

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

JEREMIAH 24-26

Most of us love our country, pray for our leaders, support our troops, even pay our taxes... *after we've exhausted the loopholes.* Actually, most Americans are patriotic. We'd take up arms to defend our country!

Nathan Hale, an officer in the Continental Army, was captured by the British Redcoats and sentenced to swing from the gallows. Hale's final words were, "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."

Jeremiah was also a patriot! He loved his nation. I'm sure, He was willing to fight to defend his country!

Yet rather than fight, God instructed Jeremiah to advocate surrender. Here was the message: *judgment is inevitable, fighting is foolish, the enemy is God's instrument. To oppose Babylon was to resist God's will.*

This was a tough message for a patriot to deliver.

It went against his every fiber. It was like asking the Joint Chiefs to initiate a unilateral disarmament. Yet this was the message God called Jeremiah to herald...

Chapter 24 begins, "The Lord showed me, and there were two baskets of figs set before the temple of the Lord, after Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and the princes of Judah with the craftsmen and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon.

One basket had very good figs, like the figs that are first

ripe; and the other basket had very bad figs which could not be eaten, they were so bad. Then the Lord said to me, “What do you see, Jeremiah?” And I said, “Figs, the good figs, very good; and the bad, very bad, which cannot be eaten, they are so bad.”

This vision was given to Jeremiah after the second deportation of Jews to Babylon... The first occurred in 605 BC in the reign of Jehoiakim. The king of Babylon was fresh from victory at Carchemish over Egypt and Assyria. Nebuchadnezzar was on the warpath!

He wanted to flex his muscle - so Nebuchadnezzar took some of the Jewish nobles prisoner to Babylon. Among them were four you'll recognize: *Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael*. Or you might know those last three by their Babylonian names: *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego*. These were the “*good figs*.”

The second deportation occurred in 597 BC. After Babylon's failed invasion of Egypt, Jeconiah, King of Judah, rebelled against Babylon and allied with Egypt.

When Nebuchadnezzar heard of it, he put down Judah's revolt by taking King Jeconiah into captivity, as well as, the Prophet Ezekiel, many of the skilled craftsmen, and the bronze vessels from the Temple.

The “*good figs*” were the Jews who were taken to Babylon. The “*bad figs*” were those left behind.

In Jeconiah's place, Nebuchadnezzar installed a king he hoped would be loyal, Jeconiah's uncle, Zedekiah.

History tells us that after the second deportation,

Nebuchadnezzar snuffed out a couple of uprisings in the east. But this gave the Jewish false prophets hope that Nebuchadnezzar and Babel would be toppled.

Despite Jeremiah's warning to the contrary, and his pleas to Judah to surrender to Babylon, King Zedekiah listened to the false prophets, and rebelled again.

This set up the final siege of Jerusalem in 586 BC.

Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem, burned the Temple, and took most of the remaining people from Judah into exile. Judah became a province of Babylon, putting an end to an independent Jewish kingdom.

The Babylonian conquest of Judah is a strategic event in biblical history. It began an era the Scriptures call "**the times of the Gentiles.**" Starting with the fall of Jerusalem until today, the Gentile nations have dominated the Jews - and the Kingdom of God once embodied in Israel, has since gone underground.

This is the reason God gave to Jeremiah and His people a New Covenant. And under this NC the Kingdom of God will function *spiritually* rather than *politically*, and *personally* rather than *provincially*.

Daniel describes the succession of Gentile kingdoms who will rule the world. Chapter 2 pictures them as flashy medals - what they look like as seen by men.

Chapter 7 envisions them as ferocious, devouring beasts - what they look like through God's eyes.

The world dominating empires Daniel saw was Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, and a last days kingdom headed by

the Antichrist. It's during this yet future kingdom that Jesus will return and establish His Kingdom on earth - this time *physically and politically*.

Don't think Jeremiah's prophecy only relates to a bygone era with no relevance for today. It sets up still future events and the fulfillment of all God's promises.

Verse 4, **Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: 'Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge those who are carried away captive from Judah, whom I have sent out of this place for their own good, into the land of the Chaldeans.'" Notice the phrase, "for their own good."**

No child likes to be spanked, but it's necessary training. It's *for their own good*. And so it is with God's discipline in our lives. He allows trials to shape us.

Hebrews 12:6, **"Whom the Lord loves He chastens.."**

God's goal in our lives is to *bless us* not *baby us*. He's raising *strong believers* not *spoiled brats*.

"For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land; I will build them and not pull them down, and I will plant them and not pluck them up. Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart." Here's a preamble for the new covenant. We'll talk much about it over the next few weeks...

It involves three promises... a **regathering** of Jews to the land, a spiritual **regeneration** of their hearts, and a **re-**

establishment of God's Kingdom to Israel. Here Jeremiah mentions the first two of these promises...

Verse 8, 'And as the bad figs which cannot be eaten, they are so bad, surely thus says the Lord - 'so will I give up Zedekiah the king of Judah, his princes, the residue of Jerusalem who remain in this land, and those who dwell in the land of Egypt.'" There were Jews who had fled to Egypt in fear of the Babylonians. God had commanded them *not to flee, but to surrender*.

"I will deliver them to trouble into all the kingdoms of the earth, for their harm, to be a reproach and a byword, a taunt and a curse, in all places where I shall drive them. And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence among them, till they are consumed from the land that I gave to them and their fathers."

As it turns out the Jews prospered during their time in Babylon. Those who fled to Egypt and elsewhere, instead of surrendering to Babylon ended up in trouble.

There's a lesson to be learned here... **A big part of repentance is accepting the consequences of our sin.**

The Jews didn't want to surrender to Babylon. It went against their grain. But it was the bed they made for themselves, and now they would have to lie in it.

Chapter 25, The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon)...

As we've mentioned the book of Jeremiah is not in chronological order. The prophecy here in Chapter 25 was given 18 years before the prophecy in Chapter 24.

Chapter 25 is a mid-life or mid-ministry reflection on the part of Jeremiah. He had ministered 23 years by this point, He'll end up ministering another 17 years.

So here's the word of the Lord "which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying: "From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, even to this day, this is the twenty-third year in which the word of the Lord has come to me; and I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, but you have not listened."

Jeremiah had been faithful to speak. *He'd showed up early to work.* It was the people who hadn't listened.

"And the Lord has sent to you all His servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, but you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear." The Jews treated Jeremiah the way they had all the prophets. Jeremiah was smart enough not to take it personally.

Often rejection a Christian experiences is not about them. What we stand for is being scorned, not us.

Verse 5, "They said, 'Repent now everyone of his evil way and his evil doings, and dwell in the land that the Lord has given to you and your fathers forever and ever. Do not go after other gods to serve them and worship them, and do not provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands; and I will not harm you.' 7 Yet you have not listened to Me," says the

Lord, “that you might provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt. “Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘Because you have not heard My words, behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,’ says the Lord, ‘and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, **My servant**, and will bring them against this land, against its inhabitants, and against these nations all around, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, a hissing, and perpetual desolations.”

For centuries God called the Hebrews, “*My servant.*”

How shocking it was to now hear Him refer to an idol-worshipping, Jew-hating, uncircumcised Gentile like the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar, as “**My servant!**”

Nebuchadnezzar was probably the most absolute despot the world has ever seen. He erected a golden image of himself and threatened the world with a fiery furnace if they didn’t bow down and pay him homage.

Nebuchadnezzar was an egomaniac. He was wicked and barbarous, yet God calls him “**My servant.**”

This reminds us, **just because God uses a person, doesn’t mean He condones all that person does.**

God can use anyone, even a tainted vessel. He uses a corrupt pastor; then turns around and judges him for his corruption. Don’t be proud when God uses you. He may be using you *in spite of you* - not *because of you*.

Verse 10, “**Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the**

light of the lamp.” The sound of millstones spoke of commerce. The light of the lamp spoke of safety... God is going to shut down business.

And no one will feel safe any longer. You'll blow out the candle at night in fear of what the darkness holds.

There'll be no weddings or celebrations.

Verse 11, **“And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.”** This is an amazing prophecy. God reveals the duration of their captivity.

The first deportees were taken to Babel in 605 BC. The Persians defeated Babylon in 536 BC. One of the first decrees the Persian conqueror, Cyrus, issued was to allow the Jews to return to their homeland. The first Jews returned home with Governor Zerubbabel in 535 BC, exactly 70 years after their exile had begun.

It's also interesting, Jerusalem was destroyed and the Temple burned in 586 BC. The Temple was rebuilt by Zerubbabel, and finished by Ezra in 515. Again 70 years later. Either way you count it the time period is the same. Seventy years separated the servitude of the nation and the return of the Jews to their land.

Of course the question arises, why seventy years?

We're told in 2 Chronicles 36:21, **“Until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.”** The law of Moses not only required a Sabbath day, but a Sabbath year. Every seventh year the land was to rest or lie dormant. This allowed it to replenish

itself of nutrients.

But for 490 years greedy, unbelieving Israel had disobeyed this Law. So for every year of disobedience God sentenced them to one year in Babylonian exile.

In the end God made sure the land rested 70 years.

It's interesting, while living in Babylon, Daniel, was reading the book of Jeremiah, and came upon this verse. He realized the 70 years was about to expire.

At that moment, God sent the angel Gabriel - with one of the most thrilling prophecies in all the Bible.

Since it took 490 years (*or 70 periods of 7 years*) for Judah to get into trouble. It'll take them 490 years (*or 70 periods of 7 years*) to make things right... Daniel is shown another 490 future years, in which the Jews will be made righteous and God's Kingdom restored.

Daniel 9 gives us the details of this redemptive 490 years. After the first 483 years Messiah will come, and be cut off for His people. Daniel 9 predicts the exact day, April 6, 32 AD. On that day, Jesus rode his donkey into Jerusalem - *a triumphant entry*. His crucifixion was four days later... The final seven years is yet to come.

Amazingly, modern Jewish farmers are as reluctant to obey the Sabbath year laws as the ancient farmers. The problem is the same today as then - *a lack of faith*.

Modern Israelis have devised a clever loophole to get around this Law. Every seventh year all the public land in Israel used for agriculture is "*sold*" by the state rabbinate to a non-Jew, usually a Christian Arab. His identity is secret. He

sells it back at the end of the year.

Since the Sabbath Law applies only to Jewish owned land, Gentile ownership allows it to be farmed. It's a scam. It's a dodge, but it appeases legalistic Jews, and enables them to feign obedience to the Law.

This too was the Jewish mentality at the time of Christ. The rabbis constructed elaborate work-arounds.

Many of them Jesus exposed for their hypocrisy.

WC Fields was a well-known skeptic. That's why it surprised a friend to see him looking at a Bible. The friend asked, "*What are you doing?*" His reply, "*Looking for loopholes, looking for loopholes.*" The "*loophole mentality*" doesn't work with God. He judges our heart.

Verse 12, 'Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the Lord; 'and I will make it a perpetual desolation. So I will bring on that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied concerning all the nations.' We'll study Jeremiah's specific judgments against Babylon in chapters 50-51.

(For many nations and great kings shall be served by them also; and I will repay them according to their deeds and according to the works of their own hands.)" God used Babylon to judge many nations.

Nebuchadnezzar was God's servant. But being His servant doesn't make you immune from His judgment.

“For thus says the Lord God of Israel to me: “Take this wine cup of fury from My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it. And they will drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them.” Jeremiah had a warning, a message, not only to Judah, but to other nations.

“Then I took the cup from the Lord’s hand, and made all the nations drink, to whom the Lord had sent me: Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, its kings and its princes, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, a hissing, and a curse, as it is this day; Pharaoh king of Egypt, his servants, his princes, and all his people; all the mixed multitude, all the kings of the land of Uz...”

Uz was southeast - home of the Arabian tribes.

“All the kings of the land of the Philistines (namely, Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod);

And the relatives of Israel will be invaded by Babylon... “Edom, Moab, and the people of Ammon...”

In verse 22 he mentions, “all the kings of Tyre, all the kings of Sidon...” These were the Phoenician capitols, known for their nautical expertise and voyages.

Thus he mentions, “and the kings of the coastlands which are across the sea...” This is a provocative statement, “*across the sea*” - does that mean the Mediterranean Sea... or perhaps the Atlantic Ocean...

Was Jeremiah speaking of the New World?

He mentions more Arabian tribes in verse 23, “Dedan, Tema, Buz, and all who are in the farthest corners; all the

kings of Arabia and all the kings of the mixed multitude who dwell in the desert; all the kings of Zimri, all the kings of Elam..." Elam will later be known as Persia, the kingdom that will overthrow the Babylonians. In modern times Elam is known as Iran.

"And all the kings of the Medes..." Media joined with Persia in overthrowing Babylon. Their empire was known as "*Medo-Persia...*" Jeremiah gives detailed judgments against all these nations in Chapters 46-51.

He mentions all the nations of the world at the time. But note where he begins? Verse 18, in Jerusalem.

Which illustrates a principle Peter declared. 1 Peter 4:17, "Judgment begins at the house of the Lord."

Verse 26, "All the kings of the north, far and near, one with another; and all the kingdoms of the world which are on the face of the earth. Also the king of Sheshach shall drink after them." "*Sheshach*" was code for Babylon. God was using the Babylonians as His instrument of judgment not only against Judah, but against all the nations... *But then He'll judge Babylon.*

As a side note. The name "*Sheshach*" is a cipher. An example of a secret Hebrew code known as Atbash.

There are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Atbash was a substitution code where you subbed the first letter for the last letter, the second letter for the 21st letter, the third letter for the 20th letter, etc., etc.

Jeremiah spoke freely about the Babylonians when he was addressing his fellow Jews, but these judgments were intended for the nations. They could fall into wrong hands, so

he speaks of Babylon in code.

Verse 27, “Therefore you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Drink, be drunk, and vomit! Fall and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you.”’ And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup from your hand to drink, then you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: “You shall certainly drink!” They’ll drink of God’s judgment, and fall down drunk... They’ll be overcome.

“For behold, I begin to bring calamity on the city which is called by My name, and should you be utterly unpunished? You shall not be unpunished, for I will call for a sword on all the inhabitants of the earth,” says the Lord of hosts.’ If God is willing to judge His own city and people, Jerusalem, will he not judge other nations?

“Therefore prophesy against them all these words, and say to them: ‘The Lord will roar from on high, and utter His voice from His holy habitation; He will roar mightily against His fold.’” Jeremiah pictures God’s judgment as a lion let loose in the sheepfold. The Babylonian armies will be bloody, ugly, ruthless.

“He will give a shout, as those who tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth.” In the Bible the stomping of the grapes is a picture of God’s judgment against the nations. It’s juicy *or* bloody. It’s violent.

“A noise will come to the ends of the earth - for the Lord has a controversy with the nations; He will plead His case with all flesh. He will give those who are wicked to the sword,’ says

the Lord.” And notice, the scope of this prophecy... It’s expanded, not just to the nations around Judah, but to the **“ends of the earth.”**

Jeremiah says God will tread on **“the inhabitants of the earth.”** God’s case is said to be against **“all flesh.”**

I believe Jeremiah is seeing beyond his local and current situation to the end times, when Jesus will return to settle the score with all nations and people.

He sees to the period NT believers would call **“the Great Tribulation.”** In fact, John in Revelation 19:15 uses this same language, **“He Himself (Jesus) treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”** Recall, in Revelation 5 Jesus is seen as **the Lion of the tribe of Judah.** He is the One person worthy to open the seals and take possession of the universe.

When the Lion roars is when Jesus returns to earth.

It was Thomas Jefferson who said, **“Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just.”** That should cause lots of nations to tremble. If they believed that truth *they’d be fearing... the Lord’s appearing!*

Verse 32, **“Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Behold, disaster shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the farthest parts of the earth. And at that day the slain of the Lord shall be from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth. They shall not be lamented, or gathered, or buried; they shall become refuse on the ground.”** Again, this kind of devastation is unparalleled in history. These verses only make sense when read in light of

Revelation and the massive destruction that is coming upon this planet just before Jesus returns.

By the end of the final seven years of Tribulation, the Bible tells us over half the Earth's population will be dead. So many will be slain they can't all be buried.

“Wail, shepherds, and cry! Roll about in the ashes, you leaders of the flock! For the days of your slaughter and your dispersions are fulfilled; you shall fall like a precious vessel. And the shepherds will have no way to flee, nor the leaders of the flock to escape.” Earlier, Jeremiah spoke of the political leaders as shepherds.

“A voice of the cry of the shepherds, and a wailing of the leaders to the flock will be heard. For the Lord has plundered their pasture, and the peaceful dwellings are cut down because of the fierce anger of the Lord.

He has left His lair like the lion; for their land is desolate because of the fierceness of the Oppressor, and because of His fierce anger.” Jesus came the first time as a **Lamb**. He handled us with kid gloves. He was a sacrifice for our sins... But He'll come the second time as a **Lion** - His claws and jaws ready to pounce. He'll roar with fierce anger and judgment.

Chapter 26 is dated. “In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came from the Lord, saying, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Stand in the court of the Lord's house, and speak to all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the Lord's house, all the words that I command you to speak to them. Do not diminish a word.’”

God wanted Jeremiah to speak to all Judah. Since all Jewish males came to the Temple three times a year, He could address them in the Temple during one of the three major feasts.

Which feast it was we're not sure. But trust me, Jeremiah's message had the effect of crashing a party!

While the Jews were there in the Temple, busy playing religion, suddenly Jeremiah's voice thunders over their powerless prayers... Tozer wrote, "Most men play at religion as they play at games, religion itself being of all games the one most universally played."

Another author puts it, "I find no quality so easy to counterfeit as religious devotion." Love for God is easy to fake! Learn the lingo, memorize a few verses, and you can play the game. Everybody in Jeremiah's day was playing - *except God!* **God don't play!** He's serious about our devotion. He expects sincerity.

Verse 3, "Perhaps everyone will listen and turn from his evil way, that I may relent concerning the calamity which I purpose to bring on them because of the evil of their doings." God reminds Jeremiah of both the **content and intent** of His Word and the prophet's preaching. Here's the **what to say** and the **why to say**.

First the **content!** Go back to the last line of verse 2, "*Do not diminish a word...*" The Hebrew word translated "*diminish*" means "to shave, or lessen, or hold back." God is instructing Jeremiah not to soften what he's been given to say - don't water it down.

Often pastors let the fear of *offending* end up *amending* what God told them to say. They add to, or leave out, or just soften up God's Word. They shave off an edge or lessen a truth. God wants me to tell it *as is*.

It's been said, "Some people water down the Word of God to the point where if it were a medicine it wouldn't heal and if it were a poison it wouldn't harm."

We shouldn't mess with the **content**, *and we should remember the intent*. The intention of my preaching should be for folks to repent - "turn from their evil way."

A pastor is not in the entertainment business. Sure, I'm wise if I can be entertaining, and hold people's attention. *My first step is to get them to listen*. But that's just the means to the ends. When they listen I hope they're convicted by God's truth and repent.

It's only if we repent that we escape God's judgment.

Vance Havner wrote, "It is not the business of the preacher to fill the house. It is his business to fill the pulpit." That is, fill it with the right *content and intent*.

Verse 4, "And you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord: "If you will not listen to Me, to walk in My law which I have set before you, to heed the words of My servants the prophets whom I sent to you, both rising up early and sending them (but you have not heeded), then I will make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth.'"

Remember, Jeremiah is speaking these words in the Temple. And it was in the Temple that the Jews put their trust.

They were confident God would never allow harm to come to the holy Temple... Some scholars call it a “**Temple Fetish.**” It was similar to a superstition.

They treated the Temple as a good luck charm. They trusted in *the things of God* rather than in *God Himself*.

The Jews thought if they went to the Temple, paid their tithes, and offered a sacrifice - all would be okay.

And isn't this how folks treat God today. It's religion, but there's no relationship - no love and loyalty.

People give God a mechanical observance - a token acknowledgement - but God wants more. As Samuel said to Saul, “**To obey is better than sacrifice...**”

Prior to the building of the Temple, the Ark and God's Presence had rested in Shiloh for 300 years, yet that didn't stop the Philistines from conquering Shiloh and stealing the Ark. And it won't stop the Babylonians from destroying the Temple if the Jews don't repent.

Ezekiel wrote his prophecy about the same time Jeremiah was penned, and Ezekiel 10 records the removal of God's glory from the Temple. The Temple was holy only because God dwelt there. Once God removed His presence all that was left was stone and mortar. *God was preparing for the Temple's demolition.*

Verse 7, “**So the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the Lord. Now it happened, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the Lord had commanded him to speak to all**

the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him, saying, “You will surely die!” This wasn’t the first time God sent Jeremiah to speak in the Temple. Chapter 7, in the reign of Josiah, he delivered a similar message.

But Josiah was a godly king who’s reign protected Jeremiah. That’s why the priests, those who opposed the prophet, and wanted him silenced, plotted his assassination secretly. *But those days are now gone...*

A wicked king, Jehoiakim, is on the throne. There’s nothing to hold back Jeremiah’s enemies. They show no restraint. They seize him, and make public death threats. They scream at him, “*You will surely die!*”

“Why have you prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying, ‘This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate, without an inhabitant?’” And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the Lord.” Everyone, “*all the people,*” were against him.

When the princes of Judah heard these things, they came up from the king’s house to the house of the Lord and sat down in the entry of the New Gate of the Lord’s house.” This is not a separation of church and state, but a joining of church and state against the prophet...

“And the priests and the prophets spoke to the princes and all the people, saying, “This man deserves to die! For he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your ears.” Blaise Pascal once said, “Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction.” And here the leaders of Jerusalem are the

classic example.

Verse 12, “Then Jeremiah spoke to all the princes and all the people, saying: “The Lord sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city with all the words that you have heard.

Now therefore, amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God; then the Lord will relent concerning the doom that He has pronounced against you. As for me, here I am, in your hand; do with me as seems good and proper to you.

But know for certain that if you put me to death, you will surely bring innocent blood on yourselves, on this city, and on its inhabitants; for truly the Lord has sent me to you to speak all these words in your hearing.”

Jeremiah was such a courageous man. He’s been seized by an angry mob of clergy and politicians. His life had been threatened. He has one chance to make his defense... *and he refuses to blink or back down the slightest. Even with his life on the line he’s committed.*

Verse 16, “So the princes and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, “This man does not deserve to die. For he has spoken to us in the name of the Lord our God.” The politicians come to their senses before the religious leaders. The priests want to kill him, but the politicians realize they have no grounds.

And isn’t this what happened at the trial of Jesus? It was Pilate and Herod that wanted to release Jesus.

The politicians agreed to His crucifixion only because the

priests insisted. This is just one of many similarities between Jesus and Jeremiah. They both never married or had kids. They both were “*men of sorrow.*”

This is why when Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” They said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah...” Jesus and Jeremiah had a lot in common.

Verse 17, “Then certain of the elders of the land rose up and spoke to all the assembly of the people, saying: “Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: “Zion shall be plowed like a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, and the mountain of the temple like the bare hills of the forest.”” The city elders quoted Scripture.

Over 100 years earlier, during the reign of the revered King Hezekiah - another prophet, Micah, in Micah 3:12 gave the same warning as Jeremiah...

Jerusalem will be plowed under and become ruins. Even the Temple Mount will become a bare hill.

Here’s the elder’s conclusion, “Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah ever put him to death? Did he not fear the Lord and seek the Lord’s favor? And the Lord relented concerning the doom which He had pronounced against them. But we are doing great evil against ourselves.” Some skilled lawyer had combed the annals of their history and pulled out a precedent.

They should be glad their forefathers didn’t kill Micah. He spoke a similar message - the people took heed to it, and

repented, and the nation was saved.

“Now there was also a man who prophesied in the name of the Lord, Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjath Jearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah.

And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men and all the princes, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death; but when Urijah heard it, he was afraid and fled, and went to Egypt.

Then Jehoiakim the king sent men to Egypt: Elnathan the son of Achbor, and other men who went with him to Egypt. And they brought Urijah from Egypt and brought him to Jehoiakim the king, who killed him with the sword and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people.” They bring up another case of which we know nothing about except this mention. Jeremiah was not the only faithful prophet at the time.

It makes you wonder though, if this Urijah had not been afraid of the king, and fled... perhaps God would've delivered him just as He did Jeremiah.

“Nevertheless the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, so that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death.” Evidently, they listened to the arguments that came from this man, Ahikam son of Shaphan, *Esquire. He'd been serving as Jeremiah's legal counsel.*

I've heard it said, “Not all lawyers are liars. It's just the 98%, that give the rest of them a bad name.”

But this Ahikam was one of the few good lawyers!
And we should praise the Lord for the Christian attorneys that are willing to defend God's people, and the cause of Christ. May God raise up more Ahikams!