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Various information and topics that help the reader of the Bible understand the apostles and the Lord Jesus Christ's teachings.

Jeremiah 4.

(2010).

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Teach it, don't demand it.

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Jeremiah 4.

Israel, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem are called to Repentance.

Jeremiah 4:1-6 ----- ¹"If you return, O Israel, declares the LORD, to me you should return. If you remove your detestable things from my presence, and do not waver, ²and if you swear, 'As the LORD lives,' in truth, in justice, and in righteousness, then nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory." ³For thus says the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem: "Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns. ⁴Circumcise yourselves to the LORD; remove the foreskin of your hearts, O men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem; lest my wrath go forth like fire, and burn with none to quench it, because of the evil of your deeds." ⁵Declare in Judah, and proclaim in Jerusalem, and say, "Blow the trumpet through the land; cry aloud and say, 'Assemble, and let us go into the fortified cities!' ⁶Raise a standard toward Zion, flee for safety, stay not, for I bring disaster from the north, and great destruction.

The men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem are called to: -

- Return to the LORD.
- Forsake their idols and remove everything that is an offence to God.
- Do what they promise to do.
- Stop perverting justice for their own gain.
- Do what is right and fair.
- Show compassion to others.

If Judah does not do these things listed above, they are warned to flee for safety because the LORD will bring a nation from the north (Babylon) against them and there will be enormous destruction (v6). Sadly the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem didn't heed Jeremiah's call to repentance and Babylon's armies destroyed the land of Judah, their houses and farms and invaded Jerusalem and took its inhabitants captive for 70 years.

Notice; (v2) if God's people had done the right thing the surrounding nations would have honoured the LORD, this is a principal for the Church and witnessing, it is useless to proclaim something if you are not living it. Witnessing without, love, grace and mercy and behaviour that shows God honour and does what is right and fair to others is going to fall on deaf ears and even worse has the potential to turn people against God.

A Lion has Gone up from His Thicket.

Jeremiah 4:7-8 ----- ⁷A lion has gone up from his thicket, a destroyer of nations has set out; he has gone out from his place to make your land a waste; your cities will be ruins without inhabitant. ⁸For this put on sackcloth, lament, and wail, for the fierce anger of the LORD has not turned back from us."

A lion has gone up from his thicket; refers to Babylon and her armies preparing for battle against Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 4:9-12 ----- ⁹"In that day, declares the LORD, courage shall fail both king and officials. The priests shall be appalled and the prophets astounded." ¹⁰Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD, surely you have utterly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, 'It shall be well with you,' whereas the sword has reached their very life." ¹¹At that time it will be said to this people and to Jerusalem, "A hot wind from the bare heights in the desert toward the daughter of my people, not to winnow or cleanse, ¹²a wind too full for this comes for me. Now it is I who speak in judgment upon them."

The sword has reached their very life; refers to Babylon and her armies killing the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

A hot wind toward the daughter of my people; refers to Babylon and her armies preparing for battle against Jerusalem. When Babylon invades Judah and Jerusalem the king, the officials, the priests and the prophets will be shocked because the prophets have been falsely proclaiming that, "It will be well with the people of God." (v10).

God Deceives the People; Jeremiah was proclaiming the true message of God, but the people did not like what he said, so they embraced the false prophets because they told the king and the people what they wanted to hear. That is why Jeremiah says, "The LORD utterly deceived the people." It's a natural principal, if people reject what is true the only alternative left is to embrace whatever is untrue. It is in this sense that Jeremiah says, "God deceives the people."

He comes up like Clouds; his Chariots like the Whirlwind.

Jeremiah 4:13-15 ----- ¹³Behold, he comes up like clouds; his chariots like the whirlwind; his horses are swifter than eagles—woe to us, for we are ruined! ¹⁴O Jerusalem, wash your heart from evil, that you may be saved. How long shall your wicked thoughts lodge within you? ¹⁵For a voice declares from Dan and proclaims trouble from Mount Ephraim.

He comes up like Clouds; his Chariots like the Whirlwind; refers to the armies of Babylon approaching the land of Judah and Jerusalem.

Bible Prophecy and Present Tense.

Often a prophecy is spoken in the present tense as though the event has already happened when in actual reality the fulfilment of it may still be many years away. This is because the prophet is seeing the vision in the present moment and speaks it as he sees it in present time.

The people the prophet is speaking to know when the prophecy is a future event, but sometimes it can be difficult for those reading it thousands of years later to realise, because of the tense it is written in. When a prophet speaks he is often speaking as the voice of God, therefore the words he speaks are guaranteed to come to pass. This is another reason the prophet can speak the words of God in the present moment because they are certain to happen at the right time in the future.

Dan; Jeroboam, Solomon's servant, set up a golden calf in Dan and put high places throughout Israel. The city marked the northern limit of Israel in the common phrase, "from Dan to Beersheba."

Ephraim; became such a leader in the new northern Hebrew kingdom (the Ten Tribes in the land of Samaria) that in addition to their more common name Israel, the kingdom is also called Ephraim. The Canaanites of Gezer lived in the midst of the Ten Tribes, because they did not drive them out of the land. Ephraim's territory included worship centers at Bethel and Shiloh.

Israel is called to warn Judah.

Jeremiah 4:16 ----- ¹⁶Warn the nations that he (Babylon) is coming; announce to Jerusalem, "Besiegers come from a distant land; they shout against the cities of Judah.

The nations; in this context primarily refer to the nations of Judah.

The people of Israel in the land of Samaria have been conquered and taken captive by Assyria they are now called to warn the people of Jerusalem a nation (Babylon) from a distant land is approaching the city and the land of Judah.

Judah (Judah means Praised) it is the name of the Hebrew tribe descended from the man Judah and King David was a member of the tribe of Judah. Both David and Solomon succeeded in unifying the Hebrew tribes, but when Solomon died, all of this came to an end.

Ten Tribes; broke away from the Kingdom and became known as the Northern Kingdom called Israel while two tribes known as the Southern Kingdom called Judah remained at Jerusalem. It is difficult to isolate Judah and Israel because the accounts of Israel and Judah are intertwined with Israel (the Ten Tribes) predominating.

Jeremiah 4:17-31 ----- ¹⁷Like keepers of a field are they (armies of Babylon) against her all around, because she has rebelled against me, declares the LORD. ¹⁸Your ways and your deeds have brought this upon you. This is your doom, and it is bitter; it has reached your very heart."

When Babylon reached the walls of Jerusalem they surrounded the city for about 1½ years so no-one could go in or come out. There was great famine and the people eventually submitted to the king of Babylon.

Notice; even though the LORD is using Babylon to punish Judah, they have brought this doom on themselves because of their rebellion and wicked ways.

It has reached your very heart; primarily refers to the destruction that has come to their beloved city Jerusalem and the Temple of God.

The LORD is Grieved.

Jeremiah 4:19-22 ----- ¹⁹My anguish, my anguish! I writhe in pain! Oh the walls of my heart! My heart is beating wildly; I cannot keep silent, for I hear the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. ²⁰Crash follows hard on crash; the whole land is laid waste. Suddenly my tents are laid waste, my curtains in a moment. ²¹How long must I see the standard and hear the sound of the trumpet? ²²"For my people are foolish; they know me not; they are stupid children; they have no understanding. They are 'wise'—in doing evil! But how to do good they know not."

Jeremiah in a vision sees into the future the total destruction of Jerusalem and God's Temple.

Notice; both Jeremiah and the LORD are deeply grieved as they watch the suffering the people and the destruction of Jerusalem. This reveals the heart of God and a true prophet and true shepherd. Jeremiah could have easily justified himself and stood back, with an attitude of, "See I told you so you stupid people," but he and God cared for the people and because they cared the people's suffering caused them both extreme emotional anxiety and anguish.

Visions; can relate to a spectacle gazed at by the eyes or a movie played out in the mind. In most cases God gives the picture or vision then the prophet speaks or writes it in their own words. Sometimes the same biblical event or experience is spoken of as an actual and real event, while at other times the same event maybe recorded as a vision (an image or mental experience within the mind).

A biblical vision is always under God's control and can appear as a movie played out on the screen of the imagination of the mind (similar to a dream) or it may appear as a hologram appearing in the air that is actually seen by the eyes of the prophet or to whoever God chooses to give the vision to. The vision communicates the LORD'S will or future events to the prophet who then proceeds to tell the vision to the people, sometimes in their own words and at other times in the exact words the LORD has spoken to them in the vision.

Notice; as rebellious and wicked as the people of Judah have been, God still calls them His children, foolish and stupid children, but nevertheless still His children. Like natural children need to be disciplined by their parents when they rebel so God is forced to discipline and punish His children when they reject His good ways and refuse to administer justice and treat others fairly and do what is right.

The LORD will not fully Destroy Judah.

Jeremiah 4:23-29 ----- ²³I looked on the earth, and behold, it was without form and void; and to the heavens, and they had no light. ²⁴I looked on the mountains, and behold, they were quaking, and all the hills moved to and fro. ²⁵I looked, and behold, there was no man, and all the birds of the air had

fled. ²⁶I looked, and behold, the fruitful land was a desert, and all its cities were laid in ruins before the LORD, before his fierce anger. ²⁷For thus says the LORD, "The whole land (of Judah) shall be a desolation; yet I will not make a full end. ²⁸"For this the earth shall mourn, and the heavens above be dark; for I have spoken; I have purposed; I have not relented, nor will I turn back." ²⁹At the noise of horseman and archer every city takes to flight; they enter thickets; they climb among rocks; all the cities are forsaken, and no man dwells in them.

The destruction of Jerusalem and the land of Judah is so great that Jeremiah likens it to the earth when it was without form and void. Babylon burned Judah's houses, destroyed the city and their farms and pillaged the House of God of its treasures.

The mountains were quaking, the hills moved to and fro, and the birds of the air fled is a graphic picture of the terror, strength and might of the armies of Babylon approaching.

Notice; the LORD says, He will 'not' fully destroy Judah.

Assyria invaded the land of Samaria and took Israel captive, later Babylon's armies surrounded Jerusalem and after a bitter siege of a year and a half the city fell to Nebuchadnezzar and was destroyed. Zedekiah was blinded and carried to Babylon, and the great bulk of the population was taken there with him (587 B.C.).

Archaeologists have found that all of the cities of Judah were completely destroyed at this time, thus ended the glorious kingdom of David and Solomon. Observers would have said that the Hebrew nation was annihilated, and indeed, the other nations conquered by the Assyrians and Babylonians did cease to exist. But the prophets proclaimed a better hope for the chosen people. "A remnant shall return" Isaiah had said, and in time this remnant, purged and returned, became the basis on which a new Israel would be built.

The Cry of a Woman in labour and Anguish Giving Birth.

Jeremiah 4:30-31 ----- ³⁰And you, O desolate one, what do you mean that you dress in scarlet, that you adorn yourself with ornaments of gold, that you enlarge your eyes with paint? In vain you beautify yourself. Your lovers despise you; they seek your life. ³¹For I heard a cry as of a woman in labor, anguish as of one giving birth to her first child, the cry of the daughter of Zion gasping for breath, stretching out her hands, "Woe is me! I am fainting before murderers."

When the ferocious armies of Babylon attack the people of Judah the suffering and pain the people of Judah will experience is likened to the cry of a woman in labour gasping for breath and in anguish giving birth to her first child.

Notice; the people of Judah are so obsessed with their own self-image and materialism that they don't even realise that the ones they do trade with and multiply their wealth by (their lovers) are actually plotting to invade them.

End.