

Jeremiah, the Persecuted Prophet

by Art Katz

Art Katz explores the profound spiritual lessons from the life of Jeremiah, emphasizing the need for a new covenant and the dangers of self-righteousness.

Duration: 55:59

Scripture: Jeremiah 17:5, Jeremiah 31:33-34, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Prophet"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the need for filmmaker Steven Spielberg to be stripped of his worldly success and brought into the wilderness of the nations. This wilderness represents a place of despair and complete dependence on God. The speaker highlights the danger of trusting in human strength and the importance of trusting in the Lord instead. The sermon also discusses the concept of a new covenant, where God's righteousness is deposited into the hearts of believers, enabling them to obey perfectly.

Transcript

Thank you for this glorious subject matter, Lord, and it's too rich, and our time is too short, my God, to be adequate in any way, so lead us into those highlights for which your wisdom, my God, has brought us, and we thank you and give you praise as we invite you again to be our anointed teacher and to give us anointing, Lord, to hear, and free spirits to discuss this precious material. Thank you for the man himself, Lord, whom you raised up and formed even from his mother's womb, though he has passed on what he has been serving generations ever since. What a privilege that we're related.

Thank you, Lord, that he's in the great book. We bless your name now. Bless us and be blessed with us.

In Jesus' name, amen. Well, I thought to speak something about the persecution of Jeremiah. Maybe we need first to consider the offense of Jeremiah.

What is it that led to his being cast into cisterns, put into the stocks, forbidden entry into the temple? What was his terrible offense? What was the root of the offense? Because I suspect that that root remains still and will bring or evoke the same kind of angry response to those who bring it as it was for him. You know that not only did Jeremiah prophesy destruction for Jerusalem, but he advised the king and the inhabitants not to oppose the Babylonian captivity of Jerusalem. That if they opposed it, they would be opposing it to their own destruction because they were the rod of God's chastisement.

It was not just some military or political thing, but that it needed to be understood as a spiritual thing. And to oppose Babylon as the rod of God's chastisement was to oppose God and would bring further and greater ruin upon themselves. He even wrote a letter to those who were already in captivity.

I don't know that we'll look at it now, but it's in chapter 29 from verse 4, where those who were sent into exile from previous captivity are encouraged to remain there and even to pray for Babylon and to take, to have your sons and daughters marry and raise your families and prosper and that you're going to be there for a length of time. See, the popular prophets were technically against the issue of exile and they would have encouraged maybe even a revolt against Babylon and a return, which would have been premature because Jeremiah tells them you're going to be there for 70 years. So settle in and find your prosperity there and grow there.

There'll be a time the Lord will himself restore you. That is to say that the practical counsel that Jeremiah was giving went against the grain of that which was spoken by the other prophets who seemed to be more patriotic, more for Israel's sake. Yes, oppose Babylon.

Let's put up a fight. God is with us. He's not going to allow the city to be destroyed.

Jeremiah is saying exactly opposite. He will allow the city to be destroyed and your own opposition to Babylon will guarantee it. So from every appearance, he seems to be a traitor speaking against the best interest of Israel saying, accede to the Babylonian conquest.

You see how detached we must be from any conventional wisdom and how much prayer is going on now and thought with regard to present Israel that is doctrinaire, that is mechanical, that is human wisdom, that actually is in opposition with God's detailed plan for that nation. And they just assume that God will come behind them to vindicate and confirm their own human suppositions because they've not heard from God in the counsel of God and their assumptions are presumptuous. So if Jeremiah serves no other purpose than to give us a certain caution about not running off in our own thoughts and that God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor his ways our ways, then the example of Jeremiah should do just that.

We cannot presume upon God that we would assume, well, he's brought it Russians and Ethiopians, he going to and bring them all that way that they should face disaster and expulsion. It's contrary to logic. Well, God is not under any obligation to be submitted to your logic.

And maybe he's brought them for destruction because two thirds of those that have come from Russia are not even Jewish. And so there are other things, but you can see how Jeremiah would be a fly in the ointment. More than that, he would be a continual irritant and be looked upon not only as sounding something discordant, but actually being a traitor at a time when the nation needs solidarity because Babylon is at the door threatening Jerusalem security.

So how can we afford a man to speak like that? He's going to demoralize the nation and rob them of their stamina to defend themselves against Babylon. So he's not just a casual point of disagreement. He's an actual threat to national security.

And such men have to be dealt with. And the fact that I'm hearing myself called traitor and giving aid to the enemy is the first echo of the same kind of thing that will grow louder as we grow on. And the issues become joined and much more serious.

Well, I want to share a little bit from a condensed version of the two volume study of Dierhard von Raad on Old Testament theology, where his remarks about the prophets were extracted and made into a single volume by itself called *The Message of the Prophets*. So this is a handy single volume published by Harper and Rowe, but it's the same theologian that we have been considering. If there was a thought about the necessity for exile, the conventional wisdom would have said there would be a return and then Israel would go on.

But Jeremiah even had a different view of what exile and restoration would mean. That Israel would not come back and take up where it left off, for it would only assure the same apostasy again, that Jeremiah had a depth of insight about the condition of human nature beyond any prophet before him. And it's in Jeremiah that we read that can an Ethiopian change his color or leopard her spots, that there's something about Israel's condition of sin that needs to be radically altered.

There cannot be just an exile and return for the characteristic nature of the nation. The people as man will again express itself in a new apostasy and a new judgment and a new expulsion. What Israel needs is a radical alteration of its own nature.

It needs a new covenant. It needs to be changed from within. And that is God's promise and will be the basis for the restoration.

So we come to a juncture in the history of Israel where something is being sounded for a first time of a radically different kind that grows out of Jeremiah's depth of apprehension of what is the root of Israel's unchanging condition and propensity for sin and her inability to keep covenant, namely the condition of man himself. That is lawless, self-seeking, disobedient. And Israel is only man writ large and that something needs to happen that only God himself can provide.

And that, strange to say, is the greatest root of the offense of Jeremiah. That he's showing Israel that it can never succeed on its own basis. It can never attain to its own righteousness.

God himself has got to become the righteousness of the nation. And that is the heart of offense to man, then, now, and always. The reason my mother is bucking against the salvation of God, or others whom we know, is for very much the same reason.

Man wants to establish his own righteousness by his own acts and by his own merit. When you rob a man of that possibility, you are threatening the deeps of his life and his reason for being. Strange to say that men will oppose themselves in their own ignorance and will go down fighting and oppose God because they want to be the basis of their own success and their own establishment and their own righteousness.

So it's not that Jeremiah is anyway moving away from covenant or Torah, the law of God, or what was given at Sinai. He's all the more standing on that ground and saying that unless God gives you a new heart and a right spirit, you'll never fulfill it. What he is is he's a precursor.

He comes before Paul. Paul says the same thing, that there was nothing wrong with the law. The law was holy.

What was wrong was your inability to fulfill it. And for that reason, God has given a new heart and a new spirit. So I like the remarks that Von Raad makes about this.

If God puts his will directly into their hearts, with this new heart that is spoken of in Jeremiah chapter 30 and 31, is the first speaking of a new covenant. If God puts his will directly in their hearts, remember he said, I will write my law in your hearts. Then properly speaking, the rendering of obedience is completely done away with.

For the problem of obedience only arises when man's will is confronted by an alien will. The conflict between Israel and God was God calling a nation to righteousness and the nation's inability or unwillingness to perform it on God's own terms. But now that whole ground is removed because the righteous requirement of God is not external but has been deposited into the new heart that he will give to the people, which will be the basis for their restoration and return.

Men are to have the will of God in their heart and are only to will God's will. So what is here outlined is the picture of a new man, a man who is able to obey perfectly because of a miraculous change of his nature, a change that is wrought by God exclusively in which man himself has no part, but only to receive the gift of a new heart and a new nature. Strange to say that men will fiercely oppose that gift and prefer on the basis of their own humanity and sufficiency to establish themselves.

Man has no part in this. And just quoting from that Jeremiah 30, 31 through 34, you might look at that. Behold, the days are coming, says Yahweh, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which they broke so that I had to show myself as Lord, says Yahweh.

But this is to be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after these days. I will put my law or my instruction, my Torah within them and write it upon their hearts. And so I will be their God and they shall be my people.

Then no man needs any longer to teach his neighbor and no man his brother saying, no Jehovah, but they shall all know me from the least to the greatest, says Jehovah, for I will forgive their iniquity. I'll remember their sins no more. So what am I for? God's reversing the whole foundation of the call of the nation.

It's finally to be fulfilled, not because there's any change in the law or its requirements, but there's been a profound change in the way in which the law can be fulfilled, that the lawgiver is now the law enabler by a supernatural miraculous act of creation, of creating in the nation a new heart and a new spirit. I will put my law in their hearts. God is the agent and Israel is the passive recipient.

Man has no place in what God is to do and therefore all glory and honor goes to him who does it and nothing for man at all. And if Israel is anything, it's man seeking to establish himself. Even the present state of Israel is that very drama and the fact that present Israel is encouraged in succeeding in that by Christians is a remarkable statement of the condition of those Christians who, though they give outward and overt approval of the doctrine of grace in their deepest and secret hearts, they admire a people who will succeed on the basis of their own merit and they love Israeli heroism and Israeli exploits because in their own secret heart that's the basis upon which they would like to succeed and find approval and significance.

That is to say that though God says that in man is no good thing at all and that if God were to mark iniquity who can stand and that the foundational doctrine of the Christian faith is the depravity of man, the hopeless depravity of man, still in their secret hearts and in their identification with present Israel there are those who reveal that what is doctrinal for them is not actual. That they give verbal support to the doctrine

of depravity and to the necessity for grace but in their own hearts they love and admire those who will do it on the basis of their own merit and want to encourage them in that. So I wrote at the bottom of this page, large segments of the church want the establishment of Israel to be Israel's own accomplishment because their own ultimate hope and desire for accomplishment equally rests in themselves.

They are enamored of human heroism and accomplishment and want to succeed themselves on that same basis. Despite their credos and those ostensible doctrines they have never despaired of flesh or agreed with God about its depravity. Though they are New Testament saints in actuality they are living Old Testament lives.

That's a remarkable thing that present Israel is revealing. So, you may want to mark in Jeremiah 31 in that text, I will put, showing the exclusive power of God in performing this, the creator creates a new heart and so I will be their God which is to say only so, only on that basis can I and will I be their God and they shall be my people. There is no other basis by which Israel can be related to me.

Then no man needs any longer to teach his neighbor. Well what is that going to do for the rabbis? It's going to put them out of work. Something inward has been wrought and a whole class who profit from being the so-called shepherds of Israel and teachers will find themselves without occupation.

Little wonder that it's that same class of men going back to the time of Jesus who were then the Pharisees or today the leaders of rabbinical Judaism were the ones who were most viciously opposed to Jesus and required his death. For the same reason that Jeremiah's death is to be required because he's fingering and touching and striking at one of the foundational things about life itself where man wants to succeed on the basis of his own merit, his own righteousness and his own works, on the basis of his own flesh. We'll look at Jeremiah 17 that I was looking at earlier this morning to show you the depth of Jeremiah's insight into the human condition given him by God that had so much to do with being also the vehicle of speaking of a new covenant to come.

The first verses speak of God's condemnation of Israel and her sin and the judgment that would follow and then from verse 5, thus says the Lord, curse it are those who trust, it says here, in mere mortals, what do you have in your edition, curse it are the men who trust in men and make mere flesh their strength whose hearts turn away from the Lord. Isn't that, that's not an accidental after effect, that's an intrinsic component to the degree that you trust in the arm of flesh to that same degree, your heart will be turned away from God because he's no longer your dependency and so long as he's not your dependency, he's no longer the object of your gratitude and so long as he's no longer the object of your gratitude, he'll not be the object of your praise or your worship or your devotion. He's got to be God as a sole dependency or we will not be in that kind of relationship with him that evokes the kind of worship that is to him.

When you make the flesh of your arm your trust, you depart from the living God. It's a curse and what is the curse? They shall be like a shrub in the desert and shall not see when relief comes. They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness in an inhabited salt land.

Well that's both literal and symbolic and figurative. I know people right now who are living in physical places that are opposite to this description but the condition that they are, that is to say insisting upon living on the basis of flesh, they are unhappy, wretched, and for all effects and purposes, might just as well be living in a parched place, in a dry land, in an uninhabited and a salt land. Salt is death to any kind of vegetation, any kind of growth.

Can you picture that? The insistence to live by flesh brings you to a dry, parched, and uninhabitable land. You could be surrounded by people but as far as your ability to relate to them or to receive the joy or the pleasures of fellowship, it's gone. For all effects and purposes, you are living a very solitary life, detached and unrelated, and it's a dry land and uninhabited because it's a curse when you predicate your life on the arm of flesh.

If Jeremiah wrote nothing else but that, he would be memorialized forever for the depth of that insight that God expressed as a verse saith the Lord. Then he gives us the opposite, but blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. God himself is their trust and their confidence, is their righteousness.

Isn't it interesting that our prayer at the table was, Lord we're helpless, we can do nothing without you? Thinking back now, where did that come from? I didn't think to pray that because that would necessarily reflect what we would be discussing. It came out as a prayer. So even here in our own conduct, our own activity, where great things are at stake that will affect the future, we acknowledge at the very commencement, without you Lord, we can do nothing.

We are as dead men. We need your life. Remember Watchman Lee? Raised his hand to knock on the door to bring correction and he couldn't lift his arm.

The life had gone completely out of it. Everything was predicated on God's life. That's what it means to trust the Lord.

Maybe we don't understand that deeply enough. It's not trusting his principles or his truths. It's God himself as source of life rather than our own.

That's a radical, two radical alternatives. The arm of the flesh or God as the source of life. And the new covenant gives opportunity to live from God.

I will, he says. So they shall be like a tree planted by water sending out its roots by the stream. They shall not fear when heat comes and its leaves shall stay green in the year of drought.

They are not anxious and they do not cease from bearing fruit. Remarkable stark contrast for these two ways of life. One a curse and one a blessing.

The remarkable thing is that Israel in rejecting Jeremiah and the new covenant of which he spoke chose curse and they got curse. And for all effects and purposes are still under it until they will come into the new covenant that is available and waiting. But it waits for someone who will despair of his own life and recognize its futility.

And that despair is the end of the time of Jacob's trouble. That's why Steven Spielberg has got to be lifted up out of his dream factory and all that he represents and symbolizes and be brought into the wilderness of the nations, stripped to the bone and having no recourse or alternative to anything. Wilderness is an entire stripping and come to a place of total and abject despair and any confidence, any hope that he can have in himself, then he will be a candidate to enter the new covenant of God.

I will meet with you in the wilderness of the nations face to face and there you will come under the rod of my authority and into the bond of my covenant. That's Ezekiel, but the covenant is the one that Jeremiah is speaking of in my new covenant. For there you will realize that you have no virtue and no strength in yourself and then you will appreciate and receive and enter.

This covenant that I'm making available by which my life, my righteousness will become yours. Jerusalem becomes the city of righteousness and their slogan is God is our righteousness. What a complete antithesis of what Israel and Jews have been until this day, because we Jews are the epitome of self-made men.

We are the epitome, you know this word, the final ultimate expression of man in his own self-sufficiency and self-confidence. That's why God's dealing with us must be the most ruthless because we represent man worldwide and therefore his dealings with us is a dealing with them. Why is that dealing necessary? Why is this new covenant the only alternative and why God must be the exclusive provider, the creator, the agent of it? Because in verse 9, the heart is devious above all things.

It is perverse. Who can understand it? There's a root. The innate condition of man is of such a kind that the heart itself is corrupt and that's why I will create in you a new heart and put a right spirit within you.

And my law will be in your heart and not some external observation for which you will fail as you have historically failed and have faced judgment and expulsion in exile as the result. A version says it's indesperately wicked or incurably sick. Yeah, that's good.

Praise the Lord. The word incurable shows there's no alternative. There's nothing to be hoped for for man in that condition.

And what we have come into is that covenant. And this is the thing that is supposed to move Jews to envy, that they can see in Gentiles what would have been their benefit had they received this promise. They will see the fruit of this covenantal relationship enjoyed by Gentiles that is yet outside their experience.

And it's a fruit of such a kind that they will be moved to envy as they observe it. That's God's stratagem. To what degree it's succeeding, I'll leave you to assess.

And maybe it's not succeeding because of what I said earlier. Massive numbers of Christians who subscribe to the doctrine of grace are actually living Old Testament lives, where they're not living out of the life of the new covenant, but still out of their own sufficiency, their own religious ability, their own humanity. And therefore they're not exhibiting a fruit that will move Israel to envy, and yet actually go to Israel to support and encourage Jews in exactly the same kind of conduct and practice.

These are the ones who are most vociferously opposed to what we express. And it's much deeper than the level in which they're arguing. The heart of their real enmity against our view is the same opposition to Jeremiah.

That is, they want to continue and to succeed in the flesh, and want Israel to succeed on that basis also. It's a real deep ideological issue and conflict. Jeremiah 32, verse 37 through 41, where this new covenant is again reiterated, is a statement, they shall be my people, I will be their God, and I will give them a heart and a way that they may fear me forever and for their own good, and the good of their children after them.

All of the emphasis is, I will. I will give, I will do, I will put, I will, I will, I will. God, the exclusive agent, because he's creator, and man only the recipient to receive.

It's the greatest insult to the pride of man to be a recipient of something that comes as gift, and in which he has no part whatever. Remember when Jesus said, no man can come unto me except the Father draw him? And many were offended at him from that day, because they wanted to come to God even on the

basis of their own zeal, their own religiosity, their own integrity, their own character, their own accomplishment. No man can, Jesus, the absoluteness of his statement, no man can come except the Father draw him.

You are helpless. You can be religious as all get out. You can subscribe to the most profound, most humane principles.

It will not bring you to the Father except he draw you. Nothing from you has any value at all. In you is no good thing at all.

And who is there who has really said yes and agreed with God in his indictment of the condition of man universally and everywhere? Even Christians in their secret hearts have not given God a yes to that, and the evidence is the persistence of themselves in seeking to succeed on the basis of their flesh. Though God says in the flesh is no good thing, that which is of the flesh is death, and numbers still persist in seeking to establish themselves on that basis. I will put the fear of me in their hearts, and I will plant them in their land, it says at the end of the statement, in faithfulness, with all my heart and with all my soul, I will plant.

What an alternative to, how shall I say this politely, the Zionist enterprise, the undertaking to establish the present state of Israel that has brought such discord to the Middle East, that has so exacerbated the people who are resident there. The recent issue of the Jerusalem Report has an article on the problem of Arab refugees, Palestinian refugees who were expelled or left for one reason or another from 1948 with the establishment of the state of Israel. There's a whole controversy over this, whether they were prompted by Arab sources themselves to get out of the way so the Arabs could come in and clean up Israel and then they could take over, or whether the Israelis themselves gave them reason to fear the prospect of terror and annihilation, or actually physically moved them out.

And in one case, at least, there's a whole village that suffered from Israel's military and were virtually wiped out. The fact of the matter is that there are millions of Palestinians who once lived in what are now Israeli cities, who were expelled or fled from that nation. And one of the great hindrances now for the establishment of this peace is how to negotiate and settle the Palestinian refugee problem.

There are still hundreds of thousands of them living in refugee camps in Jordan and in Gaza, and they are compressed and living in terrible conditions. And the irony is that Israel is so absolutely insistent on reparation and being recompensed for any loss suffered by Jews as the result of the Holocaust, making the Swiss banks pay through the nose billions of dollars for accounts that were not paid to those who perished in the Holocaust that should go to their survivors, or properties that were taken from Jews during the Nazi time, or from even Jews that were driven out of Morocco or other Middle Eastern Islamic cities and nations want their compensation. And so the Palestinian authorities are saying, you guys are teaching us how to do it.

If you're justified in being compensated for your loss, what about our loss? And thank you, we'll take interest on that for 50 years. You've got our cities. What used to be Lod is now where the airport is in Tel Aviv.

And many of those places had flourishing Palestinian or Arab communities that go back through decades and generations that were overnight looted out and expelled. So the refugee problem is fierce. I only cite that to say, this is the kind of thing that's inevitable when many by their flesh are seeking to establish what

only God by his spirit and his power is able to do.

And what God says, I will plant them in their land as being part of the new covenant provision. There's a difference between planting and between, what's the word for it? An aggressive human attempt to establish that is necessarily going to bring frayed relations, to say it politely. So that Israel will have an opportunity to see the difference between what man out of the flesh of his own arm has sought to establish, which has left Israel with no peace.

To this day, they're living in continual threat. Their enemies have unrequited sense of vengeance for their loss. And that Israel has sought to put a lid and to keep down this complaint by intimidating and by threatening expulsion and to make Palestinians uncomfortable, even in the communities where they are in order to maintain some kind of security, which further exacerbates and produces a desire for vengeance and those people.

And there will be a hell to pay for this. So if there was ever a last days and final revelation that the works of the flesh consummated death, we're going to see it when this tide of implacable resentment and hatred breaks forth and finally overflows Israel and devastates it. The PLO has never removed from its charter, the statement about Israel's demise, that they will end that nation and, and plunge its inhabitants into the sea.

And part of the Oslo agreement was the removal of that statement and they've never done it. And even if they did it, it would mean nothing because for Muslims, you can act in the most facetious ways. It doesn't matter because for Allah's sake, their presence in that land is a disgrace to the whole Islamic faith and therefore they need to be expelled.

Only God could have established this people in their own land and he will, and I will plant you, is the same God who I will put a new heart within you. That means that it's not the result of our effort, but the result of his gift. The only requirement from us is the humility to receive it, which means the acknowledgement that in ourselves is no good thing at all.

So Van Raad calls Jeremiah's description of the new covenant, Israel's full and final return to her God, which has not yet taken place. Jeremiah spoke it, but we're yet waiting for its fulfillment. Had the prophets been preachers of revival, we should expect to find their statements on conversion in the form of exhortation, but that is not the case where they are found rather amongst their preaching of judgment.

I just put the two words revival and judgment in parentheses, that the false prophets who had no stomach for a new covenant, and even today Jewish authorities denigrate and speak in a demeaning way to any reference to a new covenant as if it's not a valid biblical proposition. There's a strange correspondence to the emphasis today on revival. There are people who want something revived that does not require a radical alteration but an improvement of that which is presently existing.

There's something of the same issue today between those who think that revival is the route for the kingdom and those who say no, but only the most radical alteration, conversion and change through repentance. Jeremiah would today be on the repentance side and the popular prophets of today would be like their companions in Jeremiah's time speaking about revival, that there's no necessity for a more radical change but only an improvement of what presently is. And the root of that is that they're not persuaded that in man is no good thing at all.

They do not condemn the flesh as God does, that he condemns it so severely that the only answer for it is its crucifixion and burial. So revival, the kind of emphasis that we're seeing today could be something like reviving flesh, judgment would be flesh destroyed and out of that destruction would come the new and the enduring thing. God is so insistent upon being the sole agent of Israel's restoration on the basis of a new covenant that he does not even allow Israel's repentance to be a condition for that newness.

It's not that they're saved out of repentance but they are saved and restored and repent after the fact. The repentance of Israel in Ezekiel 36, you might want to look at it, comes not before the return but after. That's a good point.

It's a tricky thought. What verse is that? Verse 31, then, which is to say after your return, you shall remember your evil ways and your dealings that were not good and you shall loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominable deeds. It's not for your sake that I will act, says the Lord God.

Let it be known to you, be ashamed and dismayed for your ways, O house of Israel. Thus says the Lord God, on the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the towns to be inhabited and the waste places shall be rebuilt and the land that was desolate shall be killed instead of being a desolation that it was in the sight of all that passed by. So the restoration of Israel physically and the repentance of Israel comes after their return from the land when I will plant them.

God does not even give to Israel the luxury of repentance. Restoration of Israel physically and the repentance of Israel comes after their return from the land when I will plant them. God does not even give to Israel the luxury of repentance, lest they boast that their repentance was the key to their return.

And that's reiterated in Zechariah, that in a day when every family prays apart, when I will pour out the spirit of supplication and prayer on the city of Jerusalem, that before that pouring out, there's no possibility of repentance, but it requires first the visible seeing of him whom we have pierced. And then through the spirit that was poured out on the city of David, of the spirit of supplication and prayer, they are able to repent. The enablement even for repentance is the gift of God.

And in that we have such a picture of God's hatred of that which in man seeks to establish itself independent of him. And I don't think that the church has sufficiently understood and said yes and agreed with God on that condition. I will meet with you in the wilderness of nations and there you will come into the bond of my covenant.

So there will be those who are saved by a demonstration of God in that wilderness situation, but those who have either remained in Jerusalem or were not expelled with others, or maybe even those who have passed through it and have returned and have yet to experience conversion, must wait for the day that they shall see him whom they have pierced. I think it was Regius, someone who said that in that moment God will bring to the recall of those who see him whom they have pierced. All of the testimony and all of the witness that they have heard in a lifetime from Christians who have brought a word to them that gave every appearance of being the water that bounces off the duck's back, that they were unaffected.

But nevertheless it was the word of God that does not return to him void. And in that moment when they shall see him, he'll bring like a flood of remembrance all of the witness and testimony that had been spoken to them that seemed to have been in vain. And it's the combination of the visibility of Jesus as their crucified and resurrected one, compounded by the weight of all of the rejected testimony that was not in vain and did not return, that will really bring the enormous breaking that will come to Israel.

For there will never be again or ever before be a demonstration of a repentance of a nation of such a depth and magnitude as will take place in that day. Of so deep a kind that they cannot even repent in the same room together. The families have to be apart and the husbands and the wives have to be apart because they have to be so before God alone in the depth of that breaking and the pouring out of their souls that they cannot even abide the presence of another.

Each one has got to find his own place. Can you imagine this proud Jewish people who are doing it by themselves, the never again boasters when you go to their concentration camps, whether it's Dachau or the one I went to in Poland, Treblinka, that you see right in front of the monument in large letters, never again. This proud defiant people never again stretched out before God with such a heaving sighs and sobs, a racking of their bodies, you wonder if they'll survive it.

And the fact of the matter is that they won't. It's a repentance unto death. Repentance is death and out of that death will come the newness of life.

But God himself is the author of it, brings the moment of it and gives the enablement for it that no man can boast that I have obtained this new life by any virtue of my own. It is the gift of God. What does it take to break it? But wretchedness, a wretchedness unto a despair unto death where you finally come to the realization of the spirit that there's no hope to succeed on this basis and then you become a candidate for the revelation of the grace of God that was always waiting in the wings as a gift if only you could humble yourself to receive it.

It's not Judaism versus Christianity. It's living by the flesh and self-will and self-attainment or surrendering to the grace of God as a gift. That's the issue.

So we have a little drama going on within the drama and they're interesting that you come up as part and this is the heart and the root of the offense of Jeremiah to the nation. He's striking at the very cord of self-sufficiency and religiosity and self-righteousness in men and for that they will kill him and for that they killed Jesus. That was exactly the offense of Jesus and they would not come unto him.

Remember in John chapter 11 the high priest said it's necessary that one man die for the nation. What he's saying is we've got to get rid of this guy because he's threatening the nation on the foundation on which its life is predicated. He's a subversive of such a kind that he's threatening the whole mode of our being and our priesthood and our celebrated place of respect and establishment.

He's calling us to another mode of being and we cannot afford that. He's got to go. And Jeremiah was at the same offense and we are at the same offense.

And I can just tell you and I think I mentioned it somewhere in the course of these days. As I look back on my 35 years as a believer and our 25 years here, the greatest offense that has provoked the catcalls and the opposition of anything that could be named is our naive assumption that we are living from Christ and that the words I speak are not my words but the words that the Lord gives me. That there's a whole dependency upon God and that if my marriage is to survive let alone to be established or to be a success it will not be because I have more flowers or candy or spend more time or do those kinds of things that you would think would bring improvement or revival but it would be a grace that comes from above in the moment of God's own choosing.

That has offended men because they want this marriage resolved and our ministry and life to be established on the same basis by which they want their life established, namely human merit and effort. This is the offense, guys, this is the offense. And we've got to know it and recognize it.

Whether we speak it or just exhibit it or exude it in the kind of atmosphere that we give off. I went up in an elevator at one of the full gospel regional conferences years ago with one of the leading faith and prosperity men. I had never seen him before, I knew of him, he had never seen me before, nobody ever knew of me.

The moment we came into the elevator together and the door closed and our backs arched like cats. You could hear the hissing and not a word had been spoken. We represented such totally opposite things.

So this is where the vectors cross and that's why Jeremiah was scheduled for his own annihilation. He's not fit to live. You remember with Paul how men vowed that they would not eat nor drink until this man was dead.

They threw dust on their heads and cried out, he's not fit to live. Because Paul was the promulgator of the same issue of the grace of God as against American men as being a basis for righteousness and for life. He's not fit to live.

We cannot afford his existence. Nothing has changed. So I think we'll just take a breath and a prayer.

Can you pray something? What do we pray? The triumph of God's grace and the remarkable tenacity of man in his stubborn insistence of being sufficient on the basis of his own merit and succeeding independent of God. Though he will allude to God and attend services and do a lot of religious things and even subscribe to the doctrines of grace, he will not in fact live by them. And our God is patient and waiting and he has made available at great cost an alternative.

His own life that was released through suffering of death and we still spurn it. So Lord, my God, write these things in our hearts, Lord. Stab our consciousness and if there be in any of us, and I'm sure that there is more than we know, lingering aspects of self-life, of self-attainment, of wanting recognition, success, respect, acknowledgement on the basis of what we are, what we do.

And unwilling to surrender to the truth of what you say is our condition, the hopelessness, the futility. May you have that surrender, may we give up the ghost, may you have our rags, my God, that we might have your righteousness. But how shall we preach this if we are not yet totally in that place? And how shall Israel be moved to envy until you have a church that can exhibit the fruit of this grace? And so thank you Lord for reminding us of the unchanging issue of the ages, the stubborn, relentless disobedience of men, the self-will, the pride of man that wants to be its own God and to establish itself, its own name, its own honor, its own way.

We bless you Lord. Oh my God, thank you Jesus. That if there is any conversion, if there is any repentance, it's only because you've made it a gift out of your kindness.

It's not something we could have prompted and performed. You are all in all. You are the living God.

You are the creator. There's no hope in anyone other than you. We bow before you my God.

We don't know how to continue. We didn't know this morning how to continue. We don't know how to continue after this break.

We're totally cast upon you Lord. And willing to suffer the embarrassment of the failure rather than we should attempt to succeed on the basis of our own filthy rants, our own human ability. We have no ability.

We're dead men and we prefer so to be that your life might go forth and you might be glorified for glory. Oh my God, raise up prophetic men on the basis of your life who will speak your words in your power. For nothing else will succeed in an hour and a generation so perverse and so opposed to your so great salvation.

Thank you my God for this morning and what you're saying and putting in our hearts and making new and deep path on Yeshua's name. Feel free to pray if you have a personal...

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