Audio file

Gospel Service Colin Ross 1.11.26. 8826cr Jerimiah 8 v20.mp3

Transcript

00:00:00

And we'll turn to our scripture reading tonight.

00:00:01

It's found in Jeremiah and chapter eight, Jeremiah chapter eight.

00:00:07

We'll read the whole chapter.

00:00:19

At that time, saith the Lord, they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah and the bones of his princes and the bones of the priests and the bones of the prophets and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem out of their graves.

00:00:33

And they shall spread them before the sun and the moon and all the host of heaven, whom they have loved and whom they have served, and after whom they have walked, whom they have sought and whom they have worshipped.

00:00:45

They shall not be gathered nor be buried.

00:00:48

They shall be fordung upon the face of the earth.

00:00:51

And death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue of them that remain of this evil family, which remain in all the places where I have driven them, saith the Lord of hosts.

00:01:02

Whereover thou shalt say unto them, 'Thus saith the Lord, 'Shall they fall and not arise?

00:01:07

'Shall he turn away and not return?' Why then is this people of Jerusalem slidden back by a perpetual backsliding?

00:01:15

They hold fast deceit, they refuse to return.

00:01:18

I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright.

00:01:21

No man repented him of his wickedness, saying, 'What have I done?' Everyone turned to his course as the horse rusheth into the battle.

00:01:30

Yet the stork in the heaven knoweth at appointed times, turtle, dove and the crane of the swallow observe the time of their coming, but my people have not known the judgment of the Lord.

00:01:41

How do ye say we are wise?

00:01:43

The law of the Lord is with us.

00:01:45

Lo, certainly in vain made he it, the pen of the scribes is in vain.

00:01:50

The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in them?

00:01:59

Therefore will I give their wives unto others and their fields to them that shall inherit them.

00:02:04

For every one from the last, even unto the greatest, is given to covetousness.

00:02:09

From a prophet, even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely.

00:02:14

For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace.

00:02:21

Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination?

00:02:23

Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush.

00:02:27

Therefore shall they fall among them that fall.

00:02:30

In the time of their visitation, they shall be cast down, saith the Lord.

00:02:35

I will surely consume them, saith the Lord.

00:02:37

There shall be no grapes on the vine or figs on the fig tree, and the leaf shall fade.

00:02:42

Things that I have given them shall pass away from them.

00:02:46

Why do we sit still?

00:02:47

Assemble yourselves.

00:02:49

Let us enter into the defenced cities.

00:02:51

Let us be silent there, for the Lord our God hath put us to silence, given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the Lord.

00:03:00

We looked for peace, but no good came, and for a time of health, and behold trouble.

00:03:06

The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan.

00:03:09

The whole land trembled at the sound of the name of his strong ones.

00:03:13

for they are come and have devoured the land and all that is in it, the city and those that dwell therein.

00:03:19

For behold, I will send serpents, cocatrices among you, which will not be charmed, and they shall bite you, saith the Lord.

00:03:27

When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me.

00:03:31

Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people, because of them that dwell in a far country.

00:03:36

Is not the Lord in Zion?

00:03:38

Is not our King in her?

00:03:40

Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images and with strange vanities?

00:03:46

The harvest has passed, the summer has ended, and we're not saved.

00:03:51

For the heart of the daughter of my people am I hurt.

00:03:54

I am black, astonishment has taken hold of me.

00:03:58

Is there no balm in Gilead?

00:04:00

Is there no physician there?

00:04:02

Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

00:04:07

Amen, my Lord, that is blessing.

00:04:09

that reading from his own Holy Word.

00:04:12

Can we turn once again into the Scripture which we read together to Jeremiah chapter 8, and especially in relation to the words of verse 20, verse 20.

00:04:24

The harvest has passed, the summer has ended and we are not saved.

00:04:31

Well, this anguish cry goes up from the lips of Jeremiah on behalf of the inhabitants of Judah, the southern part of the divided kingdom of Israel.

00:04:41

And it is a cry of disappointment mingled with despair, for the land of Judah and the city of Jerusalem were about to face the third and final onslaught of the armies of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, in his complete subjugation and conquest of that land.

00:04:59

They had, or so they thought, reason to hope that the armies of Egypt would have come to their assistance to save them from the might of Babylon.

00:05:09

But the months have gone by, spring has given way to summer, or as our text may be better translated, the fruit gathering, and now summer to autumn.

00:05:20

Feast of Tabernacles, which coincided with the fruit gathering, is now over.

00:05:25

It is probably October by this time and yet no help has come.

00:05:31

And now as the days of winter approach when it seems unlikely that Egypt will begin any military offensive, this cry of desperation is heard in Judah.

00:05:43

Yet what is about to befall these inhabitants of the southern kingdom is not something which has come about by mere chance, for in the historical account of these days

00:05:52

Given to us in 2 Chronicles and chapter 36, we read that the wrath of the Lord arose against his people till there was no remedy.

00:06:04

Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Caldeans, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man or him that stooped for age.

00:06:17

He gave them all into his hand.

00:06:20

A solemn judgment, my friends.

00:06:23

It is in the light of the clear spiritual parallel between that old nation as it stood under God's wrath and each one of us by nature, as we stand as sinners under the wrath of a holy God, that I would like for some time tonight to consider these historic events.

00:06:42

So can you then for ease of consideration divide them into three main points and the first one

00:06:47

we might call a fair judgment, a fair judgment, the second a false security, and then the third a forlorn hope.

00:06:58

Can we address the first in a fair judgment?

00:07:01

Well, as we look at this judgment of God in its historical context, we will see that indeed it was a fair judgment.

00:07:10

Firstly, because it was deserved, it was deserved.

00:07:15

If we follow this nation of Israel all through our history, we find opening out before us not a pretty picture.

00:07:23

We see a people who constantly and persistently turned away from our God and defied all his commandments.

00:07:31

Especially the commandment, Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

00:07:35

If we follow them back to their beginnings as that infant nation which was led out of Egypt, that land of Captivity, we find them hardly established as a people when at Sinai.

00:07:45

They are grovelling down in worship to a golden calf as soon as Moses, that servant of God, is out of earshot.

00:07:54

Hardly had Moses and his successor Joshua died, and they had entered Canaan, and they had broken the promise that they had made before Joshua to serve only the Lord and turned again to the worship of false gods.

00:08:07

The gods of the heathen neighbours.

00:08:11

Well, as punishment, God allowed them to be oppressed by the heathen nations round about them.

00:08:15

And so they would repent for a time, cry to God and be delivered and then fall back into idolatry again.

00:08:23

Later under King David, that man after God's own heart, they did indeed enjoy for a time national and spiritual restoration.

00:08:31

However, in the latter years of the reign of Solomon, his son, the rot set in again by the example of Solomon himself.

00:08:39

who built altars to the gods of his many wives.

00:08:43

As a result, God decreed that the larger part of Israel, ten tribes in all, would be ruled by one of his servants, Jeroboam, and his son Rehoboam would rule only over Judah.

00:08:55

The kingdom of Israel was now a divided kingdom.

00:09:02

Well, our passage of scripture today finds Judah 391 years and 20 kings later ripe for God's judgment.

00:09:12

Only about six of these 20 kings had followed after God and attempted to stamp out the persistent idolatry which prevailed throughout these years.

00:09:22

And the last straw, as it were, was the wicked reign of Manasseh.

00:09:25

In 2 Kings 21 we read, Because Manasseh king of Judah had done these abominations,

00:09:31

and hath done all that the Amorites did which were before them, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols.

00:09:39

Therefore, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle.

00:09:51

Further on, because they have done that which was evil in my sight, have provoked me to anger since the day that their fathers came forth out of Egypt even unto this day.

00:10:02

Many hundreds of years of backsliding.

00:10:05

Oh yes, God's judgment was deserved.

00:10:08

It was deserved also because Judah had not repented, although she had seen how God had dealt with her sister Israel, the northern kingdom.

00:10:18

182 years earlier, only 209 years after the kingdom was divided, Israel and her 19 godless kings

00:10:29

had brought down God's wrath upon her head, and the population had been dispersed from the land by the Assyrian armies.

00:10:38

Yet Judah only hardened her neck.

00:10:42

God says in Jeremiah chapter three, and our treacherous sister Judah saw it, yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.

00:10:53

And again and yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart but feignedly saith the Lord.

00:11:04

Well what followed was indeed a judgment which was deserved.

00:11:09

Now what is this to say to us here tonight?

00:11:12

Well as surely as God's judgment fell upon Israel and upon Judah so his judgment will fall upon every unrepentant son and daughter of Adam who ever lived

00:11:22

For all have sinned that come short of the glory of God.

00:11:26

The unsaved friend here tonight, are there not parallels between your case and Judas?

00:11:31

Perhaps there is someone here tonight and you are like Israel of old at Mount Sinai when she turned to another God to the golden calf as soon as Moses' back was turned.

00:11:41

Perhaps you turned to other gods the things of this world instead of the things of God when you leave this building and the company of God's people.

00:11:49

You reject the clear teaching of God's Word the moment the voice of his servant is silent.

00:11:56

Repent that the judgment of God will not fall upon you also.

00:12:00

Or is there someone like Israel in the land of Canaan?

00:12:04

Has God sometimes sent illness and perhaps danger upon you in order to cause you to reconsider your ways as he sent the surrounding heathen armies upon Israel?

00:12:17

Like Israel,

00:12:18

Have these things not stopped you in your tracks, caused you to turn and to cry to God for help that the illness or the danger has passed?

00:12:26

And what is your God now?

00:12:29

What occupies all your energy and your time?

00:12:33

Danger past, God forgotten.

00:12:37

Is there someone here who, like Judah, has witnessed and recognized God's judgment as it has fallen and others who have rejected this offer?

00:12:45

of salvation.

00:12:46

And like Judah, you have effected a measure of outward reform for fear of suffering a similar fate.

00:12:53

Well, if some of these things apply to you, dear friend, then like Judah, the wrath of God hangs over you.

00:13:00

And as our savior himself said, except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.

00:13:06

But whatever is your case, is it not true to say that your life

00:13:10

has consisted of years of rejection of God and favour of the gods of your own heart.

00:13:17

And my friend the judgment which God has said he will pour out upon you will be a fair judgment also.

00:13:27

For indeed it will be deserved.

00:13:29

And you know as believers here tonight God sometimes sends temporal judgments upon us to chasten and to correct us.

00:13:36

When that happens we must remember that they are deserved.

00:13:40

Indeed, they bear no comparison to what we deserve, no matter how severe they may be.

00:13:45

For as David the Psalmist well knew, and he records in Psalm 103, he hath not dealt with us after our sin, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

00:13:55

And why is that?

00:13:57

Because he dealt with our sin and iniquity as he laid his rod up in his own dear son on Calvary.

00:14:05

So may we never grumble under his rod.

00:14:08

For whether it was the avenging hand of an offended God, we would have to say with the Psalmist, if thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?

00:14:17

But it is only the correcting hand of a loving Father.

00:14:22

Then we see that God's judgment of when Judah was not only discerned, but it was deferred.

00:14:28

It was deferred.

00:14:30

And so God had said that this people had provoked them to anger since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto the present day.

00:14:38

And so Manasseh had been the final cause of God declaring his intention to pour out his judgment upon Judah, yet through the mercy and goodness of God, this judgment is deferred.

00:14:50

It's deferred.

00:14:51

We have a further 56 years before it falls irrevocably upon our head.

00:14:57

Six kings will yet reign after Manasseh, but one of these, King Josiah, will do that which is right in the sight of the Lord.

00:15:05

and walk in the ways of David during his 31 year reign.

00:15:10

And so God will tell Josiah that because he walked uprightly, he will not cause his wrath to fall during Josiah's lifetime.

00:15:20

Yet within 23 years of Josiah's death and four more evil kings, God's hand has stayed no more.

00:15:32

But during 40 of the 56 years since Manasseh's reign, God has been graciously warning the people through Jeremiah of his intentions if they will not repent.

00:15:44

He also speaks to them through Ezekiel, tells them in Ezekiel chapter 14, Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God, Repent and turn yourselves from your idols and turn away your faces from all your abominations.

00:15:59

And again in chapter 18, verse 30, Therefore will I judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God.

00:16:07

Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

00:16:14

Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby you have transgressed and make you a new heart and a new spirit.

00:16:20

For why will you die, O house of Israel?

00:16:24

There were other prophets also.

00:16:26

Jeremiah, only 10 years into his 40-year ministry, says this to the people of Judah, From the thirteenth year of Josiah, the king of Ammon, king of Judah, even unto this day, that is the three and twentieth year, the word of the Lord hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking, but ye have not hearkened.

00:16:47

And the Lord hath sent unto you all the servants of prophets, rising early and sending them, but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear.

00:16:56

Oh my friends, a merciful God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked as he also told Israel through his sequel.

00:17:04

But he can by no means clear the guilty who will not repent.

00:17:07

So as we read the second Chronicles, the account of this point in Judas history, the wrath of the Lord rose against his people till there was no remedy, till there was no remedy.

00:17:19

Oh what solemn warnings we may draw from this account.

00:17:22

First is this,

00:17:24

People of Judah had been hearing these warnings for so many years and although Moab and Syria had earlier attacked them and indeed more recently they had suffered two attacks by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon perhaps they were thinking well it won't really happen to me okay some of our people have been taken captive but they haven't come near us and anyway we have the promise of help from Egypt We'll just carry on in our idolatry we don't really think things will get as bad for us as God says

00:17:55

How wrong they were, how wrong they were.

00:17:58

Yet how true to fallen human nature.

00:18:01

11 tells us because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

00:18:13

Someone here tonight like that.

00:18:15

Perhaps you've heard the use of warnings about hell and judgment from this pulpit for many years.

00:18:20

Did you expect to hear them again tonight, but the danger hasn't really come near to you?

00:18:26

Oh yes, you've been a bit perturbed when someone you know has died, but it hasn't shaken you enough to cause you to repent of your sins.

00:18:35

Instead you have hardened your neck, gone on in your sins like Judah.

00:18:39

You hope that somehow in the end all will turn out well.

00:18:43

Oh my dear friend, the scripture warns you,

00:18:46

He that been often reproved hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy.

00:18:54

As Judah's calamity came upon her suddenly, so shall yours.

00:18:58

Be not deceived, God is not mocked.

00:19:01

Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.

00:19:05

You may be summoned even this very night to appear in the presence of God.

00:19:10

Then there is another lesson contained here.

00:19:13

No doubt the people of Judah

00:19:15

would have been a bit concerned in Manasseh's day up in hearing of God's promised judgment.

00:19:19

But as the years went by and King Uzziah, that good king, reigned for his 31 years and nothing happened.

00:19:26

Perhaps they begin deaf to the message still being faithfully proclaimed by Jeremiah and the other prophets.

00:19:33

Nothing worse is going to happen, they may have said to themselves.

00:19:36

It would have happened long ago.

00:19:39

There's someone unsaved here tonight and you think like that.

00:19:43

You've heard that Christ will come again to judge the world of righteousness, but you've heard it for many years and still nothing has happened.

00:19:50

And so you don't concern yourself about it.

00:19:52

It's only one thing, dear friend, that stops Christ coming and calling you to answer for your sin.

00:19:59

But as God stayed his hand against you to those many years for Josiah's sake, he's only staying his hand against you this night for the sake of his elect saints.

00:20:08

until they've all been saved.

00:20:10

Peter tells us that Christ hasn't returned yet because he is longsuffering to usward, towards the saints, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

00:20:20

And then the final things in the history of this world will come to pass.

00:20:26

But we see also that the mercy and longsuffering of God is not inexhaustible.

00:20:30

It's not inexhaustible, dear friends.

00:20:34

God's Spirit will not always thrive with man.

00:20:36

That's what he himself said in the days of Noah.

00:20:40

Oh yes, he allowed him another 120 years while Noah, that man of righteousness, warned him.

00:20:46

And then no more, no more.

00:20:49

The flood came and destroyed him.

00:20:51

Yes, God's Spirit pleaded with Israel and Judah for hundreds of years while his wrath built up until there was no remedy and he carried them away in his longer.

00:21:02

God has been merciful to you, dear unsaved friend, perhaps for many years as you have listened to the invitation of the gospel.

00:21:11

Like those of Noah's time or the people of Judah, he has deferred his judgment upon you.

00:21:17

But for how long?

00:21:19

How much longer?

00:21:20

How much longer?

00:21:22

Oh, don't presume any further than the mercy and long-suffering of God.

00:21:27

So his judgment was deserved.

00:21:30

It was deferred

00:21:31

Now we see also that it was divertible.

00:21:33

It was divertible.

00:21:35

If only the people of Judah had turned and repentance to God, he would have had mercy upon them.

00:21:40

God tells them in Jeremiah 3 verse 1, they say if a man put away his wife and she go from him become another man's, shall he return unto her again?

00:21:49

Shall not that land be greatly polluted?

00:21:52

But thou was played the harlot with many lovers, yet return unto me, saith the Lord.

00:21:57

And verse four, wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, my father, thou art the guide of my youth.

00:22:04

Chapter 18, we read, If that nation against whom I have pronounced turned from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.

00:22:14

Oh, if they had turned from their idols, God would have healed their spiritual wounds.

00:22:18

So only a great physician can do as with the balm of Gilead.

00:22:23

And perhaps the judgment which would have fallen on them would have been deflected onto the land of Babylon.

00:22:30

But although he was going to use Nebuchadnezzar to punish his people of Judah, did not mean that God was pleased with Babylon.

00:22:36

He merely defers her judgment also.

00:22:39

But in Jeremiah 25, verse 12, we're told that what God intends to do to Babylon after his people's 70 year exile there is over.

00:22:49

It shall come to pass, when 70 years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.

00:23:02

Yes, if Judah had returned to our God, his judgment would have been deflected.

00:23:08

My unsaved friend, the judgment which hangs over you is divertible also.

00:23:12

If only you will return unto the Lord your God and repent of your sins, you will find that the Saviour of the Lord Jesus Christ has borne your sins in his own body upon the cross of Calvary, and that there will be no condemnation to you if you are in Christ Jesus.

00:23:30

You will experience the meaning of the words of the hymn, Jehovah lifted up his rod, O Christ, it fell in thee.

00:23:37

Thou was so stricken of thy God, there's not one stroke for me.

00:23:44

You will see that the impending wrath of God which hung over you has been deflected upon the head of the sinless Son of God.

00:23:52

Believe in Jesus Christ and you have everlasting life.

00:23:56

If you will not believe, then John 3 verse 36 tells you, He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.

00:24:07

So we can see that a Judas judgment was a fair judgment, for it was deserved, it was deferred and it was divertible.

00:24:15

But then secondly, we see in this account a fair judgment and then a false security, a false security.

00:24:24

This was a product of two things, of misconception and misinformation.

00:24:31

Firstly, it was caused by a misconception.

00:24:35

What was that misconception?

00:24:36

Well, we see it in verse 19 as Jeremiah echoes the cries of the Jews who are already captive in Babylon.

00:24:43

It's better translated in this way.

00:24:45

Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people from a distant land.

00:24:50

It's not the Lord in Zion.

00:24:52

It's not her king in her.

00:24:54

What are they saying?

00:24:55

Probably something like this.

00:24:57

Surely all things will work out all right for us eventually.

00:25:00

After all, aren't we God's chosen people and is God not there for the midst of his people?

00:25:06

Is not God in Zion?

00:25:08

Is the king not even now sitting upon the throne of our father David?

00:25:12

And so why doesn't our God do something about our situation?

00:25:18

These people thought that they had a right to expect God to be on their side, but was God on their side?

00:25:25

How does he reply?

00:25:27

Verse 19, Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images and with strange vanities?

00:25:33

Why should God have been on their side?

00:25:35

They chose to ignore God's earlier dealings with their northern sister Israel.

00:25:40

This is how Isaiah records these dealings, that they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit.

00:25:45

Therefore, he was turned to be their enemy and he fought against them.

00:25:51

Now God's wrath is built up against Judah.

00:25:54

Tell us, we read earlier, there was no remedy.

00:25:56

It was too late, my friends.

00:25:58

It was too late.

00:26:02

They thought they had the security of God on their side, but it was a false security.

00:26:07

Dear friend, unsaved, still in your sins.

00:26:10

Are you drawing comfort from a misconception tonight?

00:26:13

The illusion that God is on your side, that all is well between your soul and God.

00:26:19

All is not well, all is not well.

00:26:21

You cannot call yourself a child of God as a believer can, as example in the Lord's Prayer, our Father which art in heaven.

00:26:29

So the Bible tells us that by nature, the devil is our father, not God.

00:26:35

We are at enmity, we are enemies of God.

00:26:39

While you remain unrepentant in your sin, also God's word tells you that God command us all men ever to repent, then like Judah of old,

00:26:47

God's wrath is building up against you.

00:26:51

Paul tells us in Romans 2, you're treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.

00:26:58

Now don't continue under that misconception any longer, allowing the wrath of God to build up until it may be said of you as of Judah that there was no remedy.

00:27:09

For God's grace is still extended to you tonight to be reconciled to him through trusting the atoning death of his dear son.

00:27:18

Turn to him tonight for he is saying to you, as he did to Judah, wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, my father, thou art the guide of my youth.

00:27:27

Dear friend, God wants to be your father, not your enemy, as he is now.

00:27:33

And you know, dear believing friends, it's possible for us to fall into false security through a misconception also.

00:27:40

Think that all is well with our souls and God when it is not.

00:27:45

That is in the area of presumptuous sin.

00:27:49

For if we sin willfully against light received, the defiance of the convictions and admonitions of our own conscience.

00:27:56

And it's the most dangerous sin.

00:27:59

Psalmist asked the Lord to keep him back from presumptuous sins.

00:28:02

Let them not have dominion over me, he says.

00:28:05

And while we're walking in such sin, we have no grounds to be assured of our soul's salvation.

00:28:12

Matthew Henry says that they are the sins which most offend God and wound conscience and which wither our comforts and shock our hopes.

00:28:22

May we not play around with our eternal souls, my friends.

00:28:25

Remember that indeed we are in a death struggle with sin and either we put it to death or it will be the death of us.

00:28:33

May we never be found with a false security.

00:28:36

So Judah's false security was a product of misconception as to our true position before God.

00:28:43

But now we see that it came about by misinformation.

00:28:46

It came about by misinformation.

00:28:48

Why did these Jews not believe what it was about to befall them as God through the prophet Jeremiah and others called them to repent and to turn again to him before the armies of Nebuchadnezzar flooded in upon them?

00:29:02

Why were they under the misconception that God was still with them?

00:29:06

Probably because Jeremiah and his contemporaries weren't the only voices to be heard in Judah in these days.

00:29:14

We're told in verse 11 of other prophets who were not telling the people that God was about to judgment.

00:29:19

They were false prophets.

00:29:20

Seeker tells us they were the prophets of Israel which prophesy concerning Jerusalem which see visions of peace for her and there is no peace saith the Lord God.

00:29:31

Jeremiah tells us in verse 11, for they have healed the heart of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, peace, peace, when there is no peace.

00:29:41

These poor people, we may say, they were led astray, they didn't know who to believe.

00:29:46

Well, that's not what God saw.

00:29:48

That's not what God saw.

00:29:49

He tells us through Jeremiah chapter five, verse 31.

00:29:52

The prophets prophesy falsely, the priests bear rule by their means, and my people love to have it so.

00:30:03

Oh yes, they love the message of the false prophets.

00:30:05

Peace, peace.

00:30:07

God is not really angry with you and your idolatry.

00:30:10

All will be well.

00:30:12

We can't stand as Jeremiah fell.

00:30:14

He's demanding that we give up all our idolatrous pleasures where we face God's wrath.

00:30:20

Is there any wonder that so many people today who attend churches and listen to so-called preaching of God's Word and the misconception that all is well with their souls?

00:30:30

I say many who occupy the pulpits of this land cry, Peace, peace, when there is no peace.

00:30:37

The people love to have it so.

00:30:40

Oh, they heal slightly the hurt with the ointment, the balm of false hope, when what is needed is the removal of the cancer of sin by the application of that two-edged sword of God's Word to the souls of men and women.

00:30:56

Oh, my unsaved friend, if you attend this gathering of God's people regularly, then by God's grace, you will never hear proclaim peace, peace when in your position as yet there is no peace between you and your God.

00:31:10

I can ask you tonight, are there other voices to which you listen?

00:31:14

When in the preaching of God's word, you're told of his judgment which hangs over you.

00:31:20

Voices which say peace, peace when there's no peace.

00:31:23

You perhaps listen to your own heart, which would tell you that all will be well with you.

00:31:27

If you do your best, God will accept you on that basis.

00:31:30

Well, don't believe it.

00:31:32

Heart is the seat full above all things and desperately wicked, says God's word.

00:31:36

Does the devil come to you and tell you that you won't perish eternally?

00:31:40

God doesn't really mean it, for after all, his word tells us that he is a God of love.

00:31:46

He's a God of love.

00:31:47

And don't be fooled by him either.

00:31:51

Did you not tell our first parents the very same thing?

00:31:55

God says he was a liar from the beginning.

00:31:59

You perhaps hear other men or read their words or see them on television denying the very word of God that except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.

00:32:07

Well, then regret their words, the poison that they are.

00:32:12

For what benefit did the words of such false counselors bring to Judah?

00:32:17

Did they somehow manage to evade the judgment of God after all?

00:32:21

Not a bit of it, my friends.

00:32:23

Instead, they lost the opportunity to turn to God when he would yet hear them.

00:32:30

Same applies to any of us here who allow the word of man or the devil or the imagination of our own hearts to deflect us from a warning and God's word to flee from the wrath to come.

00:32:42

We lose the opportunity to seek the Lord while he may be found and to call upon him while he is near.

00:32:48

So the judgment was about to befall due, there was a fair judgment, for they were resting in a full security which left them thirdly with a forlorn hope, a forlorn hope.

00:33:02

The hope that their future prosperity and security would yet be ensured.

00:33:08

What were the grounds for having this hope which was ultimately shown to be an ill-founded hope?

00:33:13

Well, the main ground for their hope was what we could call unlikely allies, unlikely allies.

00:33:21

Had they not been resting in the false security that their God was with them and intended to deliver them, then they would not have clung to the very things which led to their ultimate destruction.

00:33:33

About four years before the father Judah, Egypt was attempting to reestablish the ancient Egyptian supremacy in Western Asia.

00:33:42

especially by tampering with the allegiance of the lands which were vassals of Babylon, as Judah was by this time in the history.

00:33:51

However, Judah's last king, Zedekiah, he took the initiative by rebelling against Nebuchadnezzar.

00:33:57

Sekiel tells us in chapter 17, that he rebelled against him in sending his ambassadors into Egypt that they might give him horses and much people.

00:34:07

Here was Judah, part of that nation of Israel.

00:34:10

whom God was constantly addressing with these words, I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

00:34:18

Where do they turn in their time of trouble?

00:34:21

To the Lord or God who brought them out of the house of bondage?

00:34:24

No, the false gods and to the nation who had kept their forefathers for 400 years in that house of bondage.

00:34:32

They turned to Egypt.

00:34:35

an unlikely ally indeed, of all the countries to befriend the nation which had so brutally enslaved their forefathers.

00:34:43

They put their trust in the king of Egypt and in the gods of the heathen.

00:34:47

Yet they couldn't see that their plight was all to do with their spiritual state.

00:34:52

Chapter two God through Jeremiah has been intimating their condition.

00:34:55

He says,

00:34:56

For my people have committed two evils.

00:34:59

They have forsaken me the fountain of living waters.

00:35:01

They have hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

00:35:06

Oh, what a sad picture.

00:35:08

People of God had chosen for his own that turned away from a source of light and truth that of everlasting life to grovel before stone and wooden idols and before heathen kings who could neither hear their cries nor meet their needs.

00:35:25

Surely this condition of Judah is a true reflection of the state of every unregenerated son and daughter of Adam.

00:35:32

Firstly, because by nature all of us are found estranged from God, the fountain of life, and serving the God of this world who promises contentment and satisfaction among the treasures and pleasures of this present evil world, as Judah's false religion promised them.

00:35:51

Yet are they not ultimately found to be tinsel and trash.

00:35:54

As God says, broken cisterns that can hold no water, which can never satisfy the soul's longing.

00:36:02

The world, the flesh, and the devil promise true happiness, but they fail to deliver.

00:36:07

Oh, young people, remember that fact when these three enemies of your souls cast out their net to and seer in you as they most certainly will try to do.

00:36:15

Hear the experience of the writer of these words who found

00:36:19

How empty the pleasures of this world are.

00:36:22

I tried the broken cisterns, Lord, but ah, the waters failed.

00:36:26

Even as I stooped to drink, they fled and mocked me as I wailed.

00:36:31

Oh yes, they promise satisfaction like a pool of cold water appears to a thirsty man.

00:36:37

But dear friends, they're merely the shimmering of a mirage.

00:36:40

And as you scoop them up to your lips to drink, they turn to sand in your mouth.

00:36:46

Unsaved friend of her God is the fountain of living waters.

00:36:50

Come to him tonight and drink freely.

00:36:53

Jesus said, he that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.

00:36:58

Then the other reason why Judah's condition was a picture of unsaved human nature is because as Judah sought to be saved from the judgment of Nebuchadnezzar by Egypt, the power which had so long held her in bondage and might well do so again.

00:37:13

So many men and women seek to be saved from a judgment of God by seeking refuge in something which will hold them in bondage all their days.

00:37:21

And in the end, far from saving them, it will stand up and witness against them on the day of judgment.

00:37:27

That thing is the law of God, the law of God.

00:37:29

Oh, God's law is good and holy, but it is a hard taskbuster.

00:37:34

Its yoke the Apostle Paul tells us is a yoke of bondage.

00:37:38

For labour as you will, dear, unconverted friend, to keep God's law, as revealed in the Ten Commandments, you will never be free from its demands, but you can never fulfil them.

00:37:48

Never fulfil them.

00:37:49

Conceived in sin, shaped in enictment, you or I can never keep God's law faultlessly and so obligate them to show us favour.

00:37:58

Oh, if only Judah had realised what Psalm 118 tells us, it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.

00:38:06

So better trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princess.

00:38:10

Oh dear friend, don't put your confidence in man and what you yourself can do by performing the commandments of God as a means of gaining heaven at last, for it won't work.

00:38:19

It won't work.

00:38:20

God's word tells us so.

00:38:21

By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in the sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

00:38:29

The more you know of God's holy law, the more you think, the more you know how far short of his demand you come.

00:38:36

You will never be free of it by your own efforts.

00:38:39

It's a hymn writer pen, The arm of flesh will fail you.

00:38:42

You dare not trust your own.

00:38:44

Well, if you still hope that you can, then like Judas, yours is a forlorn hope.

00:38:49

It's a forlorn hope.

00:38:52

Well, if the heathen idols in Egypt were unlikely allies for Judah, and if the idols of this world and the Egypt of our own good works are unlikely allies for the sinful sons and daughters of Adam,

00:39:04

Then where are we to turn for help?

00:39:06

Lest our hope becomes like Judas, a forlorn hope.

00:39:10

If only Judah turned again in repentance to our God, the one who called himself the fountain of living waters.

00:39:17

She would have no desire for the broken sisters of false religion and the might of Egypt.

00:39:23

And the unsaved friend, the desire for the things of this world, the desire to justify herself before God will cease if you but turn in true repentance to Jesus Christ.

00:39:34

For he is the water of life, whosoever drinks of him will not thirst after the broken reservoirs of this world.

00:39:41

And unlike the burden of one who is adhered to God's holy law, you will find that his yoke is easy and his burden is light.

00:39:49

These are Christ's own words.

00:39:52

If only Judah had realized that God was our only true friend, though how much suffering she would have spared herself.

00:39:59

Dear friend, without Christ here tonight, if only you will realize that the one whom they call the friend of sinners is the only true friend that you could ever have for the good of your soul.

00:40:11

Judas God, spurned as our friend, became our judge.

00:40:16

Beware lest the one whom you will still spurn you tonight should become your judge on that eternal day.

00:40:24

Embrace him while you may,

00:40:25

This is the words of Psalm 2, Kiss the sun lest they be angry, and ye perish from the way, when this wrath is kindled with a little.

00:40:33

Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

00:40:38

So Judah's hope was a forlorn hope because she trusted in unlike the allies.

00:40:43

Lastly, we see that it was a forlorn hope because it had unfulfilled expectations.

00:40:49

and fulfilled expectations.

00:40:50

This is what has led to the cry before us now.

00:40:53

The harvest has passed, the summer has ended, and we're not saved.

00:40:58

They were not saved and they had expected to be saved.

00:41:03

Was there no one who could save them?

00:41:05

Hear God as he speaks through Isaiah to Israel, for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.

00:41:14

Here Jehovah says to the house of Israel, I am your Saviour.

00:41:18

Why then was Judah not saved?

00:41:21

She can't because she wanted saved from the wrong thing.

00:41:24

Did she want saved from her sin of idolatry?

00:41:26

Oh no, not at all.

00:41:28

She wanted saved from the besieging armies.

00:41:30

It wasn't even God's help that she depended directly on.

00:41:35

It was the might of the Pharaoh of Egypt.

00:41:39

Had she seen that her national military weakness was because of her sin.

00:41:43

she would have seen how futile it was to try to prop it up by an alliance with Egypt.

00:41:49

But she did not see it.

00:41:50

As God's word records for us, its judgment Harry no longer but swiftly overtook her.

00:41:56

Oh, many perished beneath the chariots of the Chaldeans.

00:42:00

The remainder were led away captive to that strange land of Babylon, and Egypt had failed to come to her aid.

00:42:08

Her saviour, by her own appointment, had failed her.

00:42:13

just as the broken cisterns are false gods had not brought our peace and happiness.

00:42:19

What then is someone here tonight who has looked to the wrong things for help in their lost condition?

00:42:24

Could this perhaps be the cry of some older person here tonight?

00:42:27

Harvest has passed, the summer has ended and we are not saved.

00:42:32

Perhaps in the spring of our youth, you have hearders of out cisterns, broken cisterns that could hold no water.

00:42:38

the transient pleasures of this world which could never satisfy your soul, and turned away from God, the fountain of living waters?

00:42:47

Oh, have you spent the summer of your life trusting for your deliverance except as before God in the Egypt of your own good works, your own righteousness by keeping God's law, perhaps family ties which have not and never will save you.

00:43:02

And my dear friend, this has been true of you, the harvest indeed has passed.

00:43:07

late summer of life may be over and yet you are not saved.

00:43:12

You stand in the autumn of your day still facing the judgment of God which hangs over you.

00:43:20

But if even at this late stage Judah's plight was not a hopeless one as yours, as yours, no praise God, praise God the winter of his wrath has not yet arrived.

00:43:33

Things in which you have trusted have failed.

00:43:35

The world, the flesh and the devil have cried to you peace, peace.

00:43:39

Yet you have no peace with your God.

00:43:43

And like Judah, will you acknowledge that you have a spiritual problem which only God can cure.

00:43:49

May the salvation of your soul be your expectation tonight.

00:43:52

May not be found in that eternal day like Judah with unfulfilled expectations.

00:43:58

Young people, perhaps you're thinking, well, this doesn't apply to me, I'm not in the autumn of my days.

00:44:04

Oh, but like Judah in the spring, already you have expectations.

00:44:09

No bewareness to become unfulfilled expectations.

00:44:13

Judah's expectations were unfulfilled because we said they were wrong expectations.

00:44:18

She thought that above all things what she needed was prosperity and security by whatever means she could attain them when what she really needed was to have her sins dealt with and to be right with her God.

00:44:33

What are your expectations in the spring of your life?

00:44:36

A job, a career, to earn a living, a modest and prudent ambition?

00:44:42

Perhaps you see the pitfalls of deciding great wealth or power and fame.

00:44:47

Yet how easy it is to be caught up with even the everyday cares surrounding obtaining an education, finding and training for employment, the many duties which life soon places upon you, that you put the things of God on your soul salvation to the back of your mind.

00:45:04

God knows that we need to eat to live, but yet he tells us, seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

00:45:14

May entering the kingdom of God be your expectation and your use.

00:45:17

Don't be tempted to say, I'm still young, I don't have to attend to spiritual things yet.

00:45:22

I have years and years ahead of me.

00:45:24

Or have you?

00:45:25

Have you?

00:45:26

Only God knows that.

00:45:29

We do not know what a day and an hour may bring upon us.

00:45:32

You know, part of Judah, including Jerusalem, very nearly didn't have all those years to repent of her sins.

00:45:38

She had nearly been overcome years before by an earlier attack by Babylon, but God spared her and granted her more time.

00:45:48

But God is a sovereign God, dear young friend.

00:45:50

You may pass away in the autumn of your days spared until end like Judah, or you may be cut down like the young grass in the spring of your life.

00:46:00

God forbid that that day should find you with wrong expectations or unfulfilled expectations.

00:46:07

Instead, hear God's word you from Ecclesiastes chapter 12, Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, that the years draw nigh when thou shall say, I have no pleasure in them.

00:46:21

Oh yes, Judah's judgment was a fair judgment, for she remained resolute in her sin, convinced that all would ultimately be well with her,

00:46:29

secure in the belief that God was on her side, but it was a false security, left in an end with a forlorn hope of being saved from destruction.

00:46:39

Then the autumn of her opportunity, almost too late, this cry of desolation is heard, the harvest has passed, the summer has ended, and we are not saved.

00:46:50

My friends, Judah would not be saved.

00:46:55

The season of opportunity had passed.

00:46:58

If you know everything as its season, Ecclesiastes 3:1 tells us, for everything there is a season, a time to every purpose under heaven, time to be born, and a time to die.

00:47:10

When is the time to die?

00:47:12

That we do not know, but it is by God's appointment.

00:47:16

For it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.

00:47:21

Dear friend, it may be in the springtime of your days, perhaps in the busy days of summer,

00:47:26

It may be after three score years and 10 or even more.

00:47:29

But as the psalm says in Psalm 90, which we sang earlier, they soon cut off and we fly away.

00:47:37

Oh, listen dear unsaved friends, here we have no continuing city.

00:47:43

Does every graveyard not bear ample testimony to the inevitability of death?

00:47:49

Time, like an ever-rolling stream, bears all its suns away.

00:47:52

They fly forgotten as a dream dies at the opening day.

00:47:58

Time for everything under the sun?

00:48:01

Yes, but praise God, there is a time to be saved.

00:48:03

There's a time to be saved.

00:48:06

But it is now, not tomorrow.

00:48:08

God's Word tells us, Boat know thyself of tomorrow, thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

00:48:15

No now is except the time now is the day of salvation.

00:48:19

Today if you hear his voice, harden out your hearts.

00:48:24

O seek the Lord while he may be found and call upon him while he is near.

00:48:29

On how many lips will be this anguished cry on that eternal morning?

00:48:34

The harvest has passed, the summer has ended and we're not saved.

00:48:40

Pray God it may not be found in the lips of any of us here tonight.

00:48:47

Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this time that you have granted to us to meet together once again to praise and magnify your great and holy name and to consider your word of truth to our souls.

00:48:59

Oh may each of us here tonight make sure our eternal destiny while it is still the day of salvation.

00:49:06

So be with us now as we meet around our Lord's table to remember his death until he come.

00:49:11

For his dear name's sake we ask it.

00:49:13

Amen.