

**PLEASE NOTE WE WILL CONTINUE TO NEED A PASSCODE TO JOIN THE STUDY!**  
**NOTES FOR THIS WEEK: 2/22-23/2021**  
**THIS WEEK'S STUDY: *Jeremiah Chapters 23-24***

**MONDAY 7 PM Bible Study - Time: 07:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)**  
**THE MONDAY NIGHT STUDY HAS RESUMED MEETING IN CLASSROOM HS112, CCCM, AS WELL AS CONTINUING IN ZOOM!!**

**MEETING ID# - 87858644763 Passcode: 087484**

Join Zoom Meeting -

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87858644763?pwd=b25tUzhkaTE0UzIrSnpkVmZEWGJVQT09>

**Meeting ID: 878 5864 4763 - Passcode: 087484**

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**TUESDAY 7 AM Bible Study - Time: 07:00 AM Pacific Time (US and Canada).**  
**THE TUESDAY MORNING STUDY HAS RESUMED MEETING IN THE FAMILY ROOM, CCCM, AS WELL AS CONTINUING IN ZOOM!!**

**MEETING ID# - 85309150746 - Passcode: 715340**

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## OPENING PRAYER – Introduction Jeremiah Chapters 23 & 24

- THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS – JEHOVAH TSIDKENU
- What is the Chaff to the wheat!
- God's word is like a fire! A hammer!
- Do not say, 'The burden of the LORD!'
- Good Figs, being sent out early! It was really for their own good that God did it.

All Glory be to Him! LORD do what you want to!

*Do What You Want To* Vertical Worship (4:06)

It's Your heart we're searching for We want You and nothing more Let Your glory fill this place  
We're alive in Your presence It's Your heart we're searching for We want You and nothing more  
Let Your glory fill this place We're alive in Your presence We surrender all to You Do what You  
want to Do what You want to

God we long to see You move Do what You want to Do what You want to Do what You want to  
We are standing in Your light And our hearts are open wide Let us see more than before Lord,  
come have your way here We surrender all to You Do what You want to Do what You want to  
God we long to see You move Do what You want to Do what You want to! Have Your way here, in  
our hearts In our lives, in this place Have Your way

All-consuming fire fall, fall on us All consuming fire fall, fall on us All consuming fire fall, fall on us  
All consuming fire fall, fall on us! We surrender all to You Do what You want to Do what You  
want to

God we long to see You move Do what You want to Do what You want to We surrender all to You  
Do what You want to Do what You want to God we long to see You move Do what You want to Do  
what You want to All consuming fire fall, fall on us All consuming fire fall, fall on us All  
consuming fire fall! Would you fall on us? Come and fall on us Do what You want to

### THIS WEEK'S STUDY:

*The Branch of Righteousness (Chap 23 vs. 1-8); False Prophets; Empty Oracles (Burdens) (vs. 9-40); The Sign of the Two Baskets of Figs (Chap 24 vs. 1-10).*

- Last time in chapter 22 Jeremiah addressed his remarks to three of the final kings of Judah. He pronounced the judgments and the reasons for the judgments that were to come against them. Now the final king of Judah is Zedekiah. It is believed that the 23rd chapter is addressed to Zedekiah.

#### *The Righteous Branch*

- ***Jer 23:1 "Woe to the shepherds (leaders both church and state) who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!" says the LORD. (Jas 3:1) Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.***
- ***Woe to the shepherds:*** God has pronounced His judgment and doom against several kings of Judah. Here, He condemned such unfaithful *shepherds*. In those days kings and other leaders were often called *shepherds*. The term didn't necessarily have a spiritual context. Though generally, Jeremiah spoke to leaders, political, business, military and spiritual; today the first emphasis is that of the *shepherds* as being spiritual leaders. These leaders were worthy of special *woe* because they did not benefit or keep the flock together but *destroyed and scattered* the people of God. God refers to the people as My pasture. Some were carried away to Babylon and the nations as captives, and others went as refugees to Egypt. This could all be traced back to ungodly and poor leaders for the people of God.
- ***In the New Testament, the word pastor or shepherd applied to the leader in the church.*** Every leader in the church needs to realize that they are shepherding over God's heritage. The flock is not the pastor's church, but God's! The leader's responsibility is to God for the care of that flock. One day the pastor is going to have to report to the Chief Shepherd of what he has done concerning the flock of God. His flock, you are His, His sheep. The Lord looks upon you as His. Every pastor should look upon himself as one who is a caretaker over the flock of God.

***Jer 23:2 Therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel against the shepherds who feed My people: "You have scattered My flock, driven them away, and not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for the evil of your doings," says the LORD.***

- ***Against the shepherds who feed My people:*** This speaks mostly to the spiritual aspect of leadership, which the kings of Judah were expected to fulfill. None of the last kings of Judah, since Josiah: Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jeconiah, and Zedekiah) had any spiritual concern for God's *people (My people)*. In the modern setting, this speaks to the great need for spiritual leaders among God's people to *feed* God's *people*.
- ***Behold, I will attend to you for the evil of your doings:*** God would address the evil work of the unfaithful *shepherds*. He would hold them accountable. The **LORD** owns them as His. As He owns you as His.

***Jer 23:3 "But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.***

- ***Here is a word of comfort to the neglected sheep.*** Though the under-shepherds take no care of them, but even may betray them, the Chief Shepherd will look after them! Though the interests of God's church in the world are neglected by those who should take care of them, and postponed to their own private secular interests, yet they shall not therefore sink. God will perform His promise, though those He employs do not perform their duty.
- ***The LORD is promising that He is going to bring them back to their folds.*** Their captivity is not the end of the story for God's people. He is going to bring them back again. Over and over, the Scriptures promise the restoration of the nation of Israel and the bringing back of the people into the land and it happened. They returned from their Babylonian captivity and they were established again in the land. We see now it happening once more. After nearly two thousand years of being scattered throughout the world, God is gathering the people back into the land again. He is building up the nation once more. The next big event on the world's scene will be the Lord's return in glory.
- ***They shall be fruitful and increase:*** Not only would God bring them back into His Promised Land, but they would also be blessed there. Their population would grow rapidly.

***Jer 23:4 I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking," says the LORD.***

- ***The lack of good shepherds, or evil shepherds.*** The results of an evil *shepherd* is that the people are not dwelling securely. They are not being protected and thus there is that fear. There is that dismay. They are not being provided for and thus there is that lack.
- ***I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them:*** One of the blessings God promised to a gathered Israel was godly leadership. The godly leaders (especially in a spiritual sense) would *feed them*, bring them security, and prosperity (*nor shall they be lacking*).
- ***This was a promise to bring things to a better place*** than they were before exile, when Israel suffered under ungodly leaders. This was partially fulfilled in the good and godly leaders Israel had after the exile; men such as Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Joshua the high priest, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. We can see an initial, partial fulfillment of this in modern-day Israel. But this will not fully be fulfilled until Israel turns to Jesus as their Messiah.

***Jer 23:5 "Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.***

- ***That promise of the righteous branch, the seed of David that God will raise up, a king to reign.*** This is none other than Jesus Christ! Isaiah also predicted this branch that shall come. (*Isa 11:1-2*) *There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. [2] The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.*
- ***That promised branch out of Jesse. And here the righteous branch of David.*** As we saw at the end of the previous chapter, the branch of David, Jechoniah, who he just calls Coniah, this branch of David through Solomon was cut off. It was an unrighteous branch. The kings were not reigning in righteousness. They were taking advantage of the people. So God for the sins of Coniah and his father, Jehoiakim, cut him and the kingly line through his descendants off. ."
- ***An unrighteous branch cut off.*** But there is going to come the righteous branch of David and that of course is Jesus. In Luke's gospel chapter 3 we have the genealogy of Mary. We find that she is the descendant of David through David's son Nathan who was a brother to Solomon. So, another branch of David, not through Solomon, but through Nathan came the Messiah as God kept His promise to David.

The Messiah came through David's seed but not through Coniah but through Nathan the son of David and on down to and through Mary.

- **Again, we see the promised branch** in (*Jer 33:15-16*) *'In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David A Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. [16] In those days Judah will be saved, And Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this is the name by which she will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.'* [12] *Then speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying: "Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, And He shall build the temple of the LORD;*
- **The promised Branch that is to come, called Yahweh Tsidkenu, the LORD our righteousness.** In (*Zec 3:8*) *'Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, You and your companions who sit before you, For they are a wondrous sign; For behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH.*
- **The Jews are looking for the Messiah.** They believe that the Messiah is coming very soon because they are returned to the land. They are prophesying of the soon return of the Messiah. They declare that they will recognize the Messiah by the fact that he will help them to rebuild the temple according as the prophecy of Zechariah declares. The righteous branch that has been promised, will reign as a true king, not as a puppet or vassal like Zedekiah and his immediate predecessors.

***Jer 23:6 In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel (northern kingdom – All Israel) will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.***

- **The compound names of God.** The name of God is *Yahweh* or *Jehovah*. We are not certain of the pronunciation. Most scholars believe that *Yahweh* is probably the correct pronunciation. We are prone to say *Jehovah* because it starts with a "J" in its transliteration into English but there is no "J" sound in the Hebrew language and the "J" takes on a "Y" sound, so it sounds like *Yehovah* or *Yahweh* and thus *Yahweh Tsidkenu* means *The LORD our Righteousness*.
- **There are many compound names for Jehovah.** *Jehovah Jireh, the LORD* provides and *Yahweh Shalom, the LORD* is our peace. The word *Yahweh* literally means "**I AM**" it is a verb or "The Becoming One." Now, God has revealed Himself by this name because God will become to you whatever your need might be. Are you sick? *Yahweh Rapha: The God who Heals – He will become your healer.* He will become to you whatever your need might be. In the Greek language the name is Jesus. The Hebrew name is *Yeshua*. It is this *Yahweh Shuah*, a compound name of Jehovah which literally means that Jehovah or *Yahweh* has become our salvation.
- **The mission of Jesus Christ was that of salvation.** He said, (*Luk 19:10*) *"for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."* *Yahweh* has become our salvation through Jesus Christ. We are saved because of our faith in Jesus Christ. He has brought us salvation from our sin and the consequence of our sin. I do not have to face the judgment of God for my sins because Jesus took the judgment of God upon the cross for my sins. Thus, God has given unto me a righteous standing before Him because of Jesus Christ. The name by which He will be known in the kingdom age will likely be that of *Yahweh Tsidkenu, possibly shortened to Yah Tsidkenu* but that is the name by which He will be called because it applies to what is ours through Him.
- **As you believe in Jesus Christ, God accounts you righteous** for your faith in Jesus Christ even as He accounted Abraham righteous. We look back, Abraham looked forward, but it is the same faith in Jesus Christ that God accounts as righteousness. Therefore, right now and forever, I have a righteous standing before God, not predicated upon my works, but what Jesus has done in going to the cross, bearing my sin and receiving there the judgment of God for my sin. Thus, by my faith in this work of Jesus Christ, God accounts me righteous by believing and trusting in Jesus Christ and on the basis of that faith and trust, God accounts me as righteous.

***Jer 23:7 "Therefore, behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that they shall no longer say, 'As the LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,'***

***Jer 23:8 but, 'As the LORD lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them.' And they shall dwell in their own land."***

- **This is a prophecy that is yet future,** the Lord's coming and His name in the Kingdom Age the King of David reigning His name being ***THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS***. That is yet future. Throughout the history in the Old Testament the people in talking about God referred to Him as the God who brought us out of Egypt, that great sign that He was their God and a powerful God, He brought us out of Egypt.
- **But in the future, a greater miracle than even their deliverance out of Egypt** will be their deliverance from the whole world and being brought back into the land. That is happening today. It is amazing how God is bringing them back!

- ***They shall dwell in their own land:*** The emphatic promise is repeated again.. God will bring His people back into the Promised Land. Even after the great judgment and exile to come, He would not be finished with them, nor would He be finished with them *in the land*.

### ***Lying Prophets and Empty Oracles***

***Jer 23:9 My heart within me is broken Because of the prophets; All my bones shake. I am like a drunken man, And like a man whom wine has overcome, Because of the LORD, And because of His holy words.***

- ***Jeremiah's heart was breaking because of the false prophets.*** God's word was in his own heart. The false prophets were coming against him and they were saying the exactly opposite to what he was saying. The false prophets were promising safety and prosperity. Jeremiah was saying, "No, the Babylonians are going to conquer you! You are going to be carried away as captives to Babylon." There was this great contrast between their message and his message, which made Jeremiah nauseous. His main message was to repent; their main message was relax. It just broke Jeremiah's heart to see the people following the false prophets.

***Jer 23:10 For the land is full of adulterers; For because of a curse the land mourns. The pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up. Their course of life is evil, And their might is not right.***

***Jer 23:11 "For both prophet and priest are profane; Yes, in My house I have found their wickedness," says the LORD.***

- ***For the land is full of adulterers; for because of a curse the land mourns:*** The other prophets promised blessing and abundance, but the evidence was on Jeremiah's side. The heavy presence of sin in the land (adultery probably in both literally and figuratively). The curse upon the land itself proved that it was time to repent and not to relax. Spiritually, they were worshipping these other gods. God had sworn that if you turn from Me, I will turn from you. If you forsake Me, I will forsake you. If you will not keep My covenant then these are the judgments that are going to come.
- ***For both prophet and priest are profane...in My house I have found their wickedness:*** There was that whole corruption even within the religious system. Jeremiah could see the fundamental lack of holiness among those who were supposed to be spiritual leaders. To be profane is the opposite of holiness. They weren't different from the idol worshipping people surrounding Judah. The false prophets were second only to the ungodly kings in being responsible for bringing about the nation's ruin.

***Jer 23:12 "Therefore their way shall be to them Like slippery ways; In the darkness they shall be driven on And fall in them; For I will bring disaster on them, The year of their punishment," says the LORD.***

- ***Like slippery ways: In the darkness they shall be driven on.*** That is pretty tough, walking on ice in the darkness. Their profane ways made them destined to slip and fall. Not everyone falls on a **slippery** path, but most do.
- ***The year of their punishment.*** That is the visitation of God's judgment against them for their turning from the LORD. Their wickedness and turning from God and so they are in **slippery ways**, they will soon fall as God's judgment comes. They had the advantage of seeing what happened in the northern kingdom of Samaria. They saw that they had been carried away as captives by the Assyrians because of their wickedness and sin and the false prophets, the prophets of Baal. That should have been sufficient warning. They should have learned the lesson. But they did not.

***Jer 23:13 "And I have seen folly (distastefulness) in the prophets of Samaria: They prophesied by Baal And caused My people Israel to err.***

***Jer 23:14 Also I have seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem: They commit adultery and walk in lies; They also strengthen the hands of evildoers, So that no one turns back from his wickedness. All of them are like Sodom to Me, And her inhabitants like Gomorrah.***

- ***I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria...a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem:*** God compared the **prophets of Jerusalem** and Judah to be like the **prophets of Samaria** that led the northern kingdom to spiritual and social ruin some 120 years before.
- ***So that no one turns back from his wickedness:*** Because their own lives were filled with spiritual compromise (**they commit adultery and walk in lies**), the prophets and priests of Judah had no place or power to turn others **back** from their **wickedness**. There was no spiritual or moral restraint upon the people. Everyone did what was right in their own eyes and the men of God who should have said stop did not.

- **With the atmosphere of no restraint, Judah had become like Sodom and like Gomorrah to God.** God said that they are corrupt, wicked, filled with *adultery*, they are doing horrible things, they *walk in lies*, they are *evildoers* and even as *Sodom and Gomorrah* were to be judged and were judged by God, so they are to be judged.

***Jer 23:15 "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets: 'Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, And make them drink the water of gall; For from the prophets of Jerusalem Profaneness (pollution) has gone out into all the land.' "***

- ***Wormwood....the water of gall:*** There was a sour, bitter future for these corrupt and compromised prophets. Because they had poisoned the nation's spiritual springs, the Lord was to inflict drastic judgment on them – portrayed by bitter food and poisoned *water*.
- ***From the prophets of Jerusalem, profaneness has gone out into all the land:*** God's desire was that His people would be messengers of His holiness and righteousness. Instead, through these corrupt prophets, they had become messengers of *profaneness*, the opposite of holiness.

***Jer 23:16 Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless; They speak a vision of their own heart, Not from the mouth of the LORD.***

- ***Do not listen to the words of the false prophets:*** They are not really giving you My word, they are speaking out of their own hearts. It is *not* God's word.
- ***They make you worthless; they speak a vision of their own heart:*** These corrupt prophets spoke, but it was *not from the mouth of the LORD*. It was merely a *vision of their own heart*. The effect of these man-made words masquerading as the word of the LORD was to make those who believed them *worthless*.
- ***Not from the mouth of the LORD,*** which was a bold claim from Jeremiah since it implied that his own message came from the LORD directly, which it did!

***Jer 23:17 They continually say to those who despise Me, 'The LORD has said, "You shall have peace" '; And to everyone who walks according to the dictates (stubbornness or imagination) of his own heart, they say, 'No evil shall come upon you.' "***

- ***False prophets*** were speaking words of prosperity and comfort to the *evil* and wicked, to those who despise God. They were prophesying lies, saying *peace, peace* when there was no *peace*. They were afraid to speak a word of rebuke and repentance to those who despised God. Instead, they spoke smooth words of *peace*, promising *no evil shall come upon you* to everyone who followed their own heart. ***You shall have peace:*** The heart of false prophecy was that it always held our false hope.

***Jer 23:18 For who has stood in the counsel of the LORD, And has perceived and heard His word? Who has marked His word and heard it?***

- ***They have not!*** They have not heard the counsel of the LORD. They were not walking in the word of the LORD.

***Jer 23:19 Behold, a whirlwind of the LORD has gone forth in fury—A violent whirlwind! It will fall violently on the head of the wicked.***

***Jer 23:20 The anger of the LORD will not turn back Until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart. In the latter days you will understand it perfectly***

- ***A whirlwind of the LORD has gone forth in fury:*** The corrupt prophets did what they did without fear of punishment. They had forgotten that God's judgments would one day come and come as a *violent whirlwind*.
- ***The anger of the LORD will not turn back until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart:*** God's anger against the corrupt prophets was not just a matter of personal irritation. It was righteous and would be *performed* against them until His justice was accomplished.
- ***God spoke against those who walk according to the dictate of his own heart.*** Here God promised to carry out *the thoughts of His heart* against those who followed their own *heart*. It would be evident which *heart* was supreme.
- ***In the latter days you will understand it perfectly.*** Now there is confusion because Jeremiah is saying one thing, the false prophets are saying another thing. But Jeremiah said *that in the latter days that they would understand it perfectly*. The interesting thing about prophecy is that as we are coming into the latter days and in the fulfillment of the prophecies we are beginning to understand more perfectly the word of prophecy! (***Dan 12:4 "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."*** Prophecy becomes alive because we see now not only the fulfillment but the potential for those things that have not yet transpired!

**Jer 23:21** "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran. I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.

**Jer 23:22** But if they had stood in My counsel, And had caused My people to hear My words, Then they would have turned them from their evil way And from the evil of their doings.

- **I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran:** The corrupt prophets were *not* called or *sent* by God, yet they ran with great energy to proclaim their self-generated words.
- **If they had stood in My counsel... then they would have turned them from their evil way:** Had they listened to Me they would not have encouraged the people that things were going to be okay. They would have warned the people of the *evil* that is coming. If these were true prophets and sent prophets they would have called people to repent. They did not. Instead of repent, their message was relax.

**Jer 23:23** "Am I a God near at hand," says the LORD, "And not a God afar off?"

**Jer 23:24** Can anyone hide himself in secret places, So I shall not see him?" says the LORD; "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the LORD.

- **Am I a God near at hand:** Asking rhetorical questions, God reminded Judah that He was *near*. There was no use in trying to *hide in secret places* to avoid the sight of God.
- **They had developed this idea and concept that God was afar off in the heavens and thus He was not aware of all of the things that were going on.** God said, *I am not a God afar off, I am a God at hand.* You don't hide from Me. I see because *I fill the heaven and the earth.*" That omnipresence of God filling the heaven and the earth. The LORD is here, and I stand in the presence of the LORD constantly. I am surrounded, I cannot escape. He is the God who fills *heaven and earth.* We need to be conscious of this!

**Jer 23:25** "I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in My name, saying, 'I have dreamed, I have dreamed!'"

**Jer 23:26** How long will this be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies? Indeed they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart,

- **The prophets have said who prophesy lies in My name:** This alone should have terrified the corrupt prophets. Even if no man would judge and discern their supposed prophetic words, God *heard* them. He would judge. It is a great failing among many Christians that any purported prophecy is accepted without any testing or discernment. Yet if they will not judge, God will in some way or another.
- **I have dreamed, I have dreamed:** The corrupt prophets loved to speak about dreams and great, swelling things. The problem was that these were *lies*. Perhaps the lie was that they even had such a dream, or perhaps they really had a dream, but it was not a true message from God.
- **Instead of being from God, these messages were the deceit of their own heart.** That is the tragic thing. When they get into it they actually *deceive their own hearts*. They are deceptive, they deceive others but ultimately they are the ones that are deceived because they think they are getting by with it. They are ministering out of this thing of deception.

**Jer 23:27** who try to make My people forget My name by their dreams which everyone tells his neighbor, as their fathers forgot My name for Baal.

- **The corrupt prophets loved to focus on spiritual phenomena such as dreams.** Though this pretended to be a spiritual focus, it drew attention away from God Himself, from His holy character represented by His *name*. Once men forgot the character of the LORD, they could be persuaded to accept all kinds of doctrines.

**Jer 23:28** "The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream; And he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat?" says the LORD.

- **The LORD calls the dreams and the visions and all chaff, which is never nourishing.** You cannot make a diet of *chaff* and become strong. People get all excited over the *dreams* and over the visions and over these prophecies and over these words, but no one ever really grows spiritually over exciting spiritual phenomena. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. The only way in which you can experience growth is through the feeding on the word. It is the spiritual food that feeds the spirit of man.
- **An arrested state of spiritual development.** People who are looking for the spectacular and the exciting things and dreams and visions and prophecies, stay in an arrested state of spiritual development. True spiritual growth only comes through feeding on the word of God. That is *the wheat*. If a prophet has a dream, let him tell his dream but he who has My word let him speak My word faithfully for *what is the chaff to the wheat?* Clearly, the dream of the corrupt prophet was like *the chaff*; something, but of little substance and of no help. God's word *faithfully* presented was like *wheat*; of substance, nourishment, giving life, and having the power of multiplication!

**Jer 23:29 "Is not My word like a fire?" says the LORD, "And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?"**

- **Is not My word like a fire:** The power of the word of God! It *is like a fire* consuming the dross from our life. God's word has power like *fire*, *Chaff* has no power against *fire*. It has the power to benefit and to judge. It can warm and comfort. It can burn and cause pain. God's Word is *like a fire* that can melt the hardest materials. It refines and consumes impurity.
- **It is like a hammer** breaking the rock in pieces. God's word is as powerful as a *hammer*, with the power to build or break. *Chaff* has no power against a *hammer*.
- **The Holy Spirit is the agent used in order to produce the word's effects;** *Fire* itself must be applied by an agent. Surely the *hammer* cannot *break the rock in pieces*, unless wielded by an able workman. It is *God's Spirit* alone that can thus apply it; for we find it frequently read and spoken, without producing any real effects, because of relying on our own power and not that of the needed Holy Spirit!

**Jer 23:30 "Therefore behold, I am against the prophets," says the LORD, "who steal My words everyone from his neighbor.**

- **I am against the prophets:** Just because someone claimed to be a prophet did not mean that God was for them or approved them. In Jeremiah's day and our own there were many prophets whom God was *against*.
- **Who steal My words everyone from his neighbor:** When the true word of God was ignored or neglected because people were attracted to the chaff-like spiritual phenomena of the corrupt prophets, God said it was like *stealing* His words. God was *against* them.

**Jer 23:31 Behold, I am against the prophets," says the LORD, "who use their tongues and say, 'He says.'**

- **The LORD was against those who claimed to speak for Him and really only spoke from their own heart.** Be careful whenever you say, "Thus says *the LORD!*" If it is written in the Bible then you can say that *the LORD* said. That is good. You are on good ground. But we have to be careful of that. *The LORD* does not appreciate people going around saying, "Thus says *the LORD*" if *the LORD* has not really spoken.
- **People may come to you and say, "I have a word of the LORD for you."** Sometimes when they tell you, you may say, "That is good, I receive that. The Lord has been speaking to my heart on that issue." But other times, when appropriate, you may say, "I don't accept that as a word from *the LORD* at all. That is a word from your own heart. That is not God speaking to me." God is against those who say, *The LORD says*, when He hasn't!

**Jer 23:32 Behold, I am against those who prophesy false dreams," says the LORD, "and tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies and by their recklessness. Yet I did not send them or command them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all," says the LORD.**

- **Those who prophesy false dreams:** They will profit themselves, but they will not profit the people. God was against those who promoted *dreams* and spiritual phenomena above His word.
- **Cause My people to err by their lies and by their recklessness:** Deceptive and reckless words spoken in the name of God let God's *people* err. God was against these reckless ones with little regard for truth.
- **Yet I did not send them or command them; therefore, they shall not profit this people at all:** Because God *did not send them* they would do no real good for the people of God, even if they had good intentions. There might be some froth or some excitement, but no true *profit*.

**Jer 23:33 "So when these people or the prophet or the priest ask you, saying, 'What is the oracle (double sense – burden/oracle or, message) of the LORD?' you shall then say to them, 'What oracle (burden, message)?' I will even forsake you," says the LORD.**

- **This became a popular phrase – The burden, or the oracle of the LORD.** They would go around and say, oh *the burden of the LORD*. This is *the burden of the LORD* put on my heart! It was a phrase that was over worked. It was used by the false prophets. *The LORD* said, they go around talking about burdens and I did not put any burden on them. There are people today that talk many times about *the burden of the LORD*. God has laid on me such a heavy, heavy burden. And I am afraid, this is such a heavy burden God laid on me". But Jesus said, (*Mat 11:28-30*) *Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. [29] Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. [30] For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*
- **Often, we can take upon ourselves or by well-meaning friends,** things that *The LORD* did not put on us and the burden can sometimes be very heavy. But we're not to blame the Lord! That is not the Lord's burden. *His burden is light*. You have taken on something that *The LORD* did not put on you. You are trying to do something more than what *the Lord* has called you to do.

- **Doing the will and the work of the Lord is glorious because God gives you the strength and the ability to do it and it does not wear you out! It does not drive you to distraction. It doesn't burn you out. *The LORD's yoke is easy, and His burden is light.***

***Jer 23:34 "And as for the prophet and the priest and the people who say, 'The oracle of the LORD!' I will even punish that man and his house.***

- Just get rid of this phrase, the *burden (oracle) of the LORD*. Don't even ask *what the burden of the LORD* is. Just say, "Well what has *the LORD* spoken to your heart about lately about? What is *the LORD* speaking to you about?" Use that kind of phrase and get rid of this *burden of the LORD* phrase that has been overworked.

***Jer 23:35 Thus every one of you shall say to his neighbor, and every one to his brother, 'What has the LORD answered?' and, 'What has the LORD spoken?'***

***Jer 23:36 And the oracle of the LORD you shall mention no more. For every man's word will be his oracle, for you have perverted the words of the living God, the LORD of hosts, our God.***

***Jer 23:37 Thus you shall say to the prophet, 'What has the LORD answered you?' and, 'What has the LORD spoken?'***

***Jer 23:38 But since you say, 'The oracle of the LORD!' therefore thus says the LORD: 'Because you say this word, "The oracle of the LORD!" and I have sent to you, saying, "Do not say, 'The oracle of the LORD!' "***

- **You have perverted God's words**, so you are not to use this phrase anymore.
- **The oracle of the LORD**: This section is somewhat difficult because of a pun and wordplay in Hebrew. The key word is *massa* which meant both *burden* and *oracle* (in the sense of revelation from God). Sometimes one sense of the word is intended, sometimes the other, and sometimes both.
- **For every man's word will be his oracle, for you have perverted the words of the living God**: The institution of prophecy had become so corrupt in Jeremiah's day that anyone who did claim to speak an *oracle of the LORD* could be assumed to be speaking for himself, and speaking *words perverted* from God's true message.

***Jer 23:39 therefore behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you and forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, and will cast you out of My presence.***

- **Cast you out of My presence**: Finally, he takes and emphasizes the parent verb of 'burden' in its literal sense, to visualize these men being picked up and thrown away in disgrace.

***Jer 23:40 And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.' "***

- **This was the end result of their attraction to oracles, dreams, and other spiritual phenomena**. The LORD is serious on this. Leave that phrase alone, *the burden of the LORD*. Don't use this phrase.

### ***The Good Figs and the Bad Figs***

***Jer 24:1 The LORD showed me, and there were two baskets of figs set before the temple of the LORD, after Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and the princes of Judah with the craftsmen and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon.***

- **After Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon had carried away captive, Jeconiah (Coniah)**, reigned for only three months. He was deposed and exiled when *Nebuchadnezzar* came a second time to Jerusalem in 597 BC. After this, King Zedekiah reigned for 11 years, before a complete Babylonian conquest in 586 BC.
- **When Nebuchadnezzar left Judah with Zedekiah as a puppet king**, it was easy for them to think the worst was over and they were fortunate to survive and escape exile. Those who remained thought they were better off than those taken in exile.
- **The princes of Judah with the craftsmen and smiths**: *Coniah* was not the only one *brought* to Babylon in this second invasion of Judah. They also took others, including Ezekiel, of the nobility of Judah as well as skilled *craftsmen*.

***Jer 24:2 One basket had very good figs, like the figs that are first ripe; and the other basket had very bad figs which could not be eaten, they were so bad.***

- **This is during the second invasion of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar** when Jeremiah saw these two baskets of figs. They were there before the temple. Now, one basket had very good figs, whereas the other had figs that

were far past good – they were so spoiled *they could not be eaten*. They are very perishable and thus these were bad.

- **The fig tree is an interesting tree** in that there are two times of ripening. In spring time, the early figs develop, which are larger and really more flavorful than the *figs* that will become ripe nearer the end of summer. The abundance of the fig crops comes later. But these first ripe figs are really large and full of flavor. These were *very good figs* like those first ripe *figs*.

***Jer 24:3 Then the LORD said to me, "What do you see, Jeremiah?" And I said, "Figs, the good figs, very good; and the bad, very bad, which cannot be eaten, they are so bad."***

- God was about to speak to the prophet through these two different baskets of figs.

***Jer 24:4 Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying,***

***Jer 24:5 "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge those who are carried away captive from Judah, whom I have sent out of this place for their own good, into the land of the Chaldeans.***

***Jer 24:6 For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land; I will build them and not pull them down, and I will plant them and not pluck them up.***

- *'Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge those who are carried away captive.* Among those who were carried away were Daniel and Ezekiel, who both prophesied in Babylon. There were many good people that were carried away, like Daniel, his three friends, Ezekiel and many others. Others that were carried away that were just rotten. The fig is being used as a symbol of the nation of Israel. Some of the people were *carried for their own good*, in that they would not have to go through the terrible coming siege of Jerusalem.
- *Like these good figs...carried away captive...for their own good...whom I have sent out of this place for their own good:* We might have expected that those first *carried away captive* would be the worst in God's eyes, and He allowed them to be first exiled as a demonstration of His displeasure. Jeremiah delivered the surprising message: the first taken were the *good figs*, not the bad figs. Judgment came and was to come, upon Judah as a whole! The entire nation would feel the pain of it. Yet that did not mean that everyone in Judah was the same in God's eyes. Some were like the *good figs*. Those were essentially *sent out* of Judah to Babylon *for their own good*.
- *Carried away captive...for their own good.* For those that *were carried away* and taken as slaves to Babylon, they probably did not realize that this was *for their own good*. They probably thought the Lord has forsaken us. Oh, it is so tragic, here we are taken away as captives and all.
- ***It was really for their own good that God did it, as it may be the same of us!*** There are many times as God is working in our lives for our good because we do not understand what the future holds we sometimes think that God has failed us. We sometimes look at the work of God in our life as the sign that God does not love us or that God has forsaken us. When so many times God is working *for our own good*. (*Isa 57:1-2*) *The righteous perishes, And no man takes it to heart; Merciful men are taken away, While no one considers That the righteous is taken away from evil. [2] He shall enter into peace; They shall rest in their beds, Each one walking in his uprightness.*
- *I will set My eyes on them for good and will bring them back to this land:* Those represented by the *good figs* would be blessed even in captivity. God also promised to *bring them back to this land*, and they would be among those who came back to Judah with Ezra and Nehemiah starting around 538 BC.
- *I will build them and not pull them down, and I will plant them and not pluck them up:* When they returned to the land, God would establish them securely again.

***Jer 24:7 Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the LORD; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart.***

- *Then I will give them a new heart to know Me, that I am the LORD:* This sounds something like the many of the New Covenant promises in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Yet it is better to regard it as the ultimate fulfillment of the promise in the last days.
- **The New Covenant was not instituted in the return from exile because Jesus Christ specifically instituted it with His work on the cross (Luke 22:20).** *But* the return from exile did foreshadow the New Covenant in some important ways. God's people were gathered again into the land, and they were a changed people – having *a heart to know Me... they shall be My people... they shall return to Me with their whole hear*). The great change after the exile was that the people of Israel no longer went after the idols of the nations (such as Baal and Ashtoreth) as they had before. They were separated and devoted to the LORD in a way they had not been before.

***Jer 24:8 'And as the bad figs which cannot be eaten, they are so bad'—surely thus says the LORD—'so will I give up Zedekiah the king of Judah, his princes, the residue of Jerusalem who remain in this land, and those who dwell in the land of Egypt.***

- ***As the bad figs which cannot be eaten... so will I give up Zedekiah:*** Not all in Judah were good figs. There were also rotten ones, including the king and his associates. They were past their expiration date and good for nothing.
- ***The good figs were really those that were carried away captive. The evil or bad figs were those that remained in rebellion.*** Jeremiah had advised them to surrender to the Babylon army. But they rebelled against the word of God! They were so evil that there was no recovering. When a man comes to that place where God's Spirit ceases to strive with them, there is no more sense of dealing with them, whereas those who have been taken to Babylon, God is going to watch over them, He is going to take care of them, He is going to draw them back to Himself because they are going to turn to God and yet this other group will be scattered for their hurt. The one was scattered for *their own good*, or taken away to Babylon for their good, these will be scattered for their hurt.

***Jer 24:9 I will deliver them to trouble into all the kingdoms of the earth, for their harm, to be a reproach and a byword, a taunt and a curse, in all places where I shall drive them.***

- ***I will deliver them to trouble into all the kingdoms of the earth:*** Virtually all of Judah would be taken captive, but God knew how to appoint the *bad figs* among them to particular *trouble*. They would be *a reproach and a byword, a taunt and a curse* in exile. In verse 5, God *sent out* the people represented by the good figs, but the bad figs He *shall drive them out*.

***Jer 24:10 And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence among them, till they are consumed from the land that I gave to them and their fathers.' "***

- ***I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence.*** God would complete His judgment against those represented by the *bad figs*.

## **Summary:**

- **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS – JEHOVAH TSIDKENU**
- **What is the Chaff to the wheat!**
- **God's word is like a fire! A hammer!**
- **Do not say, 'The burden of the LORD!'**
- **Good Figs, being sent out early! It was really for their own good that God did it, as it may be the same for us! There are many times as God is working in our lives for our good because we do not understand what the future holds we sometimes think that God has failed us. We sometimes look at the work of God in our life as the sign that God does not love us or that God has forsaken us. When so many times God is working for our own good. (*Isa 57:1-2*) *The righteous perishes, And no man takes it to heart; Merciful men are taken away, While no one considers That the righteous is taken away from evil. [2] He shall enter into peace; They shall rest in their beds, Each one walking in his uprightness.***

## **Closing Prayer**

- **What are we to do? Whatever He chooses and directs, as He has, is doing and will do! LORD, do what You want to!**