

4/28/02

Jeremiah 23-24

Chapter twenty-one through twenty-three are a unit or block and they should not be studied apart from each other. The woes to the shepherds is in reference to the kings mentioned in chapter twenty-two, Jehoiachaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah. Jer. 23:1-8

The remainder of the chapter will deal with the false prophets versus the true prophet of God.

23:1-8 The godless shepherds versus the Good Shepherd.

* These first eight verses are to be applied to the kings of chapter 21-22.

23:1-4 *The wicked shepherds and their end.*

23:1-2 The judgment of God pronounced.

- 1) The identity of the godless shepherds. Vs. 1
 - a) The word shepherds “ra’ah” means to pasture, tend, graze, or feed.
 - b) These are not literal shepherds but the leaders of the nation of Judah.
 - c) These leader include the king, the civil leader and the spiritual leaders, such

as the priest, prophets mentioned in chapter 21-22.

- 2) The judgment of these leaders is marked by the word “Woe”, instead of caring for the people they had destroyed and scatter them. Vs. 1
- 3) The particular punishment. Vs. 2
 - a) Yahweh bases his right to speak against these shepherds based on the fact that the people were His own. Vs. 2a
 - b) Yahweh indicts them for scattering the people throughout the country and not tended to them. Vs. 2b-c
 - c) Yahweh would tend to them for evil in punishment for the evil of their doings. Vs. 2d-e

* There is a play on words in the phrase “not tend” and “I will attend to them” in retribution.

23:3-4 The plan of God pronounced. Vs. 3-4

- 1) Yahweh would seek His people out. Vs. 3
 - a) The re-gathering is limited to the remnant of His flock, not all the people. Vs. 3a
 - 1) Yahweh takes responsibility for the scattering due to their sins.
 - 2) Yahweh is the true Shepherd doing the work.

- 3) Yahweh is talking about the last days re-gathering not merely the Assyrian or Babylonian but from all the countries.
- b) The purpose was to return them to their folds or land to be fruitful and live. Vs. 3b-c
- 2) Yahweh said three things would take place. Vs. 4
 - a) He would set up shepherds over them who will feed them. Vs. 4a
 - b) The people would not fear any more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking, says the LORD. Vs. 4b-e
 - 1) There would be a short-term fulfillment through Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah but this is not the focus of the passage.
 - 2) The passage is a long-term fulfillment being world wide. Vs. 3a

23:5-6 *The wise Shepherd of the Kingdom Age.*

- 1) The time would be the reign of the Messiah, “the Age to come”. Vs. 5
 - a) The phrase “the days are coming” is a messianic formula, found fifteen times in the book of Jeremiah. Vs. 5a-b

- b) The authority is of Yahweh Himself, “says the LORD.” Vs. 5c
- c) The person raised up would be called a branch of righteousness. Vs. 5d-f
 - 1) Yahweh would raise up to David a Branch of righteousness, the title for the Messiah. Vs. 5d; Is. 4:2; 11:1; 53:2; Jer. 33:15; 30:9; Ezk. 34:23-24; 37:24; Zech. 3:8; 6:12; Is. 42-53
 - * The adjective modifies the quality of a person not a plant, wise rather than wicked.
 - 2) Yahweh is fulfilling the promise to David. 2Sam. 7
- d) The role of Jesus the Messiah will be as King to reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. Vs. 5e-f
 - 1) Contrary to Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah,
 - 2) His rule will be with a rod of iron! Rev. 2:27; 19:15
- 2) The blessing of the Kingdom Age is declared. Vs. 6
 - a) The nation of Israel will be saved in His days, they will acknowledge Jesus as their Messiah. Vs. 6a; Rom. 9-11
 - b) The long centuries of suffering and persecution of the Jews will be over and they will dwell in safety. Vs. 6b

- c) Jesus will be called by a specific name, “THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS”. Vs. 6d-e
- 1) The LORD Tisidhquenu, speaks of one person not a number of monarchs! Jer. 30:9; Ezk. 4:23-24; 37:24
* This was probably during the reign of Zedekiah for the title was in direct contradiction to his name which meant “Yahweh is righteous.”
 - 2) The Jews will once and for all acknowledge the righteousness of Jesus to be excepted before God, rather than their own righteousness. Rom. 1:16-17; 10:1-3
 - 3) Her wicked kings had been her undoing!

23:7-8 *The world wide re-gathering of the Jews.*

- 1) The perspective of the Jews is stated. Vs. 7-8
 - a) They in those days will not refer to the exodus of Egypt. Vs. 7
 - b) They will not even refer to the exodus from Babylonian through Cyrus. Vs. 8a

- 2) The personal acknowledgement of the Jews. Vs. 8
 - a) They will refer to the Lord’s faithfulness to recover them from the four corners of the earth. Vs. 8a-b
* The certainty is marked by “as the Lord lives”.
 - b) They to dwell in their own land. Vs. 8c

23:9-40 **The false prophets versus the true prophets.**

23:9-12 *The condemnation of the false prophets.*

23:9-10 The evil of the false prophets pained Jeremiah.

- 1) The prophet Jeremiah was deeply disturbed over the false prophets. Vs. 9
 - a) His heart was broken due to the false prophet in their opposition to God. Vs. 9a
 - b) His bones shook as if he were drunk or overcome with wine. Vs. 9b-d
* The word shake means to hover. Gen. 1:2
- c) His condition was in view of the holiness of God’s word and the people’s disregard and the false prophets unholy words. Vs. 9e-f

* Twenty-three time the word prophets or the verbal form appears from verses 9-40

- 2) The example of the false prophets set the tone of the land. Vs. 10
 - a) The land was full of adulterers, marital immorality was the standard. Vs. 10a
 - b) The land mourned due to the curse of drought as the people worshipped Baal, the god of rain. Vs. 10b-c
 - c) The false prophets course of life was evil, And their power and authority was influencing the people to national ruin. Vs. 10d-e

23:11-12 The profaneness of the prophets.

- 1) The false prophets were irreverent. Vs. 11
 - a) Both prophet and priest were profane or polluted. Vs. 11a
 - 1) The prophet could not direct the people, being spiritually blind.
 - 2) The priest could not intercede for the people, being in sin themselves.
 - 3) Jeremiah was of the priestly line.
 - b) They carried on their sinful lives in the house of God, the temple. Vs. 11b-d

* The Woes to the Scribes and Pharisees are in much the same line. Matt. 23

- 2) The false prophets would be punished. Vs. 12
 - a) Their way would be their own downfall, like slippery ways, sudden and unexpected. Vs. 12a
 - b) Their walking in darkness would bring their fall. Vs. 12b
 - c) Yahweh would bring disaster on them, The year of their punishment,” says the LORD. Vs. 12c-e
- * Most believe this is during Zedekiah’s reign but certainly each siege brought punishment on those taken, 606, 596, 586 B. C.

23:13-15 *The false prophets of Samaria and Jerusalem.*

- 1) Jeremiah witnessed the folly in the prophets of Samaria of the Northern kingdom, as they prophesied by Baal causing God’s people Israel to err. Vs. 13
- 2) Jeremiah also witnessed the deeds of the prophets of Jerusalem. Vs. 14
 - a) The things were horrible, they had done worst, ignoring the evil of the Northern Kingdom. Vs. 14a

- * The root word of the word horrible is used for rotten figs, the things were disgusting. Jer. 5:30; 29:17
- b) They commit adultery and walk in lies. Vs. 14b
 - c) They also supported the evildoers, encouraging them in their wickedness. Vs. 14c-d
 - d) The people were all like Sodom and Gamorrah to Yahweh, morally perverse and ripe for judgement. Vs. 14e-f
- 3) God would fight against them and destroy them. Vs. 15
- a) This is the conclusion of God's judgment by the word "Therefore" Vs. 15a
 - b) The Captain of the armies of heaven would be their adversary, the "Lord of host". Vs. 15a-b
 - c) He would feed them with wormwood, that which was bitter and would make them drink the water of gall. Vs. 15c-d
 - d) For from the prophets of Jerusalem profaneness has gone out into all the land, ungodliness. Vs. 15e

23:16-22 *The characteristics of lying prophets.*

- 1) They spoke of their own will and desires. Vs. 16

- a) Therefore the LORD of hosts told them not to listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to them. Vs. 16a-b
 - b) They made the people worthless or of no value to God or man, due to the source of their hopeless message from their hearts and not the Lord. Vs. 16c-e
- 2) They continually spoke favorably to the enemies of God. Vs. 17
- a) They misrepresented Yahweh to those who despised Him, prophesying in His name that they would have peace. Vs. 17a-c
 - b) They did not detoured anyone who walked according to the dictates of his own heart, telling them that no evil would come upon them. Vs. 17d-g
- 3) They were not men who had sat before Yahweh. Vs. 18
- a) They had not stood in the counsel of the LORD. Vs. 18a
 - b) They had not perceived and heard His word? Vs. 18b
 - c) None of them had marked His word and heard it? Vs. 18c
- 4) They would be utterly destroyed. Vs. 19-20
- a) The full fury and wrath of Yahweh is portrayed as a whirlwind that will

come upon the heads of he wicked.
Vs. 19

b) The Lord would not turn from His anger until He has fulfilled the punitive thoughts of His heart, which they would understand in the latter days. Vs. 20

5) They were not the servants of Yahweh.
Vs. 21

a) He had not sent them, yet they ran, having no authority. Vs. 21a-b

b) He had not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. Vs. 21c-d

6) If they had stood in the counsel of Yahweh and spoken His word, they would have turned the people from their sin by repenting. Vs. 22

* Duet. 13; Ps. 19; 119; 2Tim. 3;16-17; 2Pet. 1;20-21

23:23-32 *The test for distinguishing the false prophet from the true prophet.*

23:23-24 The credentials of Yahweh.

1) Yahweh God declares His Omnipresence, He is not a localized deity like the false gods. Vs. 23

* He is everywhere, “Am I a God near at hand,” says the LORD, “And not a God afar off?” Vs. 23

2) Yahweh God declares His Omniscience, not a localized deity like the false gods.
Vs. 24

* He sees all things, “Can anyone hide himself in secret places, So I shall not see him?” says the LORD; “Do I not fill heaven and earth?” says the LORD.” Vs. 24

23:25-27 The credentials of the false prophets.

1) Yahweh God reveals that He heard their spiritual fraud. Vs. 25

a) They say, “I have dreamed, I have dreamed!” Gen. 28; 37; 41; Num. 12:6-8; Dan. 2, 4, 7

b) If the dream is from God, it will not contradict God’s word or add to it!

2) Yahweh God is revealed His patience.
Vs. 26-27

a) He asks the question, “How long will this be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies?” Vs. 26a

b) He exposes who they are, “Indeed they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart.” Vs. 26b

c) He points out their intent, “Who try to make My people forget My name by their dreams which everyone tells his neighbor, as their fathers forgot My name for Baal.” Vs. 27

23:28-32 The criteria for the word of God.

- 1) Yahweh gives the standard for judging an authoritative message from God. Vs. 28-29
 - a) The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream. Vs. 28a
 - b) And he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully. Vs. 28b-c
 - c) “What is the chaff to the wheat?” says the LORD.
- 2) Yahweh’s word accomplishes His purposes, Vs. 29
 - a) “Is not My word like a fire?” says the LORD. Vs. 29a-b
 - * It causes people to purify from sin, instead of leading to sin.
 - b) “And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?” Vs. 29c
 - * It brings conviction and judgment on the rebellious and disobedient!

23:30-32 The condemnation of false words.

- 1) Against those who give a false word saying God’s word does not apply to them or himself or hide it from them, “Therefore behold, I am against the prophets,” says the LORD, “who steal My words every one from his neighbor. Vs. 30
- 2) Against those who misuse God’s name for their own authority to represent their

false message, “Behold, I am against the prophets,” says the LORD, “who use their tongues and say, `He says.” Vs. 31

- 3) Against those who misled the people, “Behold, I am against those who prophesy false dreams,” says the LORD, “and tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies and by their recklessness. Yet I did not send them or command them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all,” says the LORD. Vs. 32
 - * “Deepening the damnation of their own souls”. Oswald Cambers

23:33-40 *The prohibition regarding the burden of the Lord.*

- 1) The false prophets were using the phrase “the oracle of the Lord” in a mocking way. Vs. 33
 - a) The word oracle “nasa” means to lift up, representing the heavy message that laid on the heart of Yahweh to be communicated to the people in order that they repent and avert judgment.
 - * The KJV used “The burden of the Lord”.
 - b) So Jeremiah was to answer the false prophets when they asked him about the burden of the Lord, “What burden?”

- b) Yahweh would unburden Himself of these false prophets by forsaking them for mocking the burden of God's heart for the people's condition.
- 2) Yahweh would punish the prophet priest or person and his household who would use that phrase. Vs. 34
* Jeremiah never used it because it became the mark of the false prophets!
- 3) When the people asked one another about the answer and word spoken by Yahweh, Jeremiah was to not mention the oracle of God, for all would speak their own oracle perverting the words of Yahweh, the living God and Captain of the armies of heaven, their God. Vs. 35-36
- 4) Jeremiah was to ask the false prophet what Yahweh had spoken to them and when they used the phrase "the oracle of the Lord", he was to pronounce judgement on them for using the phrase. Vs. 37-40
 - a) I have sent to you, saying, "Do not say, 'The oracle of the LORD!'" Vs. 38
 - b) I, even I, will utterly forget you and forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, and will cast you out of My presence. Vs. 39

- 1) They had become a burden to Yahweh and He would cast them off!
- 2) They had not abandoned the phrase, so Yahweh would abandon them!
- c) And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten. Vs. 40

24:1-10 The sign of the two baskets of figs.

24:1-3 *The introductory remarks.*

- 24:1** The Lord gave to Jeremiah a vision.
- 1) Yahweh showed him two baskets of figs set before the temple of the LORD. Vs. 1a
 - a) It does not say that Jeremiah was in the temple and a vision is while a person is awake. Amos 7:8, 8:1
 - b) He had a vision of an almond tree at his call. Jer. 1:11-16
 - 2) The time frame after Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and the princes of Judah with the craftsmen and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon. Vs. 1a-f

- a) Ten-thousand of the choice families were taken to Babylon in 596 B. C. with Jehoiachin, so some time after this date. 2Kings 24:8-16
- b) Daniel was taken in the ? captivity!

24:1-2 The Lord tests the sight of the prophet.

- 1) One basket had very good figs, like the figs that are first ripe; and the other basket had very bad figs which could not be eaten, they were so bad. Vs. 2
* The first ripe are in June and the best.
- 2) Then the LORD asked Jeremiah, “What do you see, Jeremiah?” And I said, “Figs, the good figs, very good; and the bad, very bad, which cannot be eaten, they are so bad.” Vs. 3
* The bad are in August!

24:4-7 *The interpretation of the good figs.*

- 1) The interpretation came by the word of the Lord. Vs. 4
- 2) The good figs represented those to be carried off into captivity. Vs. 5
 - a) Yahweh would acknowledge them for their own good.
 - b) This was Yahweh’s doing, bringing good out of suffering, as in the case of Joseph.

- 3) Yahweh was going to set His eye on them for good and bring them back to the land. Vs. 6
 - a) He would build them build them and not pull them down, they prospered in Babylon. 2Kings 25:27-30; Jer. 29:4-7
 - b) He would plant them and not pluck them up.
* These were the very words of Jeremiah’s commission in chapter one, but on the positive purposes of God. Jer. 1:10; 18:7-9
- 4) Yahweh was going to do a new thing with them. Vs. 7
 - a) He would give to them a heart to know Him as the LORD. Vs. 7a-b
 - b) They would be His people, and He would be their God, for they would return to Him with their whole heart. Vs. 7c-e
* Jer. 7:23; 11:4; 30:22; 31:33; 32:38
 - c) Certainly the false prophets but perhaps even the ones left till the last siege thought they were the good one and the other that were already in captivity were the bad ones who deserved captivity, so God sets the record straight, it was really the reverse!
* Jeremiah wrote a letter to the captives to settle down, seek the

peace of the city until the seventy years were expired and then God would return them to the land! Jer. 29

24:8-10 *The interpretation of the bad figs.*

- 1) The bad figs that were so bad and unable to be eaten represented Zedekiah, his princes and the remainder of the people in Jerusalem and those who had fled to Egypt. Vs. 8
 - * This was the final siege in 586 B. C. and notice it would be Yahweh who would give Zedekiah up.
- 2) This was not captivity but punishment for their disobedience of not surrendering to Babylon. Vs. 9
 - a) Yahweh would deliver them up to trouble into all the kingdoms of the earth. Vs. 9a
 - b) For harm, reproach, a byword, a taunt and a curse, in all the places He would drive them. Vs. 9b-e
- 3) The manner of their death is given, it is three-fold. Vs. 10
 - a) Yahweh would send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence among them, till they are consumed from the land that I gave to them and their fathers.

* These are the same things during the Tribulation period, sword, hunger and death. Rev. 6:8

- b) Notice the three-fold “I will” in their punishment, one in each of these verses.

* Quoting. Deut. 28:25, 37