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*Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things. (Philippians 4:8)*

You can read all of this month's MOTT content in the e-mail message below, but you can also download a copy to your computer to save or print out a hard copy by clicking [HERE](#).



"A God who speaks to men His will is the distinguishing mark of true religion"  
(Neil R. Lightfoot, **Jesus Christ Today**, 53).

"The message of the Pharisees was a message of reformation in order to be worthy at last for a call to the kingdom. The gospel of Jesus was to sinners as they were, promising forgiveness and a welcome to every believing, penitent heart... Jesus was worse than the Pharisees had made Him out. He not only received sinners but went looking for them."  
(Paul Earnhart, **Glimpses of Eternity**, 125)

"Sin is a waste. It takes everything precious and irreplaceable and devastates it. And this happens because we try to seize our lives for ourselves instead of yielding them up to one who has in his goodness given them to us in the first place (Matt. 16:25)"  
(Paul Earnhart, **Glimpses of Eternity**, 136)

## MACEDONIANS AND NIGERIANS

Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA

Ezekiel Akinyemi (pronounced Ah-KEE-uh-me), who preaches for the Challenge Road Church of Christ in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, has been a dear friend of mine for over twenty-two years. He's eaten in my home, and I've eaten in his. He is a stalwart against the American liberalism that has decimated churches of Christ in Nigeria. He sent the following e-mail to Ron Halbrook after Brother Halbrook reported

the great need among brethren in the Philippines following Typhoon Haiyan.

*Dear brother Halbrook,  
I thank God for the good work He is doing by you and others in the Philippines. Brethren here at Challenge, Ibadan were moved when I read to them your report about the distress among our brethren caused by the typhoon Haiyan that hit the Philippines on November 8. After praying for the distressed the brethren here decided to send some relief.  
Because of your familiarity with the brethren in the Philippines who have been affected by the disaster the brethren here want to know if you can help in delivering the relief funds to the affected brethren who are still in need. As your last report shows that you have fulfilled your ministry in the Philippines from Dec 9-13 and are now back in the US we will be pleased to know if there is any way you can help us get this relief to those who are still in need among the brethren.  
We will appreciate your quick response, please.  
Yours in Him,  
Ezekiel A. Akinyemi for brethren at Challenge, Ibadan*

When Ron forwarded Ezekiel's e-mail to me he wrote:

*Keith, I thought you would be interested in this! This reminds me of 2 Cor. 8 and how shocked Paul was when saints who were in poverty themselves insisted on helping to relieve the suffering of saints in faraway Judea!*

That is very true. The majority of Nigerians live in what sociologists call "absolute poverty." They don't know how they will get their next meal. Yet brethren who compose the Challenge Road Church of Christ are determined to help their devastated brethren in the Philippines. This is indeed reminiscent of the churches of Macedonia:

*Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God (2 Corinthians 8:1-5).*

Because brethren such a Ezekiel Akinyemi, Ron Halbrook, and I oppose church support of human organizations and universal benevolence by churches, our liberal minded brethren castigate us as "Antis" and claim we're "against just about everything" (the very statement I heard a preacher make about us in a lectureship in Lakeland, Florida). The truth is, my brethren amaze me with their generosity when they see the genuineness of the need.

For anyone able and willing to help brethren in the Philippines, you can contact Ron Halbrook at [halbrook@twc.com](mailto:halbrook@twc.com) about sending assistance to needy brethren in the Philippines.

## QUESTION FROM PENNSYLVANIA ABOUT CREMATION (posted to brethren-on-line)

Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA

### Question

Does anyone have any insights into the subject of burial VS cremation? I cannot find any passage authorizing cremation in God's word, nor any examples of Godly men choosing to be cremated after their death. So where would we get the authority if we wanted to make this choice?

We have examples of God killing Nadab and Elihu with fire (Lev. 10:2), and God killing 2 groups of 50 soldiers with fire (2 Kings 1:14), but all these were burned while still alive, so that is not the same as cremation of the dead.

We have God punishing Moab for burning the King of Edom's bones to lime (Amos 2:1) which seems to reference cremation. But this punishment could be based more on WHO was killed and by WHOM rather than how his remains were disposed of.

If a Christian requested burial and his family decided to cremate him because they thought that was a better choice, obviously God could not hold that soul responsible for something out of his control. But if the Christian REQUESTED cremation (perhaps as a cost savings measure) would that be sinful?

Any thoughts you have would be appreciated.

### Answer

It certainly appears that Jewish custom dictated that the deceased be honorably buried in a family tomb rather than cremation. When the bodies of King Saul and his sons were attached to the wall of Beth Shan by the Philistines, the men of Jabesh Gilead, whom Saul had delivered at the beginning of his reign, took the bodies down, carried them to Jabesh, burned them, then buried their bones (1 Samuel 31:8-13). But later David gathered their bones and buried them honorably in their family tomb (2 Samuel 21:12-14). In contrast, the bodies of Achan and his family, who were stoned to death for troubling Israel, were burned (Joshua 7:25; All this information was gleaned from **ISBE**).

But the Jewish manner of disposing of dead bodies was a matter of national custom (John 19:40). The Greek word for "custom" in John 19:40 is "*ethos*," which can mean a custom established by law (Arndt & Gingrich, 217), but regardless, it was a Jewish custom (cf. Acts 15:1), not something demanded by the law of Christ.

The kingdom of heaven pertains to the spiritual rather than the carnal, i.e. fleshly (John 18:36; Romans 14:17; Ephesians 1:3; Colossians 2:20-23). Thus, it is the spiritual principle of a passage that is binding. Therefore, if the outward act is only a cultural or incidental expression of that principle, the outward act is a liberty, not a requirement. To find what is bound by the Lord upon us in any passage, we need to find what has spiritual significance.

If a customary practice is bound by divine law, it is no longer just a customary expression of a spiritual principle but is something God

ordains that is inseparable from its spiritual principle. These rites are outward expressions of spiritual principles.

The Old Testament was filled with ritual. The book of Leviticus, containing the priestly rites, is full of such acts required by God. Ritualism was a characteristic of Old Testament service and worship.

Christ binds two and only two rites upon us, neither were customs before He ordained them, and both represent what is at once unique to and the basis of the gospel: the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. These rites are baptism (Romans 6:3-6) and the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23-29).

It is sinful to bind customs as essential to salvation that God has not so bound (Acts 15:1; Colossians 2:20-23). This raises human customs to the level of divine rite. Ritualism is a return to Judaism (cf. Galatians 5:1-4).

Circumcision of the flesh is a rite the Jews received from their forefather Abraham (Genesis 17:9-14). As a customary practice, it is innocent (Acts 16:1-3). But, since the Old Testament was taken away by Christ (Colossians 2:13-15), it is sinful to bind this custom as a divine rite essential to salvation (Galatians 2:3-5).

Jews customarily greeted each other with a kiss (Luke 7:45). So, Paul enjoins us, "Greet one another with a holy kiss" (Romans 16:16). The form of the greeting was simply a custom, but its nature, "holy," is a spiritual principle.

The disciples of Christ buried their dead, whether the dead were sinners (Acts 5:6, 10) or saints (Acts 8:2). But this was a custom, not a spiritual principle. Their example is general authority to dispose of the bodies of dead in any manner sanctioned by civil law (Romans 13:1-7). Thus, cremation, a method of disposing of a dead body sanctioned by civil law, is authorized by the law of Christ.

#### **Works Cited**

Arndt, W.F. and F.W. Gingrich, **A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.**

**International Standard Bible Encyclopedia**

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## **QUESTION FROM ETHIOPIA ABOUT MARK 16:14-20**

Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA

### **Question**

Please explain to me well (Mark 16:14-20), but particularly vs 15,16 about baptism.

### **Answer**

Verse 14: The Great Commission was primarily given to the eleven faithful apostles of Christ. The context in Matthew, Mark and Acts indicates the apostles were the recipients of the directions (Matthew 28:16; Mark 16:14; Acts 1:1-3). In fact, the apostles are called "apostles" ("*one sent as a messenger or agent, the bearer of a commission, messenger,*" Mounce. 1094) precisely because Christ specifically sent them.

But Matthew plainly indicates that the Lord broadened the application of the commission to all disciples of Christ when he commanded, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations ... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you"* (Matthew 28:19-20). Every disciple must obey all things Christ commanded the apostles. Certainly "all" is limited by its context, but the commands in the context are *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"* (Matthew 28:19). The Great Commission secondarily applies to every disciple of Christ in every generation.

Verse 15: The Lord directed His apostles and disciples to go into all the inhabited earth and to actually preach to every human without exception. Look at the pertinent passages: *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations"* (Matthew 28:19). *"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"* (Mark 16:15). *"Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations"* (Luke 24:47). *"You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth"* (Acts 1:8).

The Lord *"desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Timothy 2:3-4). This means to accomplish His will is to preach the gospel (Romans 1:16-17; 10:17).

Verse 16: In Mark 16:16 the Lord put baptism before salvation and linked it to "believe" with the coordinate conjunction "and," which joins words, phrases and clauses of equal and like rank. He placed "be baptized" as coordinate to, equal to, "believe" as a condition of salvation.

Does the fact He didn't say, "He who is not baptized shall be condemned," eliminate the necessity of water baptism for salvation? Why not believe and obey what the Lord did say, instead of constructing an argument on what He didn't say? I certainly don't want to stake my hope of heaven on what Jesus didn't say.

Suppose a health teacher informed her class, "He who eats and digests his food will live; but he who does not eat will die." Would that mean digestion is not a condition of living? No, the teacher would simply be dividing the people into two categories: those who eat and those who don't eat. One can't digest food if he doesn't eat food.

In Mark 16:16 Jesus divided people into two categories, not three. It's not believers, baptized believers, and unbelievers. It's baptized believers and unbelievers. One who doesn't have enough faith in Jesus to be baptized is classified as an unbeliever by the Lord. There is no such thing as a sincere, penitent believer who will not be baptized (Mark 16:16).

If a car dealer promised, "He who believes and is baptized shall receive a new car, but he who does not believe shall not," how many folks would refuse baptism? If we can see it for a car, why not for eternal life? The saved believer is the baptized believer. Baptism is the response of faith that results in salvation.

Verses 17-20: The Lord promised that miraculous signs would accompany those that believed (Mark 16:17-18). The purpose of these signs was to confirm the spoken word (Mark 16:20), and they did indeed do so (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:2-4). We have this confirmed word written down in the Scriptures and have no need for the accompanying signs, so they have ceased (1 Corinthians 13:8-13).

God is not with us through miraculous, spiritual gifts today, but He is with us (Philippians 2:12-13) through His powerful word (Romans 1:16-17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; James 1:21), His divine providence (2 Peter 3:12), and His answers to our prayers (Ibid). Philip proved his message by working miracles (Acts 8:5-8); I prove my message by Scripture references (1 Peter 4:11). They had the Word of God in inspired men (2 Corinthians 4:6-7); we have the word of God in an inspired book (2 Timothy 3:16-17). With God working in us, we can "*do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think*" (Ephesians 3:20).

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## THE BEATITUDES

Patrick Farish | Lancaster, Texas, USA

Why do they call them the "Beatitudes"? A beatitude speaks of "supreme blessing; exalted happiness." As then we read Matthew 5:2-12 with the eleven verses beginning, "Blessed are..." we thrill to read of the magnificent things waiting for us, if we persevere. Consider, first, the beatitude in verse three:

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

In Matthew 13 Jesus spoke of the kingdom of heaven, as to its potential (verse 31 following), its power (verse 33); its preciousness (verses 44-45) and its exclusiveness (verses 47-49). Later in the Sermon He says "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (6:33).

The reception of the kingdom depends on their being "poor in spirit." Ken Chumbley said the expression "points to what a man is, not what he has" (**The Gospel Of Matthew**, page 84). Poverty in view here is not a poverty of material things, food or clothing or money; but the poverty that comes from spiritual bankruptcy. It is the poverty in view in Isaiah 66:2, where Jehovah says, "*to this man will I look: even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and that trembles at my word*" (**ASV**).

An example of "him that is poor" is found in Luke 18. Verses 9 and 10 introduce the characters, a Pharisee and a tax collector. The Pharisee prayed boastfully and arrogantly, informing God of his accomplishments: no extortion, no immorality, and, best of all, he was not like "this tax collector."

The tax collector, on the other hand, "*beat his breast saying God, be merciful to me, a sinner!*" (verse 13). The difference? The Pharisee saw himself as marvelous; the tax collector saw himself as God saw him: and knew that, because he had sinned, he was bankrupt - had nothing of merit: "*be merciful to me, a sinner!*" And, Jesus said, "*this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted*" (14).

We need to see ourselves, as God sees us; only so can we know we are "poor in spirit."

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## JAMAICA PATOIS WISDOM (No. 11)

Jefferson David Tant | Roswell, Georgia, USA

The Jamaican Patois dialect is colorful, unique and humorous. It is my desire to share some of the philosophy shown in this mix of colorful phrases that are witty as well as thought-provoking. I hope the readers both profit and enjoy. In my quarter-century plus of teaching there, I have come to appreciate some things about their culture. – Jefferson David Tant

**Patois:** Beg wata cyan bwile cow kin.

**English:** Begged water cannot boil the skin of a cow.

**Meaning:** You should not depend on the tools of others to do your own work.

The "welfare state" means easy living for millions. The US government, and governments in other nations have created a permanent class of people who depend on others (usually the government) to provide for them. In fact, it has been proven in some places that government handouts prove to be providing more income than if the person actually got a job and worked.

But honest labor was instilled in mankind from the beginning. In creation, God planted a garden, then created Adam and Eve. "*Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.*" The idea some have that living in the Garden of Eden was all "easy living" is erroneous. Even in that ideal place God expected man to labor for his sustenance.

Consider Paul's attitude towards providing for himself when necessary: "*For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you*" (2 Thessalonians 3:7-8).

He then goes on in verses 10-12: "*For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. No such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.*" It seems that the idea of always having a hand out for a handout is not new. Solomon's wisdom has an application here: "*Go to the ant, O sluggard, Observe her ways and be wise, which, having no chief, officer or ruler, prepares her food in the summer and gathers her provisions in the harvest. How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? 'A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest' - Your*



*poverty will come in like a vagabond and your need like an armed man" (Proverbs 6:6-10). "Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, but the hand of the diligent makes rich" (Proverbs 10:4).*

It is obvious that those seeking work to support their families face difficulties. In some areas jobs are few. But that does not mean we should give up. When I was a young man looking for work, I went to 33 places before I found a job - working at night in a difficult job. I recently read of a young man who walked 10 miles (16 km) in the cold snow to apply for a job that didn't pay much. But at least it paid something. But a storekeeper who saw him pass by his store later contacted him and offered him a better job. When he saw the determination of the young man, he knew that was the kind of employee he wanted.

By working, we then can fulfill one of the Lord's desires. *"In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:35).* If we want to be "more blessed," then God has given us the way to achieve it. And Paul advises those who have changed their lives, *"He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need" (Ephesians 4:28).* Work is satisfying. Work is Biblical.

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## ROMANS THE EIGHTH CHAPTER (No. 6)

This series of articles by the late Elmer Moore is reprinted from **Truth Magazine** by permission of the editor.

In Romans 8:9 the writer declares, *"But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."* There are at least three expressions in this passage that catch our attention, they are: "in the flesh," "in the Spirit," and "the Spirit of God dwelleth in you."

The expression "in the flesh" must be understood in the light of the immediate context. To do so one must remember that a contrast is before the writers mind - a contrast between "walking after the flesh" and "walking after the Spirit." The writer used the expressions "after the flesh" and "the mind of the flesh" to describe the one who is walking after the flesh. The expression "in the flesh" is just another term to describe this walk. In like manner the writer used the expressions "after the Spirit" and "the things of the Spirit" to describe the one who is walking after the Spirit. The expression "in the Spirit" is just another term to describe this walk. One must never lose sight of the contrast before the writers mind, (See Lesson Four of this series for a discussion of the contrast before Paul's mind).

I do not believe that there is any difference in the statement "Spirit of God" and the statement "Spirit of Christ." The law of the Spirit described in Romans 8:2 is in fact the law of Christ. Jesus declared



that the Spirit would guide the apostles into all the truth. That the Spirit would take "of mine," and declare it unto them; and that *"all things whatsoever the Father hath are mine"* (John 16:14-16). The perfect unity that exists in the Godhead is seen in the revelation of divine truth. Thus the Spirit's law is the law of God (Romans 8:7).

What then does the writer mean when he declares that "the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (verse 9)? He declares that the Spirit of God dwelt in them because they were "in the Spirit." To be in the Spirit was the opposite of being in the flesh. Those who were said to be in the flesh were those who were walking after the flesh and minding the things of the flesh. Those who were "in the Spirit" were the opposite of those who were "in the flesh." This is obvious from the contrast in verses 4-8. The writer pointed out that those who were walking after the flesh were insubordinate to the law of God (verse 7). Those who were walking after the Spirit were the **opposite** of those who were walking after the flesh; they were therefore **subordinate to the law of God**.

Note the following formulate argument: If one is in the Spirit, the Spirit of God dwells in him (verse 9). If one is elect to the law of God, he is in the Spirit. This is the obvious conclusion from the contrast presented by Paul. It follows that if one is subject to the law of God the Spirit of God dwells in him. This passage shows how the Spirit of God dwells in the Christian. When the Spirit's law is in his heart directing his thinking and his life, producing the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-24), then the Spirit of God dwells in him. Only in this sense does the Spirit of God dwell in the child of God. Every other passage that discusses the "indwelling of the Spirit" can be shown to harmonize with this truth.

Paul declares that *"if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his"* (verse 9b). As noted above, I see no difference between the "Spirit of Christ" and the "Spirit of God." Hence, the term "Spirit of Christ" is named when the Spirit that revealed His law, the gospel of Christ, is intended. It is quite common for an author to be named when his writing is intended: Moses is named when the Law is intended (Acts 15:21); Isaiah is named when his writing is intended (Acts 8:28, 30); Christ is named when the gospel is intended (Ephesians 4:20).

Inasmuch as the Spirit has a law, Romans 8:2, it is certainly in order to point out that the Spirit **may** be named when His law or message is intended. I believe this is true in many passages in the New Testament. We know that this is the case in John 3:5-8 where water is named and water baptism is meant and the Spirit is named when His law is intended. Compare also Acts 7:51-53. The Jews resisted the Holy Spirit by killing the Prophets that spoke as they were moved by the Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). They also resisted the Holy Spirit by receiving the law and not keeping it (Acts 7:52). The expression "Holy Spirit saith" in Hebrews 3:7 has reference to Psalm 95:7-11. Thus, the Holy Spirit is named when His inspired writing is intended. Just to mention a few. Thus, only the man who is willing to allow the Spirit's law to control his life is one who can rightly be said to "be of His."

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## WHAT EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT HEBREWS 10:25

Hebrews 10:25, or otherwise well known to many as "the verse about not forsaking the assembly," has been used and misused for so many purposes, and almost everyone seems to have a little different idea as to the extent of the verse's limitations. I have also received many questions that center on this verse. Therefore, I have decided to write out a scriptural explanation of this important verse for your documentation, if you believe it will be an aid to your studies in times to come.

Many would be shocked if one were to say that Hebrews 10:25 is not about binding Wednesday night Bible studies, and even more would be shocked if they were to hear that it is not even about the Sunday assembly, but the reality is that the text was never meant to be read with Sunday or Wednesday in mind, although I do believe there is great application to be redeemed from the text for those assemblies. So what is Hebrews 10:25 really about and what is this "assembling" that the Hebrew converts to Christianity were not to forsake? To answer this, we will not need a commentary, dictionary or any other resource, just the pages of the book of Hebrews. Too often Hebrews 10:25 is preached on without consideration of its context, and this has caused the great number of opinions on the verse that are not established by the facts of the context. So let's start reading!

Looking through the book of Hebrews, one will find all kinds of warnings about falling away from Christ and exhortations to stay with Christ. It is clear that these brethren were facing great problems, the kind of problems that would cause many to walk away from salvation. In chapter 2:1-3, the writer exhorts them to "*give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.*" What would this demand out of their lives? Firstly, to listen more intently to God's word, and essentially to hear the word more often than they usually would. When brethren face great tribulations in their lives, they may be forgetful in their reading of the word that they need more than anything at that time in their life. Further, they may begin to neglect assemblies, which causes them to miss out on much needed love and encouragement of the brethren, and they drift further away. This is precisely the warning given by the writer of Hebrews.

In chapter 5:11, the writer establishes that these brethren have already "*become dull of hearing.*" As a result, it became the "manner of some" to forsake the assembling of themselves together (10:25). These are people who have lost most of their faith, i.e. confidence or assurance in Christ. Consider for example these statements: "*hold fast the confidence*" (3:6); "*hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end*" (3:14); "*diligence to the full assurance*" (6:11); "*draw near with a true heart in full assurance*" (10:22); "*do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward*" (10:35). This is the supreme purpose of Hebrews 11, the great chapter of faith, which demonstrates to these brethren that men before them underwent great trials (11:36-40) but continued in their faith to God. But why are these Hebrews losing their faith? The answer is in Romans 10:17, because faith comes by hearing God's word. They had become "*dull of hearing*" God's word, and as a result, their faith had become dull, lacking all strength, and were falling away from Christ.

Is there a solution to their problem? Absolutely! The writer of Hebrews provides the solutions in chapter 3:12-13. *"Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."* How can one get away from having *"an evil heart of unbelief,"* a heart where faith in Christ is gone, and departure from God is evident? The writer answers: *"exhort one another daily."* The implications of such a statement demand that they needed to assemble together daily! Was the livelihood of these brethren so different from us today that they could and would assemble together each and every day? Certainly not! But the writer of Hebrews commands that that must change! They needed to *"give the more earnest heed"* to the word of God. They were in such a tribulation that they needed to assemble with the saints daily for exhortation. They needed this direct contact with one another and a sharing of God's word together if they were going to overcome the persecution that had risen against them.

What we read about in the book of Hebrews is a dire situation among brethren that had a more intense solution than just meeting together to partake of the Lord's Supper on Sundays, or even having a midweek service. These Christians were commanded by the Holy Spirit to *"exhort one another daily,"* yes friends, that means they needed to meet/assemble together daily in order to fulfill such a command.

It is in this grand and powerful context that the writer pens down the beautiful words of 10:25, *"not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching."* My friends, he is not referring to just a Sunday assembly, but their daily assembly!

Notice closer, how he commands them again to *"exhort one another,"* and then says *"and so much the more as you see the day approaching."* What is this approaching day? It is not the day of judgment, for the context does not allow that, nor does the verse itself. How could one *"see the day"* of judgment approaching when there is no signs of its approach (Matthew 24:36-39), for that day comes like a thief in the night (Matthew 24:42-44), something we never see approaching. Rather, a more accurate interpretation of the day in verse 25, is a particular time in their tribulation that they can see approaching; a day in which their situation will get even worse than it currently was for them. This is certainly harmonious with the command for them to *"exhort one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching."* Is he telling them to make their Sunday services more and more intense with exhortations as the days of this persecution continues? Or is he basically restating that which he already said in 3:13? Indeed, I am convinced that the words *"so much the more"* refers not to more intense exhortations, but to the amount of exhortations.

Meeting daily for exhortations, and as time progresses and the days get worse for them, they will need to spend longer time with each other, maybe even spending the nights assembled together in prayer. Certainly verse 25 shows itself once again to be struck within context by the next verse which begins with the word "for," a connective word. This verse 26 connects with the command to not forsake the

assemblies because the result will be more and more Hebrew Christians falling away from Christ, i.e. "sin willfully." In which case, the writer says "there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins." This is why the assemblies are so important, because the word of God is given heed to, and faith, confidence, and assurance in Christ is produced.

This is not the only occasion of scripture where we see unique assemblies other than the regularly scheduled weekly services. Take for example Acts 12:1-4, when Herod "*stretched out his hand to harass some from the church.*" Herod killed James and placed Peter in prison. Because of this situation, verse 5 tells us that "*constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.*" I believe this was a collective assembly, as demonstrated in verses 12-17. Therefore, there is certainly evidence of the New Testament church assembling at times other than their regular schedule in order to comfort and exhort one another, and to give themselves to prayer. This is exactly what these Hebrews needed in their spiritual lives.

### **Hebrews 10:25 and Me**

Now that we've looked closer into the context of Hebrews 10:25, we might be wondering what applications the verse has for us today. Even though the intent of the verse was not to discuss a midweek service or just the assembly on Sundays, the verse cannot be separated from such.

Firstly, I believe that if a congregation enters dire straits, then they are entering into the original intent of the command in Hebrews 10:25, and if the elders of the congregation deem the difficult situation worthy of more frequent, if not daily assemblies, then this would be something that the individuals are commanded from this verse not to forsake. I mentioned elders, in that, even the Hebrews were told in chapter 13:17 to "obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls." It is those watchful over the souls that would know whether the congregation's spiritual needs call for more assemblies. Although the elders are not to exercise any right to bind laws, they can certainly exercise the rights over that which is already bound by the scriptures.

But the applications of this text are far reaching, as the verse is a demonstration of the purpose and needs of any and every assembly of the church. What a tremendous priority this verse places on the assembly! That's a priority that many Christians fail to make today. The text explains the purpose of assemblies as times of exhorting one another, i.e. make each other stronger in Christ. And the previous verse (10:24), adds that assemblies fulfill the purpose by which we can "*consider one another in order to stir up love and good works.*" The assembly is the primary place in which we have opportunity to consider our fellow brethren in order to see how we can better show them love and influence them to love. Further, it is the place where we discover what good works we can do for one another's needs.

The assemblies of the church should not be forsaken today. Those who do forsake the assemblies do not see the dire need in their spiritual life for such an occasion. Nor do they see the needs that they are not supplying to their fellow brethren when they are not there to do their share within the body. Remember the words of Paul in Ephesians

4:16, where he said that the body grows and is strengthened by the "edifying of itself in love." The consequence of forsaking the assembly of the church together is twofold: it helps break down and destroy the church, and it helps break down and destroy the spiritual life of the forsaker.

Therefore, be careful brethren, not to forget the powerful context behind Hebrews 10:25, and the reasons we should apply the verse to our lives. It may be that, although the church may not be bearing with tribulation, we are as an individual. What a great need we have to not forsake the assemblies, to love and be loved, to strengthen and be strengthened, to consider what we can do to help out our fellow brethren and to allow them the opportunity to consider what they can do to help us overcome our struggles. In my opinion, the book of Hebrews lists the assemblies, and daily ones at that, as the single most important thing we can engage in to keep us from drifting away. I pray for an honest, examining heart for everyone who reads this article.

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## WISDOM IS THE PRINCIPAL THING : NABAL & ABIGAIL

### 1 Samuel 25

from the e-book, "...And They Shall Become One Flesh..."  
William J. Stewart | Kingston, Ontario, Canada

*Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget nor turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; love her, and she will keep you. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding. (Proverbs 4:5-7).*

### Working On Our Character

I am not certain that two people could be any more opposite than Nabal and Abigail. The writer describes Abigail as a woman of "good understanding and beautiful appearance," but her husband, Nabal, as "harsh and evil in his doings" (1 Samuel 25:3). What was it that brought these two together, we do not know. It has been said by some that opposites attract, but surely that doesn't explain why this fine woman was with such a brute of a man. Was it an arranged marriage? Did some circumstance in life change either her for the better or him for the worse? Was it the case that she did not really meet the real Nabal until after they had entered the bond of matrimony? We do not know.

Regardless what brought them together, they, like all married couples had the responsibility to work together - to help each other to grow and mature. It will often be that one spouse will have strengths in one area while the other is skilled in another. We need to use our strengths to build our partner's weaknesses.

Nabal was a successful businessman, having 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats. Though it is written that he provided for his own very well, one of his servants characterized him as "...such a scoundrel that one cannot speak to him" (1 Samuel 25:17).

This was said of him because though his men received aid from David's men (1 Samuel 22:15-16, 21), his shrewd (or should we say

foolish) business sense led him to reject David. Not only did he reject David and his men, but he reviled him - calling him a renegade servant (1 Samuel 25:10-11).

### **Protecting Your Spouse**

After she heard of her husband's rash words to David, Abigail sprang into action. She prepared a gift for David and his men, and sent her servant with haste to go and meet him. She approached David with humility and a plea for mercy (1 Samuel 25:23ff). All that Nabal was not willing to do for David (ie. give honor, pay wages, etc.), Abigail did. Speaking to David, Abigail referred to "...*this scoundrel Nabal...*" (1 Samuel 25:25). She continues, "...*as his name is so is he: Nabal is his name and folly is with him.*"

Should a wife speak like that about her husband? Understand, she was not speaking evil of him; she was calling a spade a spade, and doing so for Nabal's own protection and preservation. To stand in defense of her husband and justify his faults would have been to participate in his folly.

Notice, as she spoke to David, she claimed the iniquity of her husband was her own (1 Samuel 25:24, 28). Though she was not guilty of his actions, she was not going to abandon him. And, Abigail understood that Nabal's actions would have brought destruction upon the whole household. Thus, she stood in defense of her husband and her family (1 Samuel 25:33-34).

### **Acting Without Consulting**

We have noted previously that it is profitable to have open communications in the marriage relationship, and that decisions and actions should be discussed by both husband and wife. That said, Abigail acted without her husband's knowledge. Did she ignore his authority in the home? Did she step out of line by acting without his knowledge or authorization? Those who would reason thus are willing to permit and endorse a man to destroy his family, all under the guise of headship. A man who is not leading his household as he ought to must change, but his wife is not expected to sit by and watch her husband destroy their family in the meantime. In Abigail's case, she couldn't even tell him what she had done when she returned home, for the worthless man's "...heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk..." (1 Samuel 25:36). Yes, Abigail acted without Nabal's authorization, and according to David, her quick action without Nabal's knowledge was of the Lord (1 Samuel 25:32-33).

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## **LIVING ON THE BREAD OF LIFE**

Mike Thomas | Beaver Dam, Kentucky, USA

Jesus said something about bread that is a challenge for anyone to consider. When Satan tempted Him to misuse His powers to turn stone into bread, Jesus said, "*It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'*" (Luke 4:4). He was referring to what Moses told the Israelites after God had given them bread from heaven (manna) to satisfy their hunger. He "*fed you with manna ... that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord*" (Deuteronomy 8:3). The manna was to demonstrate to the Israelites



God's love for them and ability to meet their needs. This should have convinced them to love and trust Him no matter the circumstance - even above physical sustenance. As long as they followed Him, they had everything they needed. Jesus understood this principle and remained true to God's word when confronting the devil. We must do the same with our temptations. Nothing should be more important to us than following God and keep His word. Nothing.

What Moses and Jesus said about bread is a bold statement. Bread is a staple in most societies and has been for centuries. In America, grocery stores have entire aisles and sections dedicated to it. Nevertheless, even it cannot meet our greatest need. James said, *"Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls"* (James 1:21). If we want to be saved from sin, we must learn, understand, and obey God's word (Romans 10:13-17). Nothing else in the world has that power or ability. No medicine, no exercise, no currency, no administration, no person, no thing, and not even food and water can provide us with forgiveness. The only thing on planet earth that can save us from sin and cause us to be raised from the dead is the word of God. Specifically, this hope is found in the teachings of Christ, who said, *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever"* (John 6:51).

Our physical body is going to die, no matter how well we feed and care for it, but if we are wise our soul will last forever because we fed our spiritual man with the bread of life. *"For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come"* (1 Timothy 4:8). God gave the Israelites daily bread to teach them to depend on Him. He has given us the Bible so we might live *"by every word of God."* Do we?

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## COMFORT OF THE SCRIPTURES

Sean P. Cavennder | Bradley, Arkansas, USA

God's word is full of wonderful stories, encouraging examples, and comforting words. However, is the Bible merely a good book of stories, but lacking any authority or power? Many would argue that the Bible is just full of good anecdotal messages but is not given from an omnipotent God. Others might feign faith in God but treat His word as a tool to only excuse their sinful behavior, ignoring passages that expressly condemn false worship and immorality. Sure, the Bible is a good book. It certainly is an encouraging one. The Bible is a comforting book that is able to touch our hearts, minds, and souls. The Bible claims to be all of these things: *"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope"* (Romans 15:4, **KJV**). However, the Scriptures are so much more! The word of God is something truly remarkable, authoritative, encouraging, and comforting. Consider what makes the word of God so comforting to us.

### God's Word Is Truth

The Lord identified the word of God as truth (John 17:17). It is based upon that fundamental aspect that we must understand Paul's statement about how the Scriptures are to be understood and used in



2 Timothy 3:16. *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness..." (KJV).*

The term inspiration means "God-breathed." The Scriptures are the very words breathed and mouthed by God. It is how He has communicated to us today. Thus, the statement that Jesus made about God's word, *"Thy word is truth"* (John 17:17), is an apt description of the Scriptures.

The Bible ought to be a source of comfort because we will read what is right and true. No falsehood is contained in the Scriptures. There is no lie that we will ever read in the word of God. God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). So His words cannot be anything but true.

It is refreshing that we have a book that we can open, read, and understand. A book that will not try to deceive us, nor cause us to stumble. So we may trust the words that we read, the glorious word of truth that leads to salvation (Ephesians 1:13).

Some treat the word of God as if it does not hold any truth, though. Some will make statements such as "God's word has just spoken to you one way, and to me another way."

Consider such a foolish statement. What would you say about me if I express my will to you in one way, but turned around and spoke to someone else and said something that contradicted my statement to you? You would think of me as a liar! Why do we treat God's word as a lie, rather than the truth He intended for us to believe?

#### **God's Word Teaches Us Not To Sin**

The psalmist stated that he had hidden the word of God in his heart so that he may not sin against God (Psalm 119:11). Perhaps this is the greatest cause for comfort to be found in the Scriptures. When we search the Scriptures and examine our lives, we may know what is acceptable unto God (Ephesians 5:10-12).

Sin is not to be in the life of a Christian, and we should abstain from it. We do not have to guess as to what is acceptable before God's sight, thankfully. We have His revealed word to teach us and guide us.

We may know that fornication and covetousness is wrong (Ephesians 5:3). We may also know that evil speaking is sinful (Ephesians 4:31). Drinking is sinful, too (Ephesians 5:18). All of these things are evil and displeasing to God. They are contrary to walking wisely (Ephesians 5:15). The only true wisdom that we may find is from God's word.

#### **God's Word Reveals God's Character**

We learn about how God is love (1 John 4:8). We learn how God is just (Romans 3:26). We also learn of how God is gracious (1 Peter 5:10). All of these characteristics play a part in how God deals with people.

When we listen to the words that someone speaks, then we learn a great deal about their character. The same is true when we listen to God's word - we learn about God! We begin to understand how He interacts with people and how He treats them. Through a study of the

Bible, we begin to know God.

His word teaches us that the God of heaven will deal justly with His creation. For those who are disobedient to His word, judgment and punishment are promised. Those who are faithful to His commands can rest assured of receiving the goodness of God (Romans 11:22).

### Conclusion

How does comfort come from God's word? It comes through a better understanding of God Himself. When we understand that His word is truth, how we should please Him, and how He will judge His people, then we will learn the true comfort that is found in God's word.

The only comfort that we have is due to God's word being inspired and revealing God's will. We should heed His commands and His words. They are the very source of spiritual comfort, success, and happiness.

*"This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me."*

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## OBEDIENCE : WISE AND FOOLISH BUILDERS (The Parables of the Master)

MATTHEW 7:21-27; LUKE 6:46-49

Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA

In the sermon on the mount (Matthew chapters 5-7), the Lord reveals the nature of the righteousness of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:20). Entrance into the kingdom of heaven, in other words, being saved (cf. John 3:5) requires that our righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 5:20) and that we follow the narrow, difficult way rather than the broad, easy way (Matthew 7:13-14).

As the Master brings the great discourse on the righteousness of the kingdom to a close, He does not relax or tone down His message. He urges upon His disciples the absolute necessity of obedience as opposed to any supposed easier way to God by warning of the judgment to come.

The Protestant denominations urge sinners to "pray the sinner's prayer," promising immediate and sure salvation. You can find such a prayer inside the cover of Bibles the Gideons leave in motel rooms, but you cannot find in it the inspired words of Scripture. In fact, the Lord Himself emphatically declared, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21; cf. Luke 6:46). It is not enough to plead in prayer, "Lord, Lord, save me." Salvation not only requires obedience to God (Hebrews 5:8-9), it necessitates obedience to all the will of Christ (Matthew 28:19).

"That day," is Judgment Day, when one will either be welcomed into the eternal, heavenly kingdom or be told to depart into eternal condemnation (cf. Matthew 25:31-33, 46; Jude verse 6).

It is not enough to do what we consider good works. Many will be lost on judgement day who not only will have done what they thought were good works, but they will think they were acting in the name of Christ (Matthew 7:22). But because their deeds were "lawless," unauthorized

by the Lord, they will be commanded to depart, for the Lord never recognized them as His own (verse 23).

It is not enough to pray; nor is it sufficient to be religious, even sincerely religious, in fact hard working and sincerely religious. To be saved, we must do all the Lord directs us to do and only those things He has authorized.

To illustrate the less, the Master told the story of two men who each built a house. One was wise, and the other was foolish. What made the difference between wisdom and foolishness?

*"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"* (Psalm 111:10). This wisdom is proven by obedience (Ibid) and demonstrated by careful preparation for the future (Matthew 16:26-27).

Much of Palestine is similar to the American Southwest. In the dry season there are places know as "dry washes" (called "wadis" in Palestine) that might have flat, sandy beds. They become raging torrents when rain comes.

The wise man of the story built his house on a rock (Matthew 7:24-25). He exercised the foresight and expended the effort to build a secure foundation for his house (Luke 6:48). The work is more difficult, but the reward is a reliable house that can withstand the wind, rain, and flood of the storm.

The foolish man constructed his house on the flat, sandy bed of the dry stream (Matthew 7:26-27; Luke 6:49). Construction was easy, but when the storm came, the bed became a flood that swept all before it. The sand beneath the building quickly eroded, and the house collapsed violently. The result was disaster.

In the parable, the houses are the lives of the builders. There is no apparent difference in their lives, but the difference is in the foundations. No building is more secure than its foundation. The foundation of stone is obedience to the Lord. The foundation of sand is hearing without obedience. The storm is the judgment, as the context demands (Matthew 7:22-23).

It is not enough to hear and to know what the Lord says; we must do His will (James 1:22-25). Obedience to His will is the secure foundation that will withstand the storm of judgment.

The only one who can successfully stand before Christ in judgment is the one who both hears and obeys the doctrine of Christ. Prayer apart from obedience is futile, working zealously at religious deeds unauthorized by Christ is vain, and hearing without doing is a foundation of sand. The only way we can be ready for the great storm of judgment is by obeying all the will of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The storm is coming. Will your house stand, or will you suffer the greatest of all tragedies?

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## INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH

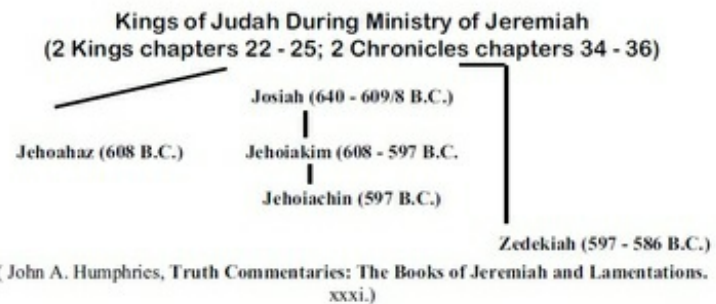
Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA

## Author

The book of Jeremiah was written by the prophet whose name the book bears (1:1). He was a priest from the village of Anathoth in Benjamin (Ibid) just a few miles northeast of Jerusalem. Jeremiah's prophecies were written down by Baruch, his scribe (36:4, 27-28, 32). Perhaps chapter fifty-two was written by Baruch after Jeremiah's death, but at Jeremiah's previous direction.

## Life of Jeremiah

More is known of the life of Jeremiah than of any other literary prophet. He began prophesying in the thirteenth year of the reign of King Josiah (1:2; 25:3), i.e., 627 B.C., when Jeremiah was but a youth (1:6). Jeremiah was a reluctant prophet, but felt compelled to speak God's word (20:9). He prophesied until after Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B.C. (39:1-10; 43:7-8; 44:1), and his ministry lasted over forty years.



Josiah's great religious reformation came in the early part of Jeremiah's work (cf. 2 Kings chapters 22-23), but the reforms did not reach the hearts of the people, for they were still rebellious (25:1-7).

The Jews opposed Jeremiah and his work from the very outset. First, the citizens of his native Anathoth tried to stop his work and even attempted to kill him (11:18-23). Even his kinsmen opposed him (12:6). Jeremiah later moved to Jerusalem, but he endured inveterate opposition there also.

When King Josiah died, Jeremiah lamented his death (2 Chronicles 35:25).

## Chronology of Jeremiah's Messages

King Josiah (627 - 608/9 B.C.)	King Jehoikim (608/9 - 597 B.C.)	King Zedekiah (597 - 586 B.C.)	Gedaliah 586 B.C.
chapters 1 - 20; some chapters under Jehoikim	Chapters 25 - 26, 35 - 36, 45	Chapters 21 - 24, 27 - 29, 34, 37 - 39	Chapters 40 - 44

Undated Messages: The Book of Consolation - chapters 30 - 33  
Judgment Upon the Nations - chapters 46 - 51

Humphries. xli.

Jeremiah prophesied against Josiah's wicked successors; Jehoahaz (also called "Shallum") (22:11-17), Jehoikim (22:18-19), and Jeconiah (i.e., Coniah or Jehoichin; 22:24-30).

In the very year Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem, Jeremiah announced both his coming and the seventy year captivity of the Jews (25:1-14).

Under the rule of Jehoikim, Jeremiah preached a great sermon in the

temple in Jerusalem (chapters 7-9). After this the princes, prophets, and priests of Judah called for his death (26:8-11). However, Jeremiah was delivered at that time (26:24).

At the Lord's direction, Jeremiah dictated his prophecies to Baruch, who wrote them on a scroll (36:1-8). However, when King Jehoiakim read the scroll, he was so angry he cut it with a scribe's knife and threw it into the fire (36:20-25). The king commanded that Jeremiah and Baruch be seized, but the Lord hid them (36:26). Jeremiah dictated the prophecies to Baruch again and added others (36:27-32).

Jeremiah urged King Zedekiah to be faithful to Nebuchadnezzar, but Zedekiah refused (27:12-22). The Babylonians besieged Jerusalem, and great suffering resulted (52:4-11).

Later, Jeremiah was accused of trying to defect to the enemy and was placed in prison (37:11-15). Subsequently the king transferred him from the dungeon to the court of the prison and gave him a daily ration of bread (37:16-21).

When Jeremiah again prophesied against Jerusalem, the king turned him over to the princes, who threw him into a dungeon, the bottom of which was filled with mud, into which Jeremiah sank (38:1-6). Jeremiah would have died there, had he not been rescued by Ebed-Melech, an Ethiopian eunuch of the king's house (38:7-13).

When Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem, he let Jeremiah go free to his own home (39:11-14).

A mutinous band of Jews murdered Gedaliah, who had been appointed governor by Nebuchadnezzar (41:1-3). They decided to flee to Egypt for safety, taking Jeremiah with them as a hostage (43:1-7). They took Jeremiah to Tahpanes in Egypt, where he continued to prophesy against them (43:8-44:1).

The life of Jeremiah was one of sorrow upon sorrow. His people whom he loved and to whom he pleaded unceasingly for half a century continually refused to hear him, rewarded his labor with rejection and persecution, and eventually perished as the result. His life is well summarized in his own melancholy lament:

*I would comfort myself in sorrow;  
My heart is faint in me.  
Listen, the voice,  
The cry of the daughter of my people  
From a far country:  
'Is not the Lord in Zion?  
Is not her King in her?'  
'Why have they provoked Me to anger  
With their carved images  
And with foreign idols?'  
The harvest is past,  
The summer is ended,  
And we are not saved!  
For the hurt of the daughter of my people I am hurt.  
I am mourning;  
Astonishment has taken hold of me.*

*Is there no balm in Gilead,  
Is there no physician there?  
Why then is there no recovery  
For the health of the daughter of my people?  
Oh, that my head were waters,  
And my eyes a fountain of tears,  
That I might weep day and night  
For the slain of the daughter of my people!  
Oh, that I had in the wilderness  
A lodging place for wayfaring men;  
That I might leave my people,  
And go from them!  
For they are all adulterers,  
An assembly of treacherous men. (8:18-9:2)*

Truly is Jeremiah called "The Weeping Prophet."

### **Condition of Judah**

During Jeremiah's ministry Judah had rejected the Lord for idols (2:13, 32; 5:19; 7:18, 31; 17:1-2; 19:4-5). They were guilty of gross personal unrighteousness (5:1, 7-8, 25-28; 6:13). The Jews hypocritically claimed to be God's people (5:2; 7:9-11), but they refused God's word (6:16-19; 7:25-26; 24:3-7; 36:20-24), refused to be corrected (5:3, 21; 6:15; 17:23; 44:15-18), and followed false prophets who spoke what the people wanted to hear (5:30-31; 6:14; 7:8; 14:13-14).

### **Jeremiah's Message**

The Lord's call to make Jeremiah His prophet summarized the message of the man of God:

See, I have set you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms,

To root out and to pull down,  
To destroy and to throw down,  
To build and to plant (1:10).

It was primarily a message of doom, but it included hope.

Jeremiah was the prophet of **DOOM**. He called Judah to repent (3:1; 7:4-7), but they refused (6:16-17; 20:1-2; 32:2-5; 37:11-21; 38:1-13; 43:1-7). Thus, Jeremiah foretold their destruction (5:9-10, 14-18, 29; 6:22-26; 7:16, 32-34; 14:15-16; 25:8-10). Israel was to be so destroyed as a nation that they could never be made whole again (19:10-11). This forever answers the premillennial claim that national Israel will someday be restored.

But Jeremiah was also the messenger of **HOPE**. He preached that Israel should place their trust in the Lord (9:23-24). A faithful remnant would be restored (23:3; 31:7-9). Ezra's record of the fulfillment of the restoration promise means this prophecy has been fulfilled, and one should not look for a future restoration of Israel to the land of Canaan. Jeremiah also prophesied salvation in Christ (23:5-6; 33:15-16) under "a new covenant" (31:31-34).

### **Outline**

- Prophecies During the Reign of King Josiah - chapters 1-20
  - Call and Commission of Jeremiah - chapter 1
  - The Lord's Case Against Israel and Judah - chapters 2-

- Charges Against Israel and Judah - chapter 2
- Call to Judah to Repent - chapter 3
- Disaster from the North - chapter 4
- Divine Justice - chapter 5
- Siege and Overthrow of Jerusalem - chapter 6
- Jeremiah's Temple Address - chapters 7-10
  - Misplaced Trust in the Temple - 7:1-8:3
  - Judgment of Backsliding Judah - 8:4-22
  - Lamentation over Wicked Judah - chapter 9
  - Idols versus the Lord - chapter 10
- Disloyalty and Its Consequences - chapters 11-13
  - Consequences of Breaking the Covenant of the Lord - 11:1-17
  - Men of Anathoth Plot Against Jeremiah - 11:18-12:6
  - The Lord Leaves His Heritage - 12:7-17
  - Impending Judgment - chapter 13
    - The Ruined Sash - 13:1-11
    - Broken Bottles of Wine - 13:12-14
    - Woe to You, O Jerusalem - 13:15-27
- Judah's Punishment Determined by the Lord - chapters 14-17
  - Do Not Pray for This People - 14:1-15:9
  - The Lord Promises to Deliver Jeremiah - 15:10-21
  - Judah and Restoration - chapter 16
  - Judah's Sin and Punishment - chapter 17
- Signs of Punishment - chapters 18-19
  - The Marred Clay - chapter 18
  - The Broken Jar - chapter 19
- The Prophet's Persecution, Threat, and Lament - chapter 20
- Prophecies During Reigns of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah - chapters 21-39
  - Prophecies Against Judah and the Nations - chapters 21-29
    - Jeremiah Answers Zedekiah - chapter 21
    - Prophecies of Doom Against the Kings of Judah - chapter 22
    - The Righteous Branch to Restore Israel - 23:1-8
    - Prophecies of Doom Against False Prophets and Priests - 23:9-40
    - Two Baskets of Figs - chapter 24
    - Seventy Years of Captivity - chapter 25
    - Jeremiah's Temple Address and Judah's Response - chapter 26
    - The Bonds and Yokes of Babylon - chapter 27
    - The False Prophet Hananiah - chapter 28
    - Jeremiah's Letter to the Captives - chapter 29
  - The Book of Consolation - chapters 30-33
    - The Restoration - chapter 30
    - Grace for New Israel with a New Covenant - chapter 31
    - Jeremiah Purchases the Field of Hanamel - chapter 32



- The Branch of Righteousness - chapter 33
  - Events Leading to the Destruction of Jerusalem - chapters 34-39
    - The Leaders in Jerusalem Transgress the Covenant - chapter 34
    - The Example of the Rechabites - chapter 35
    - Jehoiakim Burns the Scroll Containing the Prophecy of Jeremiah - chapter 36
    - The Imprisonment of Jeremiah - chapter 37
    - Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian Delivers Jeremiah from the Dungeon - 38:1-13
    - Zedekiah Refuses to Obey the Word of the Lord from Jeremiah - 38:14-28
    - Nebuchadnezzar Destroys Jerusalem - chapter 39
  - The Ministry of Jeremiah After the Destruction of Jerusalem - chapters 40-45
    - Events in Judah After the Fall - chapters 40-43
      - Gedaliah Made Governor - chapter 40
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