’ There’ll be no remorse at his burial.

“He shall be buried with the burial of a donkey, dragged and cast out beyond the gates of Jerusalem.”

2 Chronicles 36:6 says the Babylonians chained him and drug him to Babel... He was replaced by his son, Jehoiachin, who lasted just three months like his uncle.

Jehoiachin was also taken to Babylon in 597 BC during the second deportation of Jews from Jerusalem.

He was replaced by the final king, Zedekiah.

Verse 20, “Go up to Lebanon, and cry out, and lift up your voice in Bashan; cry from Abarim, for all your lovers are destroyed.” The prophets had testified that God’s hand was on the Babylonians. He was going to use them against His own people to bring judgment.

Yet Judah refused to accept their plight. Instead they allied themselves to Assyria and Egypt. These other nations were her lovers that ended up being destroyed.

“I spoke to you in your prosperity, but you said, ‘I will not hear.’ This has been your manner from your youth, that you did not obey My voice.” Zedekiah will turn to God for help when Jerusalem is under siege and he has no other choice - but in the day’s of Judah’s prosperity she didn’t think she needed God’s help.

“The wind shall eat up all your rulers, and your lovers shall go into captivity;

surely then you will be ashamed and humiliated for all your wickedness.

O inhabitant of Lebanon, making your nest in the cedars, how gracious will you be when pangs come upon you, like the pain of a woman in labor? “As I live,” says the Lord, “though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet on My right hand, yet I would pluck you off...” This man the Lord calls “*Coniah*” was Jehoiakim’s son. His proper name was “*Jehoiachin*” - which means “*Jehovah will establish.*”

But in addressing him, here God drops the prefix, “*Jehoi*” - an abbreviation of God’s name, “*Jehovah.*”

This is telling - this is revealing... God is deliberately saying He doesn’t want to be associated with this man.

One day Alexander the Great was inspecting his troops when he came upon a soldier who been lazy and exhibited a bad attitude. When the general asked him his name. He sheepishly responded, “*Alexander.*”

The general leaped from his horse, grabbed the soldier, and starting shaking him. He said, “*Young man, either change your attitude or change your name.*” The general didn’t want to share his name with this man.

I hope the King of kings doesn’t feel that way about us. We call ourselves *Christian*. Would Jesus tell you, “*Either change your name or change your*

attitude.”

This is how God felt about Coniah. God won't have this man sitting on the throne. He'll cut off him and his descendants... The king's ring was his official seal. It represented his royal authority. Even if Coniah was God's ring, God would still pluck him off. God would rather not have a king, than be represented by Coniah.

“And I will give you into the hand of those who seek your life, and into the hand of those whose face you fear - the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the hand of the Chaldeans. So I will cast you out, and your mother who bore you, into another country where you were not born; and there you shall die.

But to the land to which they desire to return, there they shall not return.” Jehoiachin lived 37 years in Babylon and died there just as God had said. He actually outlived the king who took his place, Zedekiah.

And throughout King Zedekiah's tenure false prophets kept predicting that Coniah would return to the land and retake the throne. It never happened.

There's an interesting archeological footnote... The name “**Jehoiachin**” and the names of five of his seven sons appear on a tablet discovered near the famous Ishtar Gate in the ruins of Babylon's Hanging Gardens.

The king was listed among the people who received oil and grain from the king of Babylon. That Jehoiachin found favor in Babylon is confirmation of 2 Kings 25:30.

Verse 28, “Is this man Coniah a despised, broken idol - a vessel in which is no pleasure?” The answer is yes! Why are they cast out, he and his descendants, and cast into a land which they do not know?”

O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord: ‘Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not prosper in his days; for none of his descendants shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David, and ruling anymore in Judah.’” Jehoiachin had sons, *but it would be as if he didn’t... as if he was childless*. None of Jehoiachin’s sons sat on the throne. He was succeeded by Zedekiah - an uncle, not a son.

Jehoiachin did have a famous and godly grandson.

Zerubbabel led the first group of Jews home from Babylon to rebuild Jerusalem. But Zerubbabel was the Persian governor. He never attempted to be their king.

God had promised David that he and his son, Solomon, would never lack a heir to sit on the throne.

He promised that their kingdom would be eternal. This meant Messiah was to be born of David's lineage, and come through the royal line succeeding Solomon.

Yet here in Jeremiah 22 God curses the bloodline of Jehoiachin, and thus the blood lineage of Solomon.

And for centuries this has baffled the Jewish rabbis. Why did God sabotage His own promise of salvation?

Yet I hope this comes as no surprise - but **God knew what He was doing...** He was identifying the Messiah with undeniable certainty. God was setting the stage so that Jesus would be the only man qualified for the job!

In the NT Gospels you'll find two genealogies...

First, in Matthew 1:1-17. Matthew a Jew and Levite, wanted to prove Jesus' Messiahship - so he traced His lineage from *Abraham* to *David*, through *Solomon*, to *Jehoiachin* - all the way to *Joseph*, Jesus' stepdad.

He established that Jesus was the royal heir.

The second genealogy is in Luke 3:23-38. Luke was a Gentile. His concern was Messiah's humanity, so he traced Jesus' lineage from the first man, Adam, to Abraham, to David... but rather through Solomon, he detours the cursed line of

Jehoiachin, and goes from David, to another son Nathan, to Jesus' mother Mary.

And when you put these two genealogies together the genius of our great God becomes evident...

As Joseph's step-son Jesus was firstborn in His family, and entitled to His father's *legal rights*, which included royal succession. But because Jesus was virgin born, so He didn't have Joseph's blood, which avoided the blood curse God placed on Jehoiachin.

This means, Jesus is David and Solomon's **legal heir** through Joseph, but He is David's **natural heir** through Mary, who descended from another of David's sons, Nathan, not Solomon. This avoided the blood curse.

When God cursed the house of Jehoiachin, Satan and his demons laughed - *the rabbis gasped*. But what appeared to be a divine gaffe, was God's means of pinpointing exactly the identity of His Messiah.

In the Bethlehem manger the jigsaw pieces all came together. The puzzle was solved. The only person who can possibly be Messiah of Israel is Jesus Christ.

Chapter 23, **“Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!” says the Lord.**” The shepherds he speaks of here were the political leaders.

“Therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel against the shepherds 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.” The king and his court had failed to listen to God and His prophets. It led directly to the dispersement of God’s people to Babylon.

God will judge the leaders for their failures.

But He’ll be merciful to the people. The mistakes of their leaders won’t be permanent. “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.” The Jews that are hauled away will be returned. They’ll be regathered!

And notice the scope of this prophecy. Jeremiah is not simply talking about the Jews who returned from Babylonian exile in 535 BC. Instead, Jeremiah speaks of the Jews who are returned from *“all countries.”*

The Bible makes it clear there'll be two regathering of Jews. The first was their return from Babylon. It occurred in three waves. **Zerubbabel** returned to rebuild the Temple. **Ezra** came to rebuild the people, and **Nehemiah** returned with Jews to rebuild the walls.

But the second regathering of Jews to Judah is referred to in Isaiah 11:11, “It shall come to pass in that day that the LORD shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people.” When they returned from Babylon they lived in the land for another 600 years, until 70 AD, when the Jews revolted against Rome. The Romans put down the uprising, burned Jerusalem, and scattered many of the remaining Jews.

And this began a period of Jewish history known as the “Diaspora” - or [the Jewish Dispersion](#). It has lasted now for the last 1900 years. Jews have been scattered around the globe... *until today!* For only the second time in their history another regathering is taking place.

In 1948 there were 700,000 Jews in all Israel. In 1980 the number had swelled to 3.2 million, in 2000 there were 5 million, and today the number of Jews in Israel is over 6 million. Jews are returning to their land.

And here’s the point, the Bible doesn’t predict three, or five, or twelve regatherings of Jews to their land.

The Bible mentions two, and at the time of the second the Lord will return to establish His kingdom.

This is one of those prophecies that I believe points to the return of Jesus in our lifetime. He’s coming soon.

Verse 4, “I 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.”

We know who these future shepherds will be. In Matthew 19:28 Jesus said to His 12 disciples, “In the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

When Jesus returns and establishes His kingdom, His disciples will be responsible for ruling over Israel.

Verse 5, “Behold, 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.”

The Bible speaks of Messiah as being a branch from David's family tree - but unlike Jehoiachin who was an evil branch, Messiah is a “*branch of righteousness.*”

His roots are righteousness. His limbs are holiness. His fruit is love and mercy. Rather than a cursed-king, with cursed blood. This coming King will rule forever.

“In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His

name by which He will be called: **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.** Or in Hebrew, “**Jehovah Tsidkenu,**” i.e. *Jehovah our righteousness.*

Jesus is both Jehovah God, and our righteousness.

And through Jesus “**Judah will be saved.**” In one act, on the cross, Jesus fulfilled God’s holy demands, and at the same time, extended to us God’s mercy.

And “**Jehovah Tsidkenu**” is just one of several similar names for God in the Bible. On occasions one of God’s attributes is compounded with His name, “**Jehovah.**”

Genesis 22:14, “Jehovah-Jireh,” **Lord will provide**

Exodus 15:26, “Jehovah-Rapha,” **Lord that heals**

Exodus 17:15, “Jehovah-Nissi,” **Lord my banner**

Judges 6:24, “Jehovah-Shalom,” **Lord my peace**

1Samuel 1:3, “Jehovah-Sabbaoth,” **Lord of hosts**

Exodus 31:13, “Jehovah-Maccasdeschem,” **Lord your Sanctifier**

Psalms 23:1, “Jehovah-Raah,” **Lord my Shepherd**

Ezekiel 48:35, “Jehovah-Shammah,” **Lord is present.**

It’s a good idea to memorize these names and address God according to your particular need...

If you need money for the rent, He's **Jehovah-Jireh**, *our Provider...* If your soul is troubled and worried you need **Jehovah-Shalom**, *the Lord my peace...* If you're sick, seek **Jehovah-Rapha**, *the Lord that heals*. It strengthens your faith to recall who it is that you serve.

“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, ‘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.”

Passover is the oldest religious observance and holiday in the history of humanity. It's a 3400 year old celebration. For three millennia God has been known as the God who brought the Hebrews out of Egypt.

But the day is coming when God will be known as the God who brought the Jews out of all the countries. This final regathering will be a new benchmark.

Verse 9, Jeremiah states, “**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.” God's word staggered Jeremiah.

“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. “For both prophet and priest are profane; yes, in My house I have found their wickedness,” says the Lord.” The problems in the nation were a reflection of what was occurring in God’s house. The prophets and priests had become corrupt.

If the plight of a nation is a indication of the state of God’s people, *what does that say for the church in America?* **Let judgment begin at the house of the Lord!**

Verse 12 continues to speak of the false prophets and bogus priests, “**Therefore 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.

“**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 strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns back from his wickedness.**” The prophets of Israel were no better than the pagan prophets of Baal.

They compromised their devotion to God, and committed spiritual adultery with idols. Rather than trumpet truth, they spoke lies that embolden evil doers.

“All of them are like Sodom to Me, and her inhabitants like Gomorrah.” Their spiritual infidelity was just as offensive as Sodom and Gomorrah’s sexual sin.

“Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts concerning the prophets: ‘Behold, I will feed them with wormwood (or bitterness), and make them drink the water of gall (potion of poison); for from the prophets of Jerusalem profaneness has gone out into all the land.’”

Thus says the Lord of hosts: “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.”

Notice, Jeremiah’s description of the false prophets. *“They speak a vision of their own heart, not from the mouth of the Lord.”* This is what we hear from pulpits today - not the sound doctrines of Scripture, but *the muddying of the things of God with the opinions of men.* It’s not man’s vision, but God’s Word we need!

“They continually 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 come upon you.’”

The false prophets had given the people a false sense of security. They were

telling folks who despised God and His standards, that everything will be okay.

“Don’t worry, God is good. He’s kind. He would never send anyone to hell. No evil will come upon you.”

“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?” The folks speaking God had never heard from God, or even consulted His Word.

“Behold, 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 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. “I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran.

I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.”

Jeremiah was not afraid to speak God’s truth. God’s anger and judgment was coming on the wicked like a whirlwind - a furious storm. *Everything will not be okay.*

The prophets who were speaking for God had not been sent by God. How dare these men spout, *“Thus says the Lord...”* God hadn’t spoken to any of them.

This needs to be emphasized to every new believer, *not everybody who speaks*

for God is really from God.

Verse 22, **But 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.**” If the false prophets had really been of God they would’ve first repented themselves.

“Am I a God near at hand,” says the Lord, **“and not a God afar off? Can anyone hide himself in secret places, so I shall not see him?”** says the Lord; **“do I not fill heaven and earth?”** says the Lord.” God is all-knowing and omni-present. You cannot run from God.

Ask Jonah... He purchased a ferry to the ends of the earth, yet God tracked down the runaway prophet.

Verse 25, **“I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in My name, saying, ‘I have dreamed, I have dreamed!’ How long 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 to make My people forget My name by their dreams which everyone tells his neighbor, as their fathers forgot My name for Baal.”** One of the ways a false prophet manipulates and intimidates God’s people is by appealing to the supernatural - *dreams and visions*.

If he's convincing enough with his hyper-spirituality, you walk away thinking *who am I to question him? He gets heavy revvies - divine communiques from God. I can barely read and understand my Bible. Who am I?*

If you're thirsty for God, and think He's drinking what you long for - you're a candidate for serious deception.

This is why I'm leery of dreams and visions. Not that I don't believe God speaks in such ways, I just know God has first and foremost spoken to us through His through His Word. I take the approach, "Show me in the Book! Chapter and verse..." and then I'll listen.

Paul wrote to the Galatians (1:8), "Even if... an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than we have preached to you, let him be accursed." If an angel sits on the foot of your bed, and contradicts what is written in God's Word - *let him be accursed!*

A fallen angel, Satan, has been known to author dreams. Trace the roots of every major cult and you'll find at its inception a purported dream or vision.

Don't forget, *dreams come from three sources: God, Satan, or the pizza.* The prophets in Jeremiah's day were spouting dreams that would turn into nightmares.

Be careful about dreams. Did you hear about the fellow who said, "I dreamed I

was eating spaghetti, and when I woke up, my pajama string was gone!"

Verse 28 conveys a profound thought, "The prophet 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." God says as the chaff is to the wheat, so is a dream to God's Word.

The guy with a dream will woo and ahh the crowd. Everyone is impressed with his super-spirituality. He's like a freeway accident - he's sure to draw a crowd.

Whereas, the guy who seriously and methodically teaches the Bible faithfully is boring and redundant.

But what's going to make you grow healthy? How do you muscle up - *by eating the chaff, the worthless stalks and shells? Or the wheat - the nutritional grain?*

The guy who eats only chaff, says, "Ah shucks, it made me *feel full*, but it didn't make me any stronger!"

Whereas, the person who feeds on the Word of God is like the guy who ate his **Wheaties!** The Bible is "the breakfast of champions!" It's the nutrition we need.

I love verse 29, "Is not My word like a fire?" says the Lord, "and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?" A dream, a vision is like a morning dew or a

summer haze. It doesn't last until noon. When the sun does its job, it's gone. It has no lasting impact.

Whereas, God's Word is like a fire! It's powerful. It can warm up a cold house, or light up a dark road.

The Word is like a hammer. It makes its point. It can break a stoney heart, or dash the toughest doubts.

“Therefore behold, I am against the prophets,” says the Lord, “who steal My words every one from his neighbor.” Woe to the false spokesman. It's not just the error he spews, but it's God's truth he fails to deliver.

Nothing is worse than to rob people of God's Word.

“Behold, I am against the prophets,” says the Lord, “who use their tongues and say, ‘He says.’ If you want to intimidate someone spiritually, add a little vibrato to your voice, *“Thus says the Lord...”* (Even though he hasn't). The false prophets had perfected this charade.

Sometimes we too toss this about a little to flippantly.

We speak of a decision, *“The Lord told me...”* as if it were a direct order. It was more likely something we felt impressed to do, or felt it was from the Lord, or was the wise thing to do. Well, just saying that is more accurate, than referring to it as

a direct order from God.

Verse 32, “Behold, I am against those who prophesy false dreams,” says the Lord, “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.”

Note the pun: *these are unprofitable prophets.*

“So when these people or the prophet or the priest ask you, saying, ‘What is the oracle of the Lord?’ An “*oracle*” is a spontaneous utterance originating from the spiritual world. It’s a supernatural communique.

So when they ask, ‘*What is the oracle of the Lord?*’

You shall then say to them, ‘What oracle?’ I will even forsake you,” says the Lord. “And 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 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.”

If you want to know what the Lord has spoken read His Word. Don't lean on this divine oracles any longer.

“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.” Everyone had created their own oracle. Rather than studying objective truth, and rightly dividing God's Word, everyone preferred to have their own supernatural utterance. “*Well, God told me...*”

Everyone's word became their own oracle. They tailored it to sanction whatever they desired. It made for spiritual chaos. Without a standard, a plumb-line it was anything goes... *and all in the name of God.*

Thus you shall say to the prophet, ‘What has the Lord answered you?’ and, ‘What has the Lord spoken?’

But 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 to you, saying, “Do not say, ‘The oracle of the Lord!’” therefore behold, 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.’” In short, prophets who speak of God's oracle - *against His express command* - to foster

their own agenda will be put to shame and forgotten.

And who were these prophets? They were big names in their own day... *but who are they now?*

We know Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Daniel, Ezekiel - men of God's Word. Their names will never be forgotten, but those who speak in the name of God, a message that was not from God, will forever be put to shame!