

Jeremiah 26

This chapter is the result of the preaching of Jeremiah recorded in chapter 7. The first 6 verses summarize chapter 7. The rest of the chapter tells us what happened as the result of Jeremiah's preaching. One of the main lessons learned from this chapter is that godly people need to stand for and proclaim the truth regardless of what the consequence might be from the governing authorities.

- 1 In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah came this word from the LORD, saying,**
- 2 Thus saith the LORD; Stand in the court of the LORD'S house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the LORD'S house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word:**
- 3 If so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil, which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings.**
- 4 And thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD; If ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you,**
- 5 To hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early, and sending them, but ye have not hearkened;**
- 6 Then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth.**

- Jeremiah 7:1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,
- 2 Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD.
 - 3 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place.
 - 13 And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not;
 - 14 Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh.

The main addition we have in this section from chapter 7 is that God will make Jerusalem a curse for all nations. In what way will Jerusalem be a curse to all the nations?

"The basic meaning of the word (*qalal* - curse) is light, insignificant, or trifling. It described persons lightly esteemed (2 Samuel 6:22) and also meant "to make contemptible"; hence, to curse persons (Genesis 12:3 ; Exodus 21:17). The word also means to treat with contempt (2 Samuel 19:44 ; Isaiah 23:9) or to dishonor (Isaiah 8:21)." Holman's Bible Dictionary

Zechariah 8:13 may help in our understanding of being "a curse."

"And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, but let your hands be strong."

Jerusalem would be looked at as an insignificant, contemptible city to the nations of the world. BUT:

- Isaiah 2:2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.
- 3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

- 7 So the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD.**
- 8 Now it came to pass, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded him to speak unto all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people took him, saying, Thou shalt surely die.**
- 9 Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.**

Vs. 7 It is thought the time of Jeremiah's speaking was one of the feast days assuring large crowds.

Vs. 8-9 The crowd wanted to kill Jeremiah asking him why he was speaking in the name of the LORD prophesying of the destruction of the city.

- 10** When the princes of Judah heard these things, then they came up from the king's house unto the house of the LORD, and sat down in the entry of the new gate of the LORD'S house.
- 11** Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man is worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears.

The politicians (the princes of Judah) came to the gate when they heard what was happening. The priests and the prophets tell the rulers that Jeremiah is worthy of death for saying the city will be destroyed.

- 12** Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard.
- 13** Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.

Jeremiah, as the LORD's prophet, tells the people to repent.

- 14** As for me, behold, I am in your hand: do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you.
- 15** But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the LORD hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears.

Jeremiah was willing to receive whatever penalty you deem is correct and just for me.

BUT, if you put me to death, God will avenge my death with blood shed upon this city and its inhabitants.

- 16** Then said the princes and all the people unto the priests and to the prophets; This man is not worthy to die: for he hath spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God.
- 17** Then rose up certain of the elders of the land, and spake to all the assembly of the people, saying,
- 18** Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest.
- 19** Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? did he not fear the LORD, and besought the LORD, and the LORD repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? Thus might we procure great evil against our souls.

Vs. 16 The leaders and the people disagreed with the religious leaders believing Jeremiah has spoken to them in the name of the LORD.

Vs. 17-18 The elders used the example of Micah the Morasthite (the writer of the book of Micah – Moresheth being a town about 23 miles SW of Jerusalem) and Jeremiah quotes from Micah 3:12. This is unique in the prophets as nowhere else do we have a prophet quoting another prophet.

Vs. 19 They asked if Hezekiah and the people put Micah to death for preaching the truth. The answer is no, and the LORD stayed His hand of judgment.

To go against God is to ask for God's judgement.

- 20** And there was also a man that prophesied in the name of the LORD, Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjathjearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah:
- 21** And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men, and all the princes, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death: but when Urijah heard it, he was afraid, and fled, and went into Egypt;
- 22** And Jehoiakim the king sent men into Egypt, namely, Elnathan the son of Achbor, and certain men with him into Egypt.
- 23** And they fetched forth Urijah out of Egypt, and brought him unto Jehoiakim the king; who slew him with the sword, and cast his dead body into the graves of the common people.

The example of Urijah the son of Shemaiah, a prophet of God and mentioned nowhere else in scripture, was, ultimately, slain for speaking the same truth as Jeremiah.

What can we learn from Urijah's case of political persecution?

1. Standing up for truth and preaching it is necessary even when the political system is against you.

2. There is more than one option for the believer who stands, in truth, against the commands of a sinful, political system.
 - A. As Urijah did, flee the area.
 - B. Remain and accept the consequences.

3. The example of Urijah is to let us know that Jeremiah being spared death is not always the end result of God's plan. As is the case with Urijah, standing for righteousness can result in martyrdom.

An email question(s) from September 28.

So, the question is what is the Biblical answer to using our constitutional rights (second amendment) to stand up against tyrants? Isn't a re-education camp and forced vaccines tyrannical?

Are people there struggling with these questions? The mask mandate has really caused a division here. People look at it differently; Romans 13 and that we should follow; "the powers ordained by God" v. tyrannical leaders using misinformation about the virus to control us. Some want to say no to the government and stand up for constitutional rights before they slip away; others say we should do what the government says.

It's not that easy to sort it out. Some churches said no, we won't close, only to get such steep fines they have to finally relent and close. I'm not worried about today's struggles (I wear the mask in the stores and at church) I need to be Biblically prepared for what could be coming. Thanks for helping me to understand.

My response:

The Bible trumps the constitution for believers.

Churches have a biblical mandate to meet (Hebrews 10:25) as well as a constitutional right. I appreciate what Grace Community Church and John MacArthur is doing. If they, and other churches, are fined, they will likely win a reversal in court, repayment of fines, and perhaps reparations as well. MacArthur is also willing to go to jail. Most churches can't afford to pay fines as they fight through attorneys this unconstitutional power grab. This is part of counting the cost. Most count the cost to be too high, unfortunately. They don't want to lose their buildings. Perhaps they should lose their buildings and then have a worship "protest" in front of city hall, or like venue, on Sunday morning, evening, and Wednesday evening. Think if 100 churches in a city had worship "protests" all over the city. And, special worship "protests" during the week in downtown Los Angeles, San Diego, etc.. The center of major roads is a great place for these worship "protests." Police wouldn't be needed as there would be no rioting, stealing, or killing.

A government can mandate anything, but citizens can't be forced to obey the mandate. This country has never forced a vaccine on its citizens. Will it happen in the future? Perhaps. Flee, go to jail are some of the possible options.

I wear a mask when a private business requires it. My other option is to find a business that doesn't require it. If I want to buy at that business I wear a mask. I think it is stupid, but it is their business.

For churches to require masks is stupid as well (my church requires masks but doesn't enforce it). The church is believers and not a group of despots (called deacons or elders). The decision should be up to the individual. I don't require masks at Jewish Awareness Ministries. At least a dozen or so people don't come because we allow people to be present without masks. That is their decision to make. Everyone who does come (around 15 – 20) don't wear masks. That is their decision. The few who came with masks have stopped coming. We have had no social distancing, no mask requirement, and no transmittal of COVID in the almost 4 months of having the Bible study. I believe this is what churches should do. No social distancing, no masks, and if you are uncomfortable with this watch it through live streaming. And, if your auditorium seats 200, seat 200. If it seats 2,000, seat 2,000. The state doesn't run the church.

By the way, there is the issuing of mandating "mask" wearing in scripture and how it should be dealt with (the mandating was not by the government though) by believers. The "mask" wearing issue was the perceived mandate of woman wearing a "head covering" – 1 Cor. 11:1-16. This is a much debated passage. Without getting into the particulars of whether a woman should or should not wear a head covering, here is the conclusion. "But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God," vs. 16. Bottom line, there shouldn't be any contention from either side. There is "no such custom" (mandating a head covering for women) that would bring division. If you want to wear a head covering (mask) fine; if you don't want to wear a head covering (mask) fine. Just don't fight with other believers over it. See above for what I recommend churches do.

The response above does not answer the question of the government mandating the wearing of masks in public. What should be our response if mask wearing is mandated in public (i.e. in the presence of others, not when you are outside alone such as doing yard work or driving your car)? Consider 1 Corinthians 8.

- 1 Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.**
- 2 And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.**
- 3 But if any man love God, the same is known of him.**

Think of the wearing of masks instead of the eating of meat offered to idols. Each of us has knowledge of the efficacy of wearing masks (some believe it helps and others don't believe it helps). The issue for a believer is not what you know or don't know (in other words, it matters not who is correct and incorrect in their understanding of masks). The issue for believers is love, as loves edifies.

- 4 As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.**
- 5 For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,)**
- 6 But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.**

As concerning the wearing of masks wearing or not wearing will not make us any holier, vs. 4-5. The issue is what would God have us to do, vs. 6.

- 7 Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.**
- 8 But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.**

The reality is that there are people who are not knowledgeable about the reports showing the lack of efficacy concerning the wearing of masks. These people listen to the main stream media propaganda and are paranoid about COVID-19 and believe the wearing of masks is a necessity. These people are the weaker believers.

But, it matters not whether we believe wearing or not wearing the mask is the correct position.

- 9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.**
- 10 For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols;**
- 11 And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?**

We have the freedom not to wear masks, but it might be a stumbling block to a believer or an unsaved person.

- 12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.**
- 13 Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.**

In order not to offend a believer, wear a mask.

- 24 Nevertheless the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death.**

The deliverance of Jeremiah by Ahikam the son of Shaphan.

"There is only one Ahikam in the Bible but he receives quite a bit of Biblical screen time. Ahikam is a son of **Shaphan** and the father of **Gedaliah** (the vassal governor of **Judah** under **Nebuchadnezzar**), and one of the four delegates of King **Josiah**, who he sends to consult the prophetess **Huldah** (2 Kings 22:12). Ahikam is also the one who saves the prophet **Jeremiah** from being executed (Jeremiah 26:24)."

<https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Ahikam.html#.X62Dm1qSNIK>