

Message #48

Jeremiah 44:1-30

There are many of God's people who live by a health and wealth theology when it comes to God. This kind of theology motivates people to worship God as long as God is doing good things for them. However, if some negative things start to happen, instead of a real development of faith there is a real defection and desertion of God.

One of the things that is needed in any work of God, are men who know God's word and lead the women into a true worship of God. This was needed in Israel and this is needed in the church. If the men do not lead, the women will.

Now that may not all be bad if the women are leading the church into a focus on God and His word. Unfortunately that was not happening here. The women here were way off track.

We may recall that God's people had asked Jeremiah to pray about whether or not they should stay in Judah or go down to Egypt. Jeremiah prayed and told them that they should stay in Judah. In fact, he said if you go to Egypt, you will die (42:22).

The people called him a liar and they said he was making up his answers and was getting the answers from a man, whose name was Baruch. They forced Jeremiah and Baruch to go with them and they went down to Egypt.

Now as we come to this chapter, apparently some time has passed and the people think they have made it to safety. They actually have convinced themselves that they are safe in Egypt. God's people are never safe when they are in sin. **The only place of real safety is in a right relationship with God and in obedience to God.**

But the people thought they had made the right decision in disobeying God and they were about to hear from God. They would not like what they were about to hear. In **verse 1**, God again revealed His word to Jeremiah and what He says is this:

GOD WARNS HIS PEOPLE IN EGYPT WHO THINK THEY HAVE ESCAPED FROM HIS ANGER AND CHASTISEMENT THAT THEY ARE DOOMED.

If God's people disobey God, they may seem to get away with it for a while. They may seem to be living a safe, happy life. They may seem to be sailing along with no problems. That will end fast. **God will ALWAYS track down His disobedient children and there will be chastising consequences for what they have done.**

OBSERVATION #1 – God sends His word to all Jews living in Egypt. **44:1**

There were many Jews living in Egypt at the time God revealed this. There had been some of them who had gone there before the fall and destruction of Jerusalem and others had fled there because of the fall. God had a message for all of them who were in Egypt and not Judah.

It is obvious that the people were spread out. Some of the people were living in Egypt in Migdol. Some were living in Tahpanhes and others in Memphis, which was the capital of Lower Egypt. Others lived in the land of Pathros.

They apparently thought they were way down in Egypt and far away from the judgment fray that was taking place up north in Judah. They were all spread out and seemed to be enjoying life. They really think they have outsmarted the judgment of God.

What these people don't realize is that the destruction of Jerusalem was a judgment of God against His own people so for His own people to think they can get away from God's sovereign judgment, just by geographical relocation, is ludicrous.

So now that Jeremiah was down in Egypt, God sent His word down there through Jeremiah. Jeremiah was a faithful man of God no matter where he was and he was a man God would use to communicate His word no matter where he was.

OBSERVATION #2 – God says you have seen what I did to My people who angered Me.
44:2-6

God says in **verse 2** you have seen what I did in destroying Jerusalem and your cities. They are all in ruins and no one lives there.

In **verse 3**, God says I did this because of your wickedness. You were so wicked that you stopped worshipping Me and worshipped other gods. You sacrificed to them and you served them.

God says in **verse 4**, even then I sent My prophets to warn you. I sent them again and again. They told you do not do the things that are abominable in the sight of God.

But God says in **verse 5**, they did not listen and they did not turn from their evil and wickedness.

In **verse 6** Jeremiah reminds the people that this was the reason why God poured out His wrath on Judah. This is why their cities were burned down by Nebuchadnezzar and this is why Jerusalem was destroyed.

By virtue of the fact that Jeremiah was telling them this was an amazing display of God's grace. He is still giving His own people time to do what was right.

But you would have to be seriously naïve to think that you can anger God and run to Egypt and get away with it when God is destroying everything you just left.

OBSERVATION #3 – God says you are provoking Me to anger by what you are doing in Egypt. **44:7-10**

Verse 7 is eye-opening. When people refuse to listen to God's word, they are destroying themselves. No one who experiences the chastising judgments of God will be able to blame someone else. The only person they have to blame is themselves.

In **verse 8**, God says you provoked Me to anger. You burned incense to other gods in the land of Egypt.

God says and now you people in Egypt are doing the very same thing that drove Me to punish those up north. You are about to be destroyed by Me for the very same reasons because you will not humble yourselves to Me and My word.

God says in **verse 9**, have you forgotten what I did to the men, women and children? It is amazing that these people could so quickly forget what God did to Judah and Jerusalem.

The real crux of the problem is in **verse 10**, they were not contrite and they did not fear God or His word. God's own people were proud, arrogant, defiant people.

OBSERVATION #4 – God says I will punish and destroy those who have gone to Egypt.
44:11-14

When you read **verse 11** and see the word “woe” coming from the LORD of hosts and the God of Israel, it is serious.

God says in **verse 12** that I am going to kill that entire remnant that just came to Egypt. They will die by the sword and by famine. I will allow people to kill them and I will allow them to starve to death.

Verse 13 says that God would punish the rest of the Jews who went down to Egypt by sword, famine and pestilence.

They had not learned their lesson. There was no evidence that these people intended to repent, so God says you need to know that I will bring a horror judgment on you.

Verse 14 says there will be no survivors, God will see to it.

God says you are going to die by My hand as a judgment. You will be killed by the sword, famine and plagues. People all over the world will talk about the fact that you have been cursed by the Living God.

OBSERVATION #5 – All the men and women respond to the words of Jeremiah and tell him they will not listen to him. **44:15-19**

Verse 15 is eye-opening. All the men respond to Jeremiah but it was their wives who were leading the people into false religion. Their wives were out burning sacrifices to other gods.

Verse 16 says that all the Jews in Egypt were listening to Jeremiah and were defiant. They said we are not going to listen to you and, in **verse 17**, we are going to keep offering our incense and offerings to false gods.

We intend to keep burning sacrifices to the queen of heaven and pouring out our drink offerings just as others did in Jerusalem. This is total and complete arrogance.

Their argument in **verse 17** is that when we were worshipping other deities, life was good for us. We had plenty of food and we were well off.

In **verse 18** they say but when we stopped worshipping the queen of heaven things got bad.

According to **verse 19**, the women said and when we were doing that we had our husbands and they were not dead.

In other words, they are saying it is the worship of the true God that is the problem. It was the failure of the people to worship the queen of heaven that was the reason things were so bad.

So they decided to go back to worshipping false gods and the husbands of the women approved it. They said we don't care what Jeremiah says, we are going to do this our way.

What these foolish people don't realize is that it was the worship of these false gods that caused God to destroy them.

There are many, many people who operate this way when it comes to God. I'll worship God as long as nothing negative ever happens. But if something negative happens, then I'll chuck it.

OBSERVATION #6 – Jeremiah responds to the people and tells them God will destroy them.
44:20-30

Well Jeremiah, in **verses 20-23** says you foolish people need to know that it is your idolatry that is the reason for the calamity.

Jeremiah says in **verse 21**, you are the people who burned down the cities and you are the people who burned down Jerusalem because God could no longer take it or take you (**v. 22**).

When God's people move away from God and worship something other than Him, His judgment must come. God cannot and will not sit idly by and let His people make a mockery out of Him or His word.

In **verse 24**, Jeremiah says I have four messages from God for all of you, including all the women who are in Egypt:

(Message #1) - No one from Judah will be left to invoke My name ever again from Egypt.
44:25-26

In **verse 26** God says you will never invoke My name again. You have forfeited your right to even talk to Me. God says I will not listen to one person ever again from this place.

(Message #2) - God is only going to do harmful things to His own people and nothing good.
44:27

All the men who refused to lead their wives into true worship will die by sword and famine until everyone is dead. It is a sober thought to realize that God can actually say to His own people that He will do nothing good for them again. He is a good God filled with good blessings.

(Message #3) - God will permit a small remnant to escape to testify what they saw God do.
44:28

We may assume that Jeremiah and Baruch were able to escape because God was protecting them.

(Message #4) - God will give them a sign that this will happen. **44:29-30**

God would permit Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt, who let them live there to be destroyed by enemies, just like Zedekiah was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.

Pharaoh Hophra, whom you trust will be handed over to his enemies just like Zedekiah was handed over to Nebuchadnezzar.

Hophra (also named Apries) ruled Egypt from 589 BC- 570 BC. He promised help for Zedekiah in his rebellion against the Babylonians (37:5). Hophra and Amasis ruled as co-regent kings for three years and then Hophra was overthrown and executed.

LESSONS:

1. You cannot run away from sin.
2. You cannot relocate and escape judgment.
3. Face sin; confess sin; turn from sin and experience the grace of God.