
Day 224 - August 12

Judah After Israel's Fall (725-585 BCE) *Jeremiah's Prophecies under Zedekiah*

Readings: *Jeremiah 23:9-40*

Reflections:

- This passage of Jeremiah 23 further unpacks God's words against the false prophets and priests within Israel. Jeremiah declares that the words God has given him make him like a drunken man, he is overwhelmed with the weight and severity of what God has given him. Many people who have felt convicted with a word from God will express a type of emotional intensity or heaviness that drives them to deliver the message. This can be one of the works of the Spirit to motivate us to be faithful to deliver exactly what God has said.
- What was the condition of the spiritual leadership of Israel? "Both prophet and priest are godless; even in my temple I find their wickedness." "They prophesied by Baal and led my people astray." "They are all like Sodom...like Gomorrah." It doesn't get much worse than that! "They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord." For all their self-comforting prophecies that call people into the worship of Baal and into the sexual prostitution of Baal worship, God's judgment is falling on these false spiritual leaders.
- This passage is yet another good example of how God can speak to his people and relate personally. This entire passage is based on the premise that God does want to speak to us and to have us relate to him out of that personal communication.
- God also declares that he is not just a God that is nearby and not far away. What this means is that God is not regionalized. He is everywhere and therefore you can't hide from having to have some form of relationship with him. Either you are in submission or you are actively or passively in rebellion. It isn't like you can go into the "God's not around" zone and just do what you want. Israel wanted to be the "judge of what is good and evil" rather than living dependently on the tree of life, a living relationship with God. Their attempt to hide from God was in fact just an attempt to live independently of him. Once we acknowledge that God is everywhere all the time, then we must ask the question, "how am I living in relationship to God who is with me?" God is our constant companion in all things. The question is will we live as his constant friend and servant?