

Israel's Irrational Sins

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Date: 14 July 2021

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[0 : 00] Last week, we looked at Jeremiah 43, beginning of 43.

! Make an appeal before Jehovah on their behalf to see what his instructions are. They'll do anything that he says to do. And Jeremiah knew better than that, but he prayed anyway. And God gave the answer.

Remember, this is the stage where the third siege of Jerusalem has taken place. It's now lying in ruins. And so, they come back, Jeremiah, have you gotten an answer from the Lord?

God waited 10 days to give the answer, give them time to think it over, determine whether they're really going to do what God says. God's message to them was, stay in Babylon.

[1 : 16] Don't go anywhere else. Remember, earlier on, he told them, build houses, plant gardens, and do this and that, and everything will be fine. And so, he says, stay in Babylon.

And he knew their tendency was going to be to want to go to Egypt. He said, if you do disobey me and you go to Egypt, you'll die by the sword. That, in essence, is the response of God to their request for prayer.

Stay in Babylon and everything will be okay. I'll bless you there. I will see to it that the king of Babylon has compassion on you. I will arrange that to happen.

Everything will be fine. And remember the earlier promises. I will bring you back into your land and you will prosper there. And so, the response to that was, the princes and all these other people that have always been against Jeremiah, rise up and say, that's not what God said.

God did not give you that message. Baruch. Remember Baruch? Baruch was the one that was kind of the scribe for Jeremiah in his older days.

[2 : 29] They said, God did not give you that message. Baruch has caused you to turn against us so that we will be delivered to the hands of the Chaldeans.

So, as a result, they take the majority of the remaining people in Babylon and travel to Egypt, taking Baruch and Jeremiah with them.

God had promised that they would die by the sword. Remember what God does. He tells them, he tells Jeremiah to do a symbolic message here, planting the stones in the mortar, thereby the kiln to the entrance of Pharaoh's palace.

And that was the picture of the fact that one day before long, Nebuchadnezzar will come, and he will pitch his tent right there on those stones and destroy, and destroy, in essence, do the same thing to Pharaoh and his city and his palace as he did to Jerusalem.

And so that was the message from the Lord, and that's where we left off last week. Now, chapter 44 is where we begin tonight. And here we find Jeremiah's last prophetic message to the people of Judah.

[3 : 53] And so, in chapter 44, let's look at the first 14 verses, if you will. Jeremiah 44, verses 1 through 14.

The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews who were dwelling in the land of Egypt, at Migdal, at Tapanes, at Memphis, and in the country of Pathros, saying, Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, You have seen all the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, and upon all the cities of Judah.

And see, this day they are desolation, and no man dwells in them. Because of the wickedness which they committed, provoking me to anger, in that they went to burn incense to serve other gods, that they did not know, neither they, nor you, nor your fathers.

Yet I sent to you all my servants, the prophets, earnestly and persistently, saying, Oh, do not do this loathsome and shamefully vile thing that I hate and abhor.

But they did not listen and obey, or submit and consent to turn from their wickedness, and burn no incense to other gods. Therefore my wrath and my anger were poured out, and were kindled in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem.

[5 : 18] And they became waste and desolate, as it is this day. Therefore now, thus says the Lord of hosts, or the Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel, why do you commit this great evil against yourselves, that will cut off from you man and woman, infant and weaned child out of Judah, to leave yourself with nothing remaining?

Why do you provoke me to anger with the works and idols of your own hands, burning incense to other gods in the land of Egypt, where you have come to dwell temporarily, that you might be cut off and become a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth?

Have you forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, the wickedness of the kings of Judah, the wickedness of their wives, who clung to their foreign gods, your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, who imitated their queens, which they committed in the land of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?

They are not humbled, they're not contrite, penitent, or bruised for their guilt and iniquities. Even to this day, neither have they feared and revered me, nor walked in my law or my statutes, which I set before you and before your fathers.

Therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will set my face against you for evil, even to cut off all Judah from the land.

[6 : 51] And I will take away the remnant of Judah who have set their faces to come into the land of Egypt to dwell here temporarily, and they will all be consumed and will fall in the land of Egypt.

They will be consumed by the sword and by the famine. From the least even to the greatest, they shall die by the sword and by famine, and they will be a detestable thing, an astonishment, a curse, and a reproach, that is, an object of horror, reviling, and taunts.

For I will punish all the inhabitants of the land of Egypt as I have punished Jerusalem by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, so that none of the remnant of Judah who have come to the land of Egypt to dwell temporarily shall escape or survive or return to the land of Judah to which they desire and lift up their souls to return to dwell there.

For none shall return except a few fugitives. Now, it's amazing to me, it just astonishes me how hardened a person's heart can get against the Lord.

I mean, here are the people of Judah having experienced the fact that everything God said would happen has taken place.

[8 : 15] They're out of their land, they're captive in Babylon, their city, Jerusalem, is destroyed, the temple is destroyed, everything lies in rubble.

God gives them another prophecy. Answer to their prayer. Tell us what God wants and we'll do anything He says.

He tells them, stay in Babylon. And they say, God hasn't told you that. Baruch set you up to lead us to be destroyed by the Chaldeans.

It's just amazing to me. So they do exactly opposite of what God tells them to do and are about to face the same consequences He said they would face.

So once again, God sets before His people the situation in very simple terms. They've provoked me to anger in that they went to burn incense to serve other gods that they did not know.

[9 : 19] Neither they, nor you, nor your fathers. That's verse 3. Of course, the sin of the idolatry here was in direct violation of the law that God gave to Moses in Exodus chapter 20 verses 4 through 6.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water underneath thee or under the earth.

Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

It's always a question in our mind why at this stage the people of Israel even forsook the law of Moses which they revered so much. But again, keep in mind what happens when things pass from one generation to the other.

A generation that early on had experienced the work of God at Sinai giving the law seeing the mountain filled with smoke lightning and thunders the voice from heaven and those type things

brought a terror to them.

[10:42] But from generation to generation to generation that loses its hold because of the lack of personal experience in that and the lack of teaching. Even in our generation I am now a great grandfather and so I've lived that long to become a great grandfather.

I am just now really coming to understand the degree of how things have changed and why they have changed in the mind of the present generation.

young people young adults think differently and have no clue as to some of the things that we did we thought of we thought were right we thought were wrong.

It flabbergasts them when you tell them. Yeah. Yeah. I may have told you before I've got this Kelvin I've got this this old Edison Victrola crank thing stands about so tall got the cabinet we refinished the cabinet had the work set off and so it would work and we could play play the discs on that.

The discs are like the old LP albums how many of you remember the old LP albums? Yeah. Most of you do and you just heard about them okay you know what an 8 track was?

[12:08] Yeah. Okay. well that's the size of the LP but they're about that thick about a quarter of an inch thick heavy and the girls that we've got with us this week our granddaughters from Omaha were visiting with us with their folks good while back and I showed it to them first time they'd seen it I said I want to show you what this is and I never thought about this I said and reached down to the bottom of the cabinet pulled out one of those records I said this is one of the original CDs compact discs and I went to put it on the thing and I'm thinking they may not even know what a compact disc is and they didn't they didn't so I played that for them and they weren't as interested as I thought they would be in that thing it's a big deal you mean they listened to that but anyway generations change and sadly sadly to say spiritual things are included in that when when when young people are not of a a family that has had a heritage that's rich in spiritual things that have been passed on from generation to generation they lose out on the reality of what's going to happen here of what

God expects and what it means to be saved and those type of things so that's what's happened here and that's what happens is happening to us today so God asks why is this such irrational behavior among you why do you commit this great evil against yourselves that's going to end up cutting all your posterity off you'll have nobody left you're going to die your children are going to die grandchildren are going to die there'll be nobody left to have children after you why in the world would you do such things now he says in verse seven why do you commit this great evil against yourself that will cut off from you man and woman infant and wean child out of Judah to leave yourself with none remaining so they prevented themselves and here's here's the sad thing they prevented themselves from possessing the inheritance that God has in store for them yeah God has that inheritance for them as the people of God as the covenant nation they'll not get that they've cut themselves off because of their idolatry and their disobedience and their failure to repent of their sin now verse 11 behold I will set my face against you for evil even to cut off Judah from the land all of Judah from the land except of course that exception of a few fugitives that would would be exempted from that I meant to look up the word fugitive and see what the exact meaning of that word was when we think of fugitives we think of people that Tom went to chase when he was in law enforcement but don't know necessarily that that's the case now verse 15 through 19 continued rejection of God's man and God's message in verse 15 then all the men who knew that their wives were burning incense to other gods and all the women who stood by a great assembly even all the people who dwelt in Pathros in the land of Egypt answered

Jeremiah now again picture the picture they're in Egypt now and they're burning these these this incense to these pagan deities in particular the queen of heaven whoever she may be as for you as for the word that you have spoke to us in the name of the Lord we will not listen to or obey you that's the word here but we will certainly perform every word of the vows we have made to burn incense to the queen of heaven and to pour out drink offerings to her as we have done we and our fathers our kings and our princes in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem for then we had plenty of food when we were well off and prosperous and saw no evil when we were burning incense to the queen of heaven everything was just peachy but notice verse 18 but since we stopped burning incense to the queen of heaven pouring out drink offerings to her we have lacked everything and have been consumed by the sword and by famine isn't it amazing how perspectives are different and the wives said when we burned incense to the queen of heaven and poured out drink offerings to her did we make cakes in the shape of a star to represent and honor her and pour out drink offerings to her without the knowledge and approval of our husbands oh did we not do that

did they not know we were of course they were they approved of this now you know as long as we were doing that offering the incense we had plenty to eat we are at peace with everyone else everything was rosy it's amazing how they overlooked those little judgments of god that were just easily overlooked but when we stopped doing that and that is a picture of the revival under Josiah by the way that that occurred that they stopped burning the incense he forced them to do that because it was a sin against god now when that started all of our problems returned to us and and so why not go back and offer these offerings to her again and have everything okay once again again in verse 16 and 17 we will not listen to you but we will certainly perform every word of the vows that we have made that is to the queen of heaven now notice if you will all this is put forward by them as a self vindication vindicating themselves for what they're doing because in the law of God to Israel in Numbers chapter 30 verse 9 the husbands had the right to annul any vow that that their wife had made even if they made it without their knowledge they could annul that vow so undoubtedly the husbands were not doing that they were just allowing their wives to go right along with what's happening and offering their offerings their incense to the queen of heaven because everything is going good for them amen when things are going good you don't cross your wife right mike yeah yeah okay

[19:40] I wouldn't say right tom but I wasn't about to do that all right now look at jeremiah's reply here very emphatic verses 20 through 30 then jeremiah said to all the people to the men and to the women and to all the people who had given him that answer the incense that you burned in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem you and your fathers your kings your princes and the people of the land did not the Lord earnestly committed because of them therefore has your land become a desolation and an astonishing waste and a curse without inhabitants as it is this day you know get a clue here folks you're sitting here in Egypt and over there is Jerusalem your city in ruins why do you suppose it's in ruins just because

Baruch said it would be no because of your idolatry get a clue here it's like a lot of preachers sometimes just want to grab some people by their neck and say listen yeah get a clue don't you understand God could no longer put up with that verse 22 again the Lord could no longer endure the evil of your doings and the abominations which you have committed because of them therefore your land has become desolate and an astonishing waste and curse without inhabitants as it is this day because you have burned incense to idols and because you have sinned against the Lord and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord or walked in his law and in his statutes and in his testimonies therefore this evil has fallen upon you as it is this day moreover Jeremiah said to all the people including the women hear the word of the Lord all you of Judah who were in the land of Egypt thus says the

Lord of hosts notice Jehovah of hosts the God of Israel you and your wives are both declared with your mouths and fulfilled it with your hands saying we will surely Now look at verse 26 interesting here therefore a little bit of difference here in what he says therefore hear the word of the Lord all you people of Judah who dwell in the land of Egypt behold I have sworn by my great name says the Lord says Jehovah that my name shall no more be invoked by the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt saying as the Lord God lives that statement behold I have sworn by my name boy that puts added credence to what he says and when they heard that they had to really understand what's going on we get a taste of that over in

Hebrews chapter 6 turn there just a moment if you will Hebrews chapter 6 here the writer the Hebrews is expressing to us the strength of the promises that God has made both to Israel and to us as well in verse number 13 of Hebrews chapter 6 for when God made promise to Abraham because he could swear by no greater he swore by himself saying surely blessing I will bless thee and multiplying!

I will multiply thee and so after he had patiently endured he obtained the promise for men verily swear by the greater an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife in taking an oath when two people are coming to an agreement in taking an oath it's implied that they appeal to someone that's of superior power alright someone as well then that's superior but also able to adhere to some punishment in case there's an infraction of the agreement that's been made between the two now when God made those promises and confirmed it by an oath he swore by himself and the reason he swore by himself is there's nobody greater to swear by alright no one superior to him so the oath then that he gave and the promise was confirmed upon the fact of who he was of his own existence alright it declares that the evident shall be as certain as his existence is alright because he exists

and always will the promises that he made are going to come true and those promises and that oath are secured by all the perfections of his nature

[25 : 15] I love that he swears by all that he is everything that he is in himself all attributes characteristics inherent within Jehovah of hosts the Lord God now when he tells the people of Judah behold I have sworn by my great name it's the very same thing very same idea because this idea comes out of an Old Testament law by all that I am in myself I guarantee you this is going to happen it's exactly what he's saying you talk about being stern that's it there's no if ands but about it no appeal to be made here he says my name shall no more be invoked by the mouth of any man of

Judah and all the land of Egypt now verse 27 behold I am watching over them for evil not for good remember before he said of good but now of evil and all the men of Judah who are in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword by the famine until there is an end of them and they are! yet a small the remnant of Judah who came to the land of Egypt to dwell there temporarily in other words on purpose shall know whose words shall stand mine or theirs and this will be the sign to you says the Lord that I will punish you in this place so that you may know that my words will surely! stand against you for evil! Thus says the Lord behold I will give Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt into the hands of his enemies into the hands of those who seek his life just as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon who was his enemy and was seeking his life now God brought all this upon Judah because of their idolatry and their wickedness and rebellion against him God could no longer let it go as we say their sin had come to its fullness the holiness of God the righteousness of God had to deal with that and so that's what's happened now again verse 29 and 30 this will be the sign unto you I will punish you in this place so that you may know that my words will surely stand against you for evil thus says the Lord behold I will give Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt into the hands of his enemies into the hands of those who seek his life just as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon who was his enemy and was seeking his life I would almost imagine I don't care what they said they believed what they thought about Jeremiah and his prophecies I've got to believe when God gave that last word and said I swear by who I am that the blood just had to drain from their head down to their toes I mean no hope no hope at all boy isn't isn't of course doing it gently be wise as serpents but harmless as doves but isn't that still the stress we need to put on the message that

[29 : 20] God has for us to give to this generation yeah because with this generation as with most others for many in one ear and out the other but to realize God has determined it's going to happen it's going to happen and the more we see taking place today the more we recognize how soon it's got to be before this actually really begins to take place is if it hasn't already now so Jeremiah was believed to have died in Egypt in 870 BC but what a glorious time that has to be amen when he stands before God now in conclusion sin always has been a problem even for the people of God amen remain so today don't know what the statistics are but the church today has its share of sin problems so what are we to do what are we as

God's people in this generation of wickedness and ungodliness what are we to do how many of you have just determined you're not going to watch any news anymore yeah it's pretty depressing stuff isn't it except for the fact you're trying to keep yourself up to date with what's going on so you're kind of halfway know what's happening and silliness and ridiculousness is that a word ridiculousness put that on the board yeah ridiculousness yeah of what's going on I always like to go to Psalm 11 go there just a moment Psalm 11 because the psalmist asks a good question in this particular passage begins in verse 1 of Psalm 11 by saying in the Lord that's Jehovah put on my trust how say ye to my soul flee as a bird to your mountain his dear friends were telling

David David you need to get out of dodge you need to go hide somewhere there's people after you you need to get yourself somewhere where your life can be spared but begins he said response to that it's in Jehovah that I put my trust how can you dare say that I should flee verse 2 for lo the wicked bend their bow they make ready their arrow upon the string and they may privately shoot at the upright in heart now look at verse 3 again familiar passage if the foundations be destroyed what can the righteous do of course in this case the foundations are all those things upon which the society government life and everything of Jerusalem of Israel was built of the kingdom of the nation was built when those begin to crumble as they were in David's time and they are in our time what are the righteous to do what can we do well in reality there's not anything can do amen we're all

praying and hoping for next year 2022 that's what it will be to come around the corner for elections again so maybe we can usher a change in but how much is that going to change things things go so far sometimes they go far enough that they can't even try to go back and change it back so what are the righteous to do look in verse 4 here's here's the basis of here's the basis of

David's confidence in the fact that there are those trying to put him to death destroy his life his kingdom all of those things he said the Lord that's Jehovah is in his holy temple the Lord's throne is in heaven his eyes behold his eyelids try the children of men yeah God's on his throne he says he's enthroned there in his holy temple it's above us and he's looking down on it all and he is aware of that he knows what's going on the Lord trieth the righteous but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hates upon the wicked he shall rain snares fire and brimstone and in horrible tempest this shall be the portion of their cup for the righteous

Lord the righteous Jehovah loveth righteousness his countenance doth behold the upright yeah yeah how many times in the psalms is David praying for God to watch over him to take care of him I love the way the psalms are written a lot of times David has a complaint and he does what should be done he takes it to the Lord now sometimes he feels sorry for himself oh God why are you doing this you know but invariably in the middle of that psalm he gets the answer and he begins to give praise to the Lord for who God is and the realization that once again refreshed in his mind that God knows him God watches over him and God takes care of him and has a future for him alright now Psalm 16 1 preserve me oh God for in thee do I put my trust how excellent is thy loving kindness in Psalm 36 7 how excellent is thy loving kindness oh God therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of their wing

[35 : 31] Lord loves righteousness the reality of that is the Lord loves that which resembles himself amen yeah well I'm not going to do that I'm not going to say that that's probably almost be blasphemy so I'm not going to do that Fonzie just came to mind but I wasn't going to compare God to Fonzie as I wanted to be careful with that you remember the Fonz you know he'd stand there with his comb out of his pocket and go hey why I don't need anything else amen yeah yeah yeah God loves to see himself in his people righteousness yeah so what do we do we live righteously we live the way God expects us to live the way he instructs us to live and in so doing then we are to share the love of God with an unsaved world what can the righteous do live righteously reestablish what is crumbled strengthen what remains the scripture says live with the standards that

God has established amen no matter what anybody else does no matter what anybody else does live with those standards boy that's what we've got to teach our kids and our grandkids doesn't matter what anybody else is doing what they say what they think about you what's important is what God thinks about you so let's live righteously live with the standards that God's established and live with such faith in God that your trust in him supersedes everything else so let it be known from the way we live our life that we love God and that we live for him and that we trust him amen biggest thing the world will not understand is how can you trust somebody you can't see but we can because we know him and we know that he knows us father we are grateful again for your love and grace and father thank you for just the privilege of knowing you and of you knowing us and thank you lord for living through us and in us and I do ask father that you will make us more and more aware keenly aware every day of that reality that you through your spirit living your son's life through us to accomplish your kingdom purposes through our lives so father just enable us to live boldly to live righteously because you love righteousness you love seeing yourself in us so father just work that in our hearts and our minds daily thank you for these sweet precious folks brothers and sisters in christ and for their love for you their love for your word and I pray god that you will continue to bless them as they meditate on your word daily to allow you to do that work within our lives that we will give it free reign unhindered liberty within our lives to do what it needs to do and what you want it to do so until we come back again next wednesday or sunday even that you will keep us mindful of your living within us what your direction for us is and use us to honor and glorify your son and thus yourself and we'll thank you for it in jesus name amen