

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing

Part XLVI: God's Contrast Of Godly And False Prophets, Jeremiah 23:9-40

B. God's Contrast Of The MINISTRIES Of Godly And False Prophets (Jeremiah 23:16-40)

I. Introduction

- A. The prophet Jeremiah lived and ministered in godliness, but false prophets lived and ministered in wickedness, and the people of Judah were left choosing which ministry and lifestyle was that of God's *real* prophet.
- B. God Himself contrasted these prophets, including His contrast of the **ministries** of the good and false prophets in Jeremiah 23:16-40. We view this passage for insight and application in our era (as follows):

II. God's Contrast Of The MINISTRIES Of Godly And False Prophets, Jeremiah 23:16-40.

- A. In Jeremiah 23:16-40, the Lord alternated between discussing the ministries of the false prophets and His judgment on them and discussing the ministries of the true prophets.
- B. Thus, to simplify the contrast between these two ministry types, we **sort** the information, listing **first** God's comments on the *false* prophetic ministries **then** His comments on the *true* prophetic ministries (as follows):
 - 1. We note the ministries and God's condemnation of the false prophets as follows, 23:16-21, 23-27, 30-40:
 - a. The false prophets offered vain hopes to their hearers, Jeremiah 23:16a.
 - b. They verbalized man-made visions that were non-authoritative, non-Scriptural, Jeremiah 23:16b.
 - c. The false prophets pronounced blessings on people who despised God's Word and followed their own rebellious will versus God's will, Jeremiah 23:17.
 - d. The false prophets failed to proclaim the truth about God's coming judgment on sinners, that such sinners would not understand God's ways until His discipline had come upon them, Jeremiah 23:18-21.
 - e. The false prophets failed to sense their accountability to the Lord as the omnipresent God Who saw everything they did, including the false lies they proclaimed as if they were the truth, Jeremiah 23:23-24.
 - f. The Lord condemned the outright lies the false prophets proclaimed in their ministries, Jer. 23:25-26.
 - g. God also condemned the false prophets for trying to make their hearers forget the Lord like their forefathers had forgotten Him so as to replace Him with the false, pagan god Baal, Jeremiah 23:27.
 - h. The Lord complained that the false prophets even stole words from one another (Jeremiah 23:30) and recklessly proclaimed utterly false, lying dreams (Jeremiah 23:31-32), what God condemned.
 - i. Accordingly, the Lord would level severe judgment on these false prophets who misused the term, "the burden of the Lord" as an impressive phrase to try to move their hearers to heed their messages when their messages were just their own words that also perverted the words of the Lord, Jeremiah 23:33-40.
 - 2. We then note the ministries of the true prophets as follows, Jeremiah 23:22, 28-29:
 - a. God's true prophets proclaim God's words that turn people from evil to righteousness [as defined by the written Scriptures], Jeremiah 23:22 [with Jeremiah 2:8-9].
 - b. God's true prophets faithfully proclaim God's Word [in accord with Scripture,] Jer. 23:28a [with 2:8-9].
 - c. The words of God's true prophets nurture godly hearers like wheat does in contrast to the teachings of the false prophets that are like straw in that they have no spiritually nutritional value, Jeremiah 23:28b.
 - d. God's true prophets minister God's Word with penetrating power, likened to that of a consuming fire or a hammer that shatters the rock to pieces, Jeremiah 23:29. (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1159)

Lesson: (1) *False prophets offered vain hopes, they verbalized non-authoritative visions, they blessed those who despised Scripture and followed their own rebellious ways, they failed to proclaim the truth of God's judgment on sinners and that such sinners would not understand spiritual truth until that judgment fell, they failed to sense their accountability to an omnipresent God Who saw their false lies and condemned them, they tried to get their hearers to forget God so as to replace Him with another god, they stole messages from one another and recklessly, manipulatively proclaimed false, lying dreams God condemned, so He would judge them for their deceit and perversions.* (2) *True prophets faithfully spoke God's Word to turn men from sin to righteousness as defined by Scripture, their words, being God's words, thus being marked by spiritual nurture and penetrating power.*

Application: *May we realize that false messengers function in man-made, unscriptural ways, they bless hearers who sin and teach what is spiritually empty and powerless, but that godly messengers faithfully proclaim Scripture truth to turn men from sin to righteousness with words that truly feed the spirit and possess penetrating power.*