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**APOSTOLIC VERSE BY VERSE BIBLE STUDY**

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**“GOD’S PUNISHMENT”**

**Jeremiah 44:1-30**

***Jeremiah 44:1 "The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews which dwell in the land of Egypt, which dwell at Migdol, and at Tahpanhes, and at Noph, and in the country of Pathros, saying,"***

In the last chapters Jeremiah had warned them not to go to Egypt, or the wrath of God would descend upon them. We see they have defied the warnings and went to Egypt anyhow. A popular proverb goes something like this: “Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.” In other words, if you fail to learn from the mistakes of those who failed in the past, be prepared to follow in their footsteps. This seems to be God’s message to the people of Judah who had disobediently run off to Egypt. Through Jeremiah, the Lord reminds the Jews of the idolatry of Judah and the disaster that resulted. It’s unavoidable: Serving false gods and rejecting God is a sure path to ruin. The history of Israel and Judah demonstrates this vividly. The names above are just some of the cities in Egypt where they are living. Egypt is a type of the world. The message for Christians in this is to stay in the city of God. Do not go back into the world after you are saved.

***Jeremiah 44:2 "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Ye have seen all the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, and upon all the cities of Judah; and, behold, this day they [are] a desolation, and no man dwelleth therein,"***

There was no doubt from even the Chaldeans that this was a judgment of God. God had warned them over and over through Jeremiah to stop worshipping false gods, but they continued their evil ways. God finally poured his wrath out upon his people. Really God was not at fault for this. The people brought it on themselves because of their unfaithfulness.

***Jeremiah 44:3 "Because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke me to anger, in that they went to burn incense, [and] to serve other gods, whom they knew not, [neither] they, ye, nor your fathers."***

Jews are the wife of God symbolically. The worship of other gods is like an unfaithful wife. This is spiritual adultery. Just as a jealous husband will not tolerate and unfaithful wife, God will not tolerate unfaithfulness from his chosen. The burning of incense in the temple of God symbolized the rising of the prayers of saints to heaven. You can see why burning incense to false gods would be so bad.

***Jeremiah 44:4 "Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending [them], saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate."***

Jeremiah had not been the only prophet that God had sent to warn them. Jeremiah was one that stayed and prophesied to them for about 40 years. They could not say they were not warned. They did not accept Jeremiah's message, because it was not a message of prosperity. They did not want the truth. They wanted to hear something that would tickle their ears.

***Jeremiah 44:5 "But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense unto other gods."***

***Jeremiah 44:6 "Wherefore my fury and mine anger was poured forth, and was kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; and they are wasted [and] desolate, as at this day."***

They had ears to hear, but they did not hear. They heard words and did not accept Jeremiah's warning to them. They should have learned from the very recent destruction of Jerusalem and Judah. This is another warning to learn from the past. This is why it is so important to read the Old Testament as well as the New. The modern Christian can find signs we need to heed. This Scripture says it well.

***I Corinthians 10:11 "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."***

***Jeremiah 44:7 "Therefore now thus saith the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; Wherefore commit ye [this] great evil against your souls, to cut off from you man and woman, child and suckling, out of Judah, to leave you none to remain;"***

In light of the disastrous results of Judah’s sin, God asked the Jews in Egypt, “Why are you doing such terrible harm to yourselves?”. “Therefore”, connects this verse to the verse before. Because of their great sin, they have willfully committed, God has destroyed Judah. This remnant could have been saved, if they would have obeyed the LORD, but they chose to disobey God. They have sinned to the destruction of their own souls.

***Jeremiah 44:8 "In that ye provoke me unto wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense unto other gods in the land of Egypt, whither ye be gone to dwell, that ye might cut yourselves off, and that ye might be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth?"***

The people refused to heed God’s command to remain in Judah and receive his blessing. These were God's chosen people to bring a blessing upon the entire earth through Abraham.

***Genesis 26:4 "And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;"***

It is such a shame that all nations were to be blessed through them and in verse 8 above we see curses by them. They were God's example on the earth, and they have failed. And not only did they flee to Egypt but incredibly! they angered God by burning incense to other gods there.

***Jeremiah 44:9 "Have ye forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, and the wickedness of the kings of Judah, and the wickedness of their wives, and your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which they have committed in the land of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem?"***

***Jeremiah 44:10 "They are not humbled [even] unto this day, neither have they feared, nor walked in my law, nor in my statutes, that I set before you and before your fathers."***

This is a very sad thing that they had sinned so much, they did not even recognize the fact that they were sinning. This seems that from the least to the greatest were all caught up in sin. Wives, usually set a standard of righteousness for their families. They teach their children righteousness as well. The sin had gotten so bad, even they were involved. They had been a proud, stiff-necked people. They were the opposite of humble.

***James 4:6 "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."***

God was trying to teach them that to be His children was a daily walk. They must remain faithful to Him. Could they not anticipate what would happen? This is called a self-inflicted wound! They had forgotten the evils that they, their ancestors, and their kings had committed. They had learned nothing. They [had] not become humble. When God takes a swat at your pride, it’s meant to lead you to repentance and humility. One of the purposes for Jeremiah’s book was to teach subsequent generations the lessons about faithfulness to God that the Jews of his day failed to learn and the price they paid.

***Jeremiah 44:11 "Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will set my face against you for evil, and to cut off all Judah."***

***Jeremiah 44:12 "And I will take the remnant of Judah, that have set their faces to go into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, and they shall all be consumed, [and] fall in the land of Egypt; they shall [even] be consumed by the sword [and] by the famine: they shall die, from the least even unto the greatest, by the sword and by the famine: and they shall be an execration, [and] an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach."***

***Jeremiah 44:13 "For I will punish them that dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence:"***

God is a holy God. He cannot look upon sin, without burning it up. This is the situation here. Judah had to be destroyed because of their unrepented sin. God had given them another chance when he destroyed the land of Judah and Jerusalem. They did not learn from the experience. They will now face the same curse of God for their sin, as Judah did. It seems so strange, if God is going to totally destroy them, that He would still be telling them what was coming. Even at this point, if they had returned out of Egypt, God would have saved them. God is longsuffering.

***II Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."***

***Jeremiah 44:14 "So that none of the remnant of Judah, which are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall escape or remain, that they should return into the land of Judah, to the which they have a desire to return to dwell there: for none shall return but such as shall escape."***

***Jeremiah 44:15 "Then all the men which knew that their wives had burned incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying,"***

***Jeremiah 44:16 "[As for] the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the LORD, we will not hearken unto thee."***

The lessons of history were lost on the Jews who defiantly fled to Egypt. So, Jeremiah repeated God’s words of judgment against them for their foolishness (42:15-22). In defiance, the people proclaimed, “We are not going to listen to you!”. This is still pleading with them to go back home to where God put them before it is too late. After His wrath falls, it will be too late. This is speaking of total rejection of the Word of the LORD. This is just about the worst sin a person can commit. This is total rejection of God's message. They have openly committed spiritual adultery by burning incense to false gods. The men and the women are guilty.

***Jeremiah 44:17 "But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for [then] had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil."***

This is just choosing to worship a false god, for advantages they think they will receive from them. They chose this evil queen over God. They are not interested in the message Jeremiah brings them from God. They are like the people of our day, who want a feel-good religion. They are doing whatever is pleasing to their own flesh. They are so blind; they do not realize their food came from God. They gave this false goddess credit for providing their food.

***Jeremiah 44:18 "But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all [things], and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine."***

***Jeremiah 44:19 "And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink offerings unto her, without our men?"***

The depths of their depravity became even more clear when they claimed that their problems began when they ceased to burn incense to the queen of heaven. This means they actually credited a pagan goddess with the prosperity and blessings they had enjoyed in Judah! The unspoken assumption was that worshiping the Lord had gotten them nowhere. Serving him instead of their idols, they reasoned, was the reason for their disaster. They couldn’t have been more wrong. They did not realize that the problems they were having now was in punishment for worshipping false gods like the queen of heaven. This queen is like all the idols, she is a nothing. She can do nothing to help them. The worship of this queen would bring nothing but hopelessness. We might take a lesson from this on idolatry. There is only one God. Jesus is the only mediator. To seek help through another, would be sin. This is just explaining that the husbands were in one accord with their wives burning incense to this false queen of heaven. The sad thing in all of this is that this is our society today. The society as a whole has decided to follow the false god of the flesh. The men and the women are caught up in worship that is not holy but pleasing to themselves.

***Jeremiah 44:20 "Then Jeremiah said unto all the people, to the men, and to the women, and to all the people which had given him [that] answer, saying,"***

***Jeremiah 44:21 "The incense that ye burned in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, ye, and your fathers, your kings, and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the LORD remember them, and came it [not] into his mind?"***

***Jeremiah 44:22 "So that the LORD could no longer bear, because of the evil of your doings, [and] because of the abominations which ye have committed; therefore is your land a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day."***

God is not like man. He does not forget anything. They were not unfaithful just once. It was a way of life with them. They had broken the heart of the LORD. He loved them so much, but they did not return His love. An abomination is a revolting sin. The land is desolate because of their sin. The terrible thing about all of this is, you see a picture of our land in this. There is sin and abomination everywhere you look. The very same sins that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed for, are present in our land. How long will it be, before God cannot bear our unfaithfulness?

***Jeremiah 44:23 "Because ye have burned incense, and because ye have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD, nor walked in his law, nor in his statutes, nor in his testimonies; therefore this evil is happened unto you, as at this day."***

***Jeremiah 44:24 "Moreover Jeremiah said unto all the people, and to all the women, Hear the word of the LORD, all Judah that [are] in the land of Egypt:"***

This is an indictment on them, but also on us. God does not bring punishment on anyone unprovoked. They have deliberately continued to walk in their own ways. They have rebelled against God. The women were specifically mentioned here, because they had burned the incense to this false queen of heaven. He reminds them also that they are in Egypt where the LORD had specifically told them not to go.

***Jeremiah 44:25 "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying; Ye and your wives have both spoken with your mouths, and fulfilled with your hand, saying, We will surely perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her: ye will surely accomplish your vows, and surely perform your vows."***

They think nothing of breaking the vows that they and their fathers had made to God. Jeremiah is saying, you surely will perform your vows to this false queen of heaven. It is implied by him that they would receive their punishment from the LORD. This would be their reward for the evil they had done and said. This blasphemy was so incredible that God essentially said, “Enough!” Jeremiah first corrected their twisted view of their history and the disastrous loyalty to pagan gods as the source of their well-being. Then God pulled down the curtain on this crowd. He had endured enough of their arrogance. If lies and destruction was what they demanded, lies and destruction is what they would receive: Go ahead, confirm your vows! Keep your vows! that is, “Have it your way. Worship and plead with the queen of heaven. See where that gets you.”

***Jeremiah 44:26 "Therefore hear ye the word of the LORD, all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt; Behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith the LORD, that my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, The Lord GOD liveth."***

Up until this time, the LORD had not left them, they had left the LORD. He had been still trying to reason with them. Now He is through reasoning with them. There is no greater name than the name of the LORD. The reason that no one will say, "The LORD liveth", is because they will all die.

***Jeremiah 44:27 "Behold, I will watch over them for evil, and not for good: and all the men of Judah that [are] in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by the famine, until there be an end of them."***

There is a danger in worshipping false gods. This has never stopped. It seems people would rather believe a lie, than to believe the One True God. There are always false prophets. Every age has had them. The only way not to be deceived by them, is to know the Bible. Be familiar with its Words. Be led by the Spirit of God and not by your flesh. Try every spirit and see whether it is of God or not. Destruction comes to those who wander away from the Truth.

***Jeremiah 44:28 Yet a small number that escape the sword shall return out of the land of Egypt into the land of Judah, and all the remnant of Judah, that are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall know whose words shall stand, mine, or theirs."***

It seems this remnant is saved to tell future generations of who really is God. Elijah proved this very thing on Mount Carmel when God destroyed the prophets of Baal. It seems people never learn. God is the only Truth. Then God made an even more ominous statement: My name will never again be invoked by anyone of Judah in all the land of Egypt I am watching over them for disaster and not for good until they are finished off.

***Jeremiah 44:29 "And this [shall be] a sign unto you, saith the LORD, that I will punish you in this place, that ye may know that my words shall surely stand against you for evil:"***

It is such a shame that they will not learn without the wrath of God being poured out on them. Just as surely as this sign came upon them and destroyed them, there is a wrath awaiting those today who continue to worship false gods. Repent today and follow the One True God. God is loving, but He is also Just.

***Jeremiah 44:30 "Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will give Pharaoh-hophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies, and into the hand f them that seek his life; as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, his enemy, and that sought his life."***

This Hophra had fled to Egypt himself. He was not in the will of the LORD either. The very same thing that happened to Judah and Jerusalem will happen to Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed Jerusalem and Judah. This evil pharaoh would do no better. History tells us he was strangled to death after the fall of Egypt. God also said he would confirm his word of disaster and death by handing over Pharaoh Hophra, Egypt’s king, to his enemies. The leader to whom the Jews fled for protection, then, wouldn’t even be able to protect himself. This was fulfilled in 570–569 BC when Hophra was deposed in an army coup and eventually assassinated. When these things came to pass, the rebellious Jews would finally see, although it would be too late: [They] will know whose word stands, mine or theirs!”

**QUESTIONS**

1. What had God warned them of in the last lesson?

2. They defied the warnings and went to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ anyhow.

3. Verse 2 is explaining to them that they should learn from what?

4. What was one of the wicked things they had done, mentioned in verse 3?

5. These Jews were the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of God symbolically.

6. Their worship of a false god was like committing \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

7. What did the burning of incense in the temple symbolize?

8. Why did they not accept Jeremiah's message?

9. They had ears to hear but did not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

10. What happened to Jerusalem?

11. This remnant could have been saved, if they had done what?

12. Who in the family, was wicked?

13. They were a proud, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ people.

14. Why did Judah have to be destroyed?

15. He will punish those in Egypt as He did \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

16. Who are the only ones who will return to the land of Judah?

17. What did all the people say to Jeremiah about the Word of God they received from him?

18. They chose this evil \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ over God.

19. Who is the only mediator?

20. How did Jeremiah reply to them?

21. They were not unfaithful just once, it was a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_ \_\_\_\_ with them.
22. Who were they keeping their vows to?

23. How is the only way to not be deceived?

24. What sign did God give them?

25. What happens to the evil Pharaoh-Hophra?