

## **Jeremiah 23 – 11 May 2014**

### **What should a Christian's reaction be to false teachers?**

**Reactions are a product of our true character...we just react. C.S. Lewis said it this way:**

Surely what a man does when he is taken off his guard is the best evidence for what sort of man he is. If there are rats in a cellar, you are most likely to see them if you go in very suddenly. But the suddenness does not create the rats; it only prevents them from hiding. In the same way, the suddenness of the provocation does not make me ill-tempered; it only shows me what an ill-tempered man I am.

**What should our reaction be to false teachers in our community? (Get audience answers)**

**In today's study, God will give us 4 reactions that we should have regarding false prophets that cross our path. As we meditate on how God would have us to react, then we'll react appropriately when the time comes.**

## **Read 23:1-2**

- We are just stewards of God's things.
- It was THEIR doings that was causing them to be scattered not God's doings.
  - Easy to trace, as example from Hezekiah's pride of showing the Temple treasures to Babylon, right to Babylon conquering them.
  - We so often blame God for the derision in our lives, but if we thought long enough we could probably draw a straight line from OUR doings to the punishment.

## **Read 23:3-8**

**Our 1<sup>st</sup> reaction to false teachers should be to center our preaching on Jesus.**

- How do we fight back? Answer them with a true hope. Not a temporary hope/peace but a lasting one.
  - Be ready to give every man an answer for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.  
(1 Pet 3:15)

- For I know the thoughts I have toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, *to give you an expected end.* (Jer 29:11)
- Vs 3 – God says that when He returns them to the land, He will make them fruitful.
  - Fruitful in Agriculture (confer Eze 36:8)
  - Fruitful in population
- Vs 4 – There is yet one more way that God will make Israel fruitful; that is spiritually fruitful. (confer with Eze 34)
- Vs 5 – Just cursed Jehoiachin in chapter 22, but reminds them that the promise will still come thru David. (confer Eze 34:23)
- Vs 6 – Notice that it's Israel and Judah. (Eze 37 – valley of dry bones and 2 scrolls)
- Vs 7-8 – confer Eze 36:22-24

## **Read 23:9-12**

**Our 2<sup>nd</sup> reaction to false teachers should be one of broken-heartedness.**

- Woe unto the pastors in vs 1-8 and now a broken-heartedness towards the false prophets.

- Remember, we're not trying to win an argument we're trying to win (gain) a *PERSON*.
- Read I Cor 9:19-22 (win = gain)
- Matt 18:15 (win = gain)
- Notice it's the Lord that brings evil upon them. (Just read II Pet 2)
  - We don't need to seek out false teachers to rebuke them.
  - If they're infesting our friends THEN we do.
    - Acts 13:6 – Barjesus, Paul rebuked

## **Read 23:13-15**

- Not only were the prophets into idolatry, committing adultery and lying, but they comforted and encouraged others in sin.
  - We would never admit to this, but:
  - Have you ever commiserated with someone who was gossiping to you?
  - Have you ever allowed someone to slide by not confronting them with their addictions that are controlling their live?

- Have you ever laughed at their God-dishonoring jokes?

## **Read 23:16-17**

**Our 3<sup>rd</sup> reaction to false teachers should be to not fall for their enticing words.**

- A false prophet will speak **for their own gain**, usually by comforting someone in their sin.
  - Read II Pet 2:1-3
  - Even when not overt, cults do it for their own gain. When we witness, we don't need them to come to our church...we just want them to come to Jesus!
- A true prophet will speak the truth whether comfortable or painful.
  - I Thes 1:1-7

## **Read 23:18-22**

- If a prophet or teacher truly knew God, then they would be out there turning people away from their sin!
- Why does God allow bad people to prosper?

- We won't need to ask this question in the end. It will already be fixed perfectly. (see vs 20)
- How about the opposite question: Why does God allow good people to suffer?
  - We won't need to ask this question in the end. It will already be fixed perfectly.

## **Read 23:23-29**

### **Our 4<sup>th</sup> reaction to false teachers should be to exalt God's Word over experience.**

- Mormons are notorious for this.
- Of the ways that God spoke to the people, the prophets used dreams for they knew this method was easy to abuse and twist for their own purposes.
- God speaking thru dreams is legitimate.
  - Joel 2:28 repeated in Acts 2
  - We know that now the primary method God speaks is Hebrew 1:1, thru His own dear Son.
- You have a dream...I have God's eternal, unchanging, written Word. What is the chaff to the wheat?

- So many today have their emphasis in the wrong place for their own selfish gain.

### **Read 23:30-32**

- If you've been put in a place of influence over someone (and we all have) be careful not to keep them away from the Lord.
- **Luke 11:52** – Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

### **Read 23:33-40**

- “What kind of hard message do you have for us today, Jeremiah?”
- “Nope, no hard message to repentance today. The Lord will now leave you in your sin!”
- There comes a time when we're just casting pearls before swine...not worth it to directly try to convert them.

## Conclusion:

Only 3 kinds of people: Them that is, them that ain't, and them that think they is, but ain't.

When it comes to reacting to “those that think they is, but ain't”, use what the Lord has taught us today.

1. Preach Jesus as the center of your message.
2. We should be broken-hearted.
3. Don't fall for their enticing words.
4. Exalt God's Word over experience.