

JEREMIAH: SHINING AS SPIRITUAL TWILIGHT FALLS
"Part VI: "Sifting Y2K-type Forecasts On Our Future Welfare"
(Jeremiah 29:1-32)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

There are seriously conflicting reports on how we should prepare for the Y2K event coming upon us Saturday. That event, if we don't know by now, is caused by many computers containing only two digits for the year, so that when these computers' clocks turn over to the year 2,000 on January 1, they will read "00". If not fixed in time, it is *alleged* this event will cause these computers to treat the year 2000 as "1900", causing chaos in commercial and governmental circles:

(1) On the one hand, computer expert Michael S. Hyatt wrote in his January 1998 book, The Millennium Bug: How To Survive the Coming Chaos, outside jacket cover): "12:01 A.M. January 1, 2000: Your electricity goes off. Phones aren't working. The computer at your local bank crashes. Police and 911 are nowhere to be found . . . Social security checks will stop coming. Planes . . . will be grounded. Credit card charges will be rejected. Military defense systems will fail . . . The Federal reserve will be unable to clear checks . . ."

(2) Donald S. McAlvany's February 1998 The McAlvany Intelligence Advisor says: "The coming computer crisis . . . could trigger . . . the onset of the biggest global depression since the 1930s . . . the national power grid . . . is completely computer dependent and may be the most important system at risk . . ."

(3) On the **other** hand, Dave Hunt in his March 1999 issue of The Berean Call wrote: "Those who warn of Y2K tell us embedded [computer] chips pose the greatest problem and it can't be solved in time. Yet those who design and install embedded systems seem unconcerned. Embedded Systems Programming is the premiere trade magazine on this subject. Its subscribers, the true experts, daily work in this field. Its January 1999 edition carried an editorial which stated, 'Ten months ago I asked for those of you who have encountered year 2000 (Y2K) problems in embedded systems you're developing to let me know . . . [and] **no** one cited a verifiable problem.' The articles planned for 1999 (including their December issue) will not even address Y2K. If the danger is as great as we are being told, why aren't the real experts concerned?"

Should we be bothered about Y2K? If so, WHY hasn't the Pastor told us before NOW? What should a good Christian DO?

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

Need: "Since the Y2K glitch will be upon us NEXT WEEK, and I've heard CONFLICTING views on how badly (or scarcely) it will affect our welfare, what should I believe and do about it, and WHY?!"

I. In Jeremiah's day, VERY OPPOSING predictions existed on the FUTURE WELFARE of Judah's captives in Babylon, Jer. 29:1-19:

- A. When Nebuchadnezzar took captives from Judah to Babylon, some Hebrew prophets tried to encourage these captives by saying they would soon be returned to Judah, Jeremiah 29:1, 15 with 28:1-5:
1. In Jeremiah's letter to the Jewish captives in Babylon, he revealed the people were already listening to false prophets, Jer. 29:1, 15.
 2. What these prophets predicted was a quick restoration of the Hebrew captives to Judah, Jeremiah 29:16-19:
 - a. Jeremiah's letter to the Judaeans captives in Babylon intended to counter the idea that all would go well for the remnant in the land. He said they also would be taken captive, Jer. 29:16-19.
 - b. This view contradicted predictions of prophets among these captives who predicted they would soon return, 29:15; 28:1-5.
- B. Jeremiah's letter aimed to **counter** what the *false* prophets predicted:
1. In view of the reality of their **long, seventy year** stay to come in Babylon, Jeremiah urged the people to settle down, live ordinary lives and be supportive of the rule over them, Jer. 29:4-7.
 2. The captives were to **RESIST** suggestions by their false prophets of a rebellious attitude toward Babylon's government in the false hope of a soon return to Judah, Jer. 29:8-9 implied.
 3. God revealed that His plan was to make the captives think seriously of their waywardness so that they would truly repent during the coming **long** captivity, Jeremiah 29:10-14.

II. From examining God's PAST LEADING and SCRIPTURE applied to LIFE, these captives could discern WHO told the TRUTH, and WHAT to DO in the FUTURE for their WELFARE (as follows):

- A. Issue One - These captives were alerted to the *sins* of the **false** prophets that signaled a warning as to their erroneous **views!**
1. Jeremiah reminded these captives that the prophets predicting their quick release from Babylon blatantly committed **adultery**, 29:23.
 2. Such action in violation of the Law indicated these men were not being led by the God who **forbade** such sin, cf. Exodus 20:14.
- B. Issue Two - These captives could have checked Jeremiah's words with the words of **former, PROVEN** prophets to see Jeremiah matched their message and was thereby **correct** as follows:

1. As we saw in Jeremiah 26:16-18, the captives knew the predictions of past prophet, Micah about Jerusalem's fall to Babylon for its sins.
2. Since Jeremiah's prediction calling for repentance in such a national failure fit Micah's **past proven** prediction better than the words of the prophets in their midst, these captives should have seen they should obey Jeremiah and settle down for a seventy-year captivity.

III. **God then sent Jeremiah to false prophet, Shemaiah to predict Shemaiah's demise for misleading the captives, Jeremiah 29:24-32.**

Application: *To apply this lesson to handling Y2K, (1) we FIRST believe in Christ for salvation (Jn. 3:16) to be indwelt by God's DISCERNING Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:17a; 1 Cor. 2:10-12). (2) Then, we become controlled by Him by confessing sins that block His leading, 1 Jn. 1:9. (3) Next, we evaluate the LIVES of all making Y2K predictions for signs of their being led or not led of God, Jer. 29:23. (4) We next examine PAST (credible) Bible statements for insight: (a) we know from 2 Thess. 2:1, 16-17 where Paul DEALT with world Tribulation troubles that WE CHRISTIANS are NOT to be CURRENTLY unsettled, alarmed or distracted from practicing every present Christian service, (b) for the Great Tribulation is NOT meant for CHRISTIANS, but for those who reject Christ: the Church will be taken to heaven by the PREtribulation rapture, 2 Thess. 2:13-15. (c) Also, since Y2K is NEVER NAMED in Bible prophecy, it will EITHER NOT ruin world order before the Rapture OR Y2K is AFTER the RAPTURE and thus becomes a non-issue for us Christians! (d) 1 Tim. 6:6-10 reveals we should NOT STOCKPILE what others will come to view as "riches" lest we invite troubles for doing so. (e) Besides, God promises to meet all our pressing livelihood needs, Phil. 4:19. (5) We conclude that to address Y2K, a modest accumulation of cash, foodstuffs and fuel for perhaps a several-day period (like for a bad snowstorm) is sensible. BEYOND that, we hoard what will amount to "riches" (if Y2K brings a bad depression) versus what 1 Tim. 6:6-10 says!*

Lesson: *The (a) quality of the prophet's life and (b) alignment of his words with proven Biblical precedents were the means the captives could have used to know WHICH prophet's message to heed for their welfare.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

Wink Wilson of Goshen wrote an article in the December 17-23 issue of The Voice entitled, "Y2K -- Don't Panic." He admits there (p. 16) he himself had first spread alarms about Y2K, for besides Michael Hyatt's book (The Millennium Bug), other Christians like Jerry Falwell, Jack Van Impe, Dr. James Dobson, R. C. Sproul and Dr. D. James Kennedy had also warned of a looming Y2K world crisis. However, Wilson reports he has **since changed** his view due to Hank Hanegraaf's book, "The Millennium Bug Debugged." Hanegraaf, of the reputable Christian Research Institute (www.equip.org) documents many errors in Hyatt's book, and notes Hyatt and others have received "ninety-nine percent" of their information from a Mr. Gary North's website.

Now, North (writes Wilson, Ibid.) is "a Calvinistic Reconstructionist who believes...the world is going to end in chaos with Christians taking over and restoring everything in the name of God..."

I know about Reconstructionism, and **agree** with Wilson and Hanegraaf that this view is what reconstructionism asserts. Hanegraaf writes of North, saying (Ibid., p. 82), "As a...Reconstructionist, he sees Y2K as an ideal validation for a world view in which society collapses and Christians emerge victorious out of the embers."

(1) BIBLICALLY, Scripture teaches the rapture must occur *before* the Tribulation, and THEN Christ RETURNS to set up His reign. We Christians will NOT take over a destitute world and create a utopia BEFORE Christ returns! The ERROR of North's RECONSTRUCTIONISM in view of our SERMON causes us to DOUBT the DEGREE of chaos he predicts for Y2K!

(2) REGARDING EXPERIENCE, Wilson reports (p. 17) some of North's words have already been shown to be suspect. In October, 1999, the Federal government swung its computers over to the year 2000, but nothing catastrophic happened. North said the passing of September 9th ("9/9/99" on non-Y2K-compliant computers) would give us a taste of Y2K, but it delivered no crisis!

(3) REGARDING CREDIBLE SOURCES, Wilson (Ibid., p. 16) reports more leaders like Jerry Falwell and Dr. James Dobson have SIGNIFICANTLY SOFTENED their INITIAL Y2K alarms, further adding virtue to our conclusion! [We need to STICK with BIBLE PROPHECY and not react excessively to Y2K!]