

THRU THE BIBLE SYNTHESIS

"Part XXVI: Jeremiah - Staying Upright In The Minority Though The Errant Majority RETALIATES"

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

While I attended a vocal arts class in a secular junior college, our music professor assigned us the task of picking out a favorite song to sing to the class for a grade. One of the girls in the second row, a Christian from our church, when asked to announce her song, said, "I'd like to sing, 'How Great Thou Art!'"

The professor tersely ridiculed the selection, and the girl cowered, getting all red-faced! She decided to select another song to sing to avoid any more public humiliation from the professor!

Had I been aware of our rights at the time, the Christians in the class could have appealed to the administration as the professor had not previously detailed what types of songs we could **not** sing! Anyway, I felt very bad for the girl and very vulnerable in our land of "freedom."

When we conscientiously stand for what is right, and experience unjust retaliations from the majority or more powerful entity that opposes us, how can we handle it?

(We turn to the "Need" section of the message . . .)

Need: "When I come to a gathering of others of like faith, I'm o.k. But put me in another environment where just living properly brings down all sorts of reactionary pressures, I have a problem! How can I stay upright if others RETALIATE for my doing what I should?!"

- I. **Though Judah had been called of God to CHECK Nimrod's error, she became so SEDUCED by it that God had to judge the nation:**
 - A. Though God created the world and set man up as His deputy, sin deposed him, and Satan became ruler on earth, Gn. 1-5; 2 Cor. 4:4.
 - B. The Lord renewed history through the Noahic flood, Gen. 6:1-9:7.
 - C. Yet, Noah's descendant, Nimrod, began an apostasy opposing God's rule on the earth, Gen. 10:8-10; 11:1-9; Rev. 12:1-3.
 - D. God thus chose Abraham to start a nation to check his sin, Gn. 12:1-3.
 - E. Yet, after many challenges en route, that nation, Israel failed to curb Nimrodian error, itself becoming so **seduced** by it that judgment fell:
 1. Because of Solomon's sins, God divided Israel's kingdom, giving most of the tribes to his servant, Jeroboam, 1 Kings 11:1-13.
 2. But Jeroboam started an idol worship to keep people from turning to Solomon's side. That led later kings to sin, so God sent Jeroboam's nation into Assyrian captivity, 1 K. 12:25-2 K. 17:41!
 - F. Though Israel's fall should have motivated Judah to repent, the nation went ever deeper into sin. Finally, God gave Judah over to captivity.
- II. **God called Jeremiah to be a spiritual judge to critique ALL the sinners in Judah, leading them to DESPISE him for 40 YEARS!**
 - A. God called Jeremiah to predict Judah's fall to Babylon, 1:10a,14-15.
 - B. In addition, he was to prophesy about future **restoration**, to "build and to plant" Israel back in the land following her captivity, Jer. 1:10b.
 - C. In addition, for **forty YEARS** (1:1-3), Jeremiah would be **mistreated** by **all** the people in Judah that he critiqued for God, Jer. 1:17-19.
- III. **Though the human personality cannot normally handle such a difficult task, GOD equipped Jeremiah for this harsh mission:**
 - A. God affirmed to the reserved Jeremiah that he had been formed in his mother's womb and ordained by **God** for this rough ministry, Jer. 1:5.
 - B. Though Jeremiah did not consider himself respectable enough to gain a hearing, **God** would give him the words to speak so that **God's** words with their **own** authority would **make** Jeremiah **effective**, Jer. 1:6-7.
 - C. Though Jeremiah would be resisted by **all** who heard him (1:8a,18b), **God** would be with him to **strengthen** him to stand **against** the crowd and be **rescued from its retaliations** against him, 1:8b,19. Jeremiah was to **trust** God's promises to that end and serve **ANYWAY**, 1:17!
- IV. **Jeremiah performed God's assignment, as tough as it was, and lived to see God's Babylonian judgment fall on Judah, 2:1-52:23.**

V. **The "thread of redemption" in Jeremiah predicts God's NEW Covenant for power for His people to STAY holy like Jeremiah:**

- A. The Mosaic Covenant did not keep Israel uncontaminated from the apostasy of Nimrodian error around her as the nation had a bad heart.
- B. Thus, Jeremiah "built and planted" by predicting the arrival of a NEW covenant to keep Israel holy BY WAY OF a new heart (31:27-28):
 1. The day would come when God would put the Law of God on Israel's heart so she would always know and obey God, 31:33-34. This promise would be fulfilled for Israel in her Messianic Kingdom
 2. God backed up this promise to preserve Israel with the promise to preserve the sun, moon and stars, 31:35ff; B.K.C., O.T., p. 1171.
- C. The blessings of this covenant are now enjoyed through Christ:
 1. When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, he announced His death as the basis of fulfilling this NEW COVENANT, 1 Cor. 11:25.
 2. Thus, we Christians have the Holy Spirit given to us so that the will to obey God is thus securely prodding within US, Phil. 2:12-13.
 3. This help for believers to keep doing God's will is, by application, as secure as God's preservation of the sun, moon & stars!!

Application: Though the majority around us goes apostate, stay powerfully holy by (1) believing on Christ for salvation from sin to be saved by the blood of Christ, participating in the New Covenant, Jn. 3:16 with 1 Cor. 11:25. (2) Then utilize th at covenant's provision of the indwelling Holy Spirit's power via (a) confession of sin (1 Jn. 1:9) and dependence on the Spirit for living power (Gal. 5:16-23) (b) for the proper MOTIVATION to OBEY Scripture (Phil. 2:12-13) as God's servant like Jeremiah h did for 40 years in his tough ministry! (c) When tempted to cave in to errant majority pressure, check to see if there are still stars, a sun and a moon in the sky as God's signal that HE can enable us to STAY godly! (d) Then, armed with this confidence , copy Jeremiah and obey Scripture by GOD'S power!

Lesson: Regardless of the negative reaction of others around him, God equips TODAY'S believer so that, as sure as God preserves the sun, moon and stars, he doesn't HAVE to cave into the pressure, but STAY upright!

Conclusion: (To illustrate the lesson . . .)

Ray Davis, former missionary to Ethiopia, East Africa tells in his book, Fire on the Mountains of the trials of the early Ethiopian Christian community that suffered under Italian occupation during World War II.

On one occasion, an Ethiopian pastor named Toro led his people to violate the edict of the soldiers to rebuild the church that the soldiers had destroyed. He felt he needed to obey God rather than man, and this infuriated the Italian soldiers who wanted the Africans to renounce the beliefs the missionaries had taught them and adopt the beliefs of their priests. Accordingly, the soldiers took Toro and other church leaders, stripped them of their clothes, threw them face down in mud and beat them with more than a hundred lashes of hippo hide whip.

They were thrown into the jail and taunted by the soldiers. "Now, where is the god that can deliver you our of our hands? You will never get out of this prison alive."

Toro was barely strong enough to speak, but he responded, "My God answers prayer -- He is able to deliver me -- if He chooses -- and if not, He has promised to take me to heaven to be with Him there."

Sometime later, while the Christians in the prison were praying together, a powerful storm ripped off the prison roof and dissolved the mud walls. Terrified, the jailers considered the storm divine judgment, and pleaded with Toro that if he got God to withdraw the storm's fury, he would be released! When the storm subsided, the Christians were released, confidently rejoicing in God's powerful provision for them! (p. 135-136)

We have a great, powerful God who can equip us to stand for what is right no matter what we face from powerful human pressure to the contrary! Like Toro in Ethiopia in World War II, our part is simply to take our cue from the Creator's sustaining a sun, moon and stars that we can handle all we face, and FACE it in HIS power!