

Message #47**Jeremiah 43:1-13**

Someone told me an interesting story this past week. A relative of theirs loved to smoke and when he would go to a doctor with health problems the doctor would tell him to stop smoking. Well he did not like the doctors telling him that, so he went to one doctor after another until he found one who said it was okay to smoke. In other words, he did not want to listen to counsel that didn't tell him what he wanted to hear. He acted just like Israel back in the days of Jeremiah.

When we go through this book of Jeremiah, it becomes very obvious that Jeremiah's biggest enemies were religious leaders who opposed the word of God. We could say it this way, the biggest enemy of God's truth has always been religion and religious leaders.

There are those political and religious leaders who do not tell the truth. In fact, they will actually tell people just the opposite of the truth. They butcher God's word and tell people what they want to hear.

This is as true today as it was in the days of Jeremiah. The biggest enemies of God's truth are religions and denominations that twist the word of God and make it say what it does not say. They use the word of God to promote their own ideology.

We may recall that the people of God wanted Jeremiah to pray to God and report to them God's word about whether or not they should stay in Israel's land or go to Egypt. God's people said that they would do whatever Jeremiah told them was the word of God (42:5-6). They said whatever God said to them, they would do it.

So Jeremiah prayed and ten days later, he came back with an answer from God. If the people would stay in the land, God would bless them; if they went back to Egypt, God would kill them (42:22). That is as clear as it can be.

Now in view of what the people said, you would expect them to say, okay, we stay. That is not what happens:

AS SOON AS GOD REVEALED HIS WILL, FALSE RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL LEADERS OPPOSED IT AND CONVINCED THE PEOPLE TO FOLLOW THEM AND DO JUST THE OPPOSITE OF THE WORD OF GOD, WHICH EVENTUALLY LED TO THEIR JUDGMENT.

We have been in this church now for over twenty years. When we first came to this church, I made it very clear that my counseling is Biblical counseling. I do not do psychological profiles or personality analysis. Our counseling is very simple. We listen to the situation and set forth Biblical truths that pertain to that situation. If the people will apply God's word, life will be good.

Now you would think that the majority of people who we counsel would want that. You would think that they would say, you tell us what God's word says and we will obey it. The problem is some don't want that. I could cite for you many examples of people who were told the truth of God who went to some other counselor who told them something else and now they are on medication and their lives are an emotional wreck. Why? God's word is not enough so they go listen to someone else.

That is what happens right here with Jeremiah. There are three main historical observations we want to make from this chapter:

HISTORICAL OBSERVATION #1 – Jeremiah's message of not going to Egypt is immediately opposed. **43:1-3**

Just as soon as Jeremiah was done speaking and revealing God's true word, Azariah and Johanan and all the arrogant men said to Jeremiah "you are lying." They are calling the one man on earth who is telling them the truth a liar.

This was the Johanan who had warned Gedaliah that he was going to be assassinated and this was the guy who went and rescued the Jewish hostages from Ishmael. So he carried quite a bit of weight with these people.

These were men who were arrogantly defying the word of God spoken by Jeremiah. Jeremiah had told them that they were deceptive in having him pray for them (42:20). They were deceiving themselves when they said they really wanted to obey God.

They started alleging in **verse 2** that God did not send Jeremiah and that his message that they should not go to Egypt was a complete fabrication. They said God did not send him with the answer to the prayer. This was no real answer to prayer and Jeremiah had just made up his message.

In fact, in **verse 3** they said Baruch was the one who gave Jeremiah the message so that we will be turned over to the Babylonians and either be hauled to Babylon or killed. What a crazy argument. What in the world would Baruch have to gain if this were the reason for his message? This argument is ludicrous. But the people believe these arrogant, false religious and political leaders.

The fact is, many times God revealed through Jeremiah that the phony religious leaders were false deceptive liars (8:6; 9:4; 14:14; **23:25-26, 32**; 28:15; 29:21). They were the ones who were leading people away from the word of God and the blessings of God. Now, these guys take their deception to a whole new level by accusing Jeremiah of being a liar.

Frankly, it is amazing that people would follow false religious leaders that are telling them things that they can see aren't true. You would think that in light of what these people had already seen, they would realize that Jeremiah is not a liar. Every prediction Jeremiah made came true.

Jeremiah predicted Nebuchadnezzar would be sent by God into Jerusalem to take people captive and he did that in three different waves. These false religious leaders said that would not really happen.

Just this fact alone should have convinced the people that these leaders are not telling the truth, but Jeremiah is telling the truth. But it didn't convince them.

These guys wanted to go to Egypt and nothing Jeremiah could say would stop them, so they called him a liar. God's word didn't fit with their desires and plans.

HISTORICAL FACT #2 – Jeremiah's message was purposely and blatantly disobeyed.
43:4-7a

When it comes to the word of God, you have two options: obey it or disobey it. There are no in-betweens.

For example, the only way to be saved is to believe on Jesus Christ. He is the only way to salvation. Now you either believe that or you don't. There are phony religious leaders who will try to convince you that it is your works that will save you and not faith alone in Christ alone.

God's people had a choice to make, we either believe God and obey and will be saved by staying in our land or we disobey God and we will be destroyed by leaving and going to Egypt.

Verse 4 says they opted to not obey God to be saved. Notice "all the people" would not listen to Jeremiah and they would not obey the word of God. They refused to obey God and stay in Judah. They did just the opposite of what Jeremiah told them to do.

According to **verse 5**, when the first wave of the Babylonian attacks hit Israel, many people returned to Judah. But now, Johanan and all the commanders of the forces took the entire remnant of Judah with them and headed back to the land of Judah to Egypt (**v. 7**).

From **verse 6** we learn that they took Jeremiah and Baruch with them. Now we think these two were forced to go against their own will. This would have been sad for Jeremiah because he had made the choice not to go to Babylon and enjoy the good life. He had decided to stay in the land with the remnant of Israel.

Some have suggested that Jeremiah believed it was his duty to remain with the people to warn them as they left, but we do not take that position. We believe that Jeremiah was forced to go. Jeremiah would not blatantly disobey God to appease the people. They forced Jeremiah to go with them as they disobeyed God and headed to Egypt.

So what we have here is a political religious and military power forcing two godly men (Jeremiah and Baruch) to do just the opposite of what God's word wanted them to do, which was to remain in Judah.

One point of interest is why would you want Jeremiah to go with you when you know he is telling people just the opposite of what you are doing?

It may be they thought by having Jeremiah with them they would stand a better chance of survival. They probably felt like having Jeremiah along was like some “lucky charm.”

But the sovereignty of God is with Jeremiah and He will always look out for faithful people even when they find themselves in situations they do not like.

HISTORICAL FACT #3 – God reveals His word to Jeremiah about what He will do. **43:7b-13**

In the northeast corner of the Nile area in Egypt is a place called Tahpanhes, modern day Tell Defneh. This was like a border town and for some reason the people of Israel stopped there.

It has been speculated that they may have needed to get permission from the Pharaoh or king to go any further into Egypt. Jerome claims that this was the place where Jeremiah was actually stoned to death.

We don't know exactly how long they had been camped there, but what we do know is that while they were camped there, **verse 8** says the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah. God's man is always God's man and God will always speak through His faithful man.

What God decided to do was to give a symbolic picture via a physical illustration of what He would do to Egypt and those Jews who were there. These people could care less about the word of God, but an illustration would certainly get their attention.

God told Jeremiah to take some large stones and bury them in clay in the brick pavement at the entrance of Pharaoh's palace in Tahpanhes. Jeremiah was to do this in the sight of some of the Jews (**v. 9**).

The stones were to be large stones, but stones that Jeremiah could hold in his own hands. What God wanted Jeremiah to do was to take the stones and bury them in the ground right in front of Pharaoh's palace. Now it must have been in front but back a little because no Egyptian would have let anyone just start digging up Pharaoh's property in close proximity to his house.

After Jeremiah had done this, according to **verse 10**, Jeremiah was to interpret this picture for them. **The interpretation would symbolize what would happen to the exiles in Egypt and what would happen to Egypt.**

God says (**verse 10**) I am going to bring Nebuchadnezzar to Egypt and he would spread his throne there. God would literally set up Nebuchadnezzar's throne right on the very spot where these stones were placed.

Nebuchadnezzar would be brought by God to set up a tent pavilion and put his throne and carpet right on this very spot.

God says in **verse 11**, he will also come and strike down the entire land of Egypt. He will kill those people God wants killed and he will take captive those people God wants taken captive.

God says in **verse 12** that He would use him to set fire to their religious temples and he will burn them down and take all of their valuable deities with him and he will depart in safety.

He would also shatter the “temple of the sun” which was located in Heliopolis (**v. 13**).

This place was located about 10 miles NE of Cairo.

In 568-567 BC, Nebuchadnezzar invaded Egypt and did everything predicted right here. There has been an inscription found that says Nebuchadnezzar actually invaded Egypt in 568-567 BC when Amasis (570-526BC) was Pharaoh.

The attack of Nebuchadnezzar seemed to be more punitive in nature rather than a land grab. In other words, God literally fulfilled this prophecy and used a heathen political military leader to do it.

God’s people may choose to obey or disobey God’s word. But disobedience will never bring happy consequences or the blessings of God.

Always believe God’s word, not religious and political leaders who tell you just the opposite.