

**JEREMIAH: SHINING AS SPIRITUAL TWILIGHT FALLS**  
**"Part VIII: Discerning Truly God-Led Leadership"**  
**(Jeremiah 40-44)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . . )

(1) In my file is just one of a number of the following reports mailed out to me in 1999 by a Christian party from our area, attempting to get me to stir you up as a congregation in preparation for the Y2K "crisis" that was supposed to hit us hard on January 1, 2000:

(a) In the group's *final, November/December 1999* newsletter, the Millennium Bug Update, p. 2, the local Christian party wrote: "Countless Y2K remediation project deadlines have been missed. Every month of delay has meant one less month for thorough testing. This is the first time the data processing industry has faced an immovable deadline. Although most organizations are proclaiming that all is well, it seems that many systems will be put into production in January without adequate testing."

(b) On pages 3-4, the author lists some last-minute suggestions by Michael S. Hyatt, author of The Millennium Bug as follows: "[a] Secure a source of clean water . . . [b] Stockpile basic food . . . [c] develop a way to stay warm . . . [d] put back some extra cash . . . [e] stockpile medications . . . [f] develop a waste disposal strategy . . . [g] improve your family's security."

(2) Well, following the Y2K event, last Sunday, January 2, 2000, I talked with a computer-skilled Christian who shared his disappointment with nationally known Christian leaders who led the charge on Y2K warnings. Himself an expert and knowing what it takes to correct the Y2K problem, this believer told me, "I wish these leaders would have stayed within their area of expertise rather than dilute their credibility by talking about Y2K issues they really don't understand!"

**Well, not only with the Y2K issue, but often on OTHER matters, WHAT is a believer to do when he notices cracks in the armor of credibility of Christian leaders? What does he do to identify IF there are CREDIBLE CHRISTIAN leaders around, and HOW does he discern WHO they are IF they even EXIST?**

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

***Need: "Besides the challenge of identifying credible SECULAR leaders, telling IF there are credible CHRISTIAN leaders, and identifying WHO they are can be equally hard! ARE there leaders today who are truly led of God? IF so, HOW do we identify them?!"***

- I. **The Jews who were scattered after Babylon's invasion came to DISTRUST the leadership of their SECULAR leader, Gedaliah:**
  - A. Babylon set up Gedaliah as its puppet ruler in Judea, Jeremiah 40:5.
  - B. In his rule, Gedaliah made a very tragic, costly decision: (40:5-41:16)
    1. A threat to Gedaliah's leadership was noted by some of the Hebrew commanders who survived Babylon's invasion: they felt Ishmael of the royal line would assassinate Gedaliah, Jeremiah 40:13-14; 41:1.
    2. Without taking precautions, Gedaliah refused to believe the report, and even welcomed Ishmael to a friendly feast, Jer. 40:16-41:1.
    3. Ishmael did as the commanders felt he would, taking advantage of the meal's invitation to kill Gedaliah, Jeremiah 41:2.
    4. The commanders then attacked Ishmael's force, causing him to flee, and the remnant gathered under the commanders' care, 41:11-16.
- II. **The people became so DISILLUSIONED by Gedaliah's reign that they DISTRUSTED even GOD'S PROPHET, Jeremiah!**
  - A. The **commanders** felt it was in their best interests to **flee** into *Egypt* to avoid a Babylon retaliation for Gedaliah's assassination, Jer. 41:17-18.
  - B. **They then craftily tried to get Jeremiah to CONDONE this plan:**
    1. The people asked Jeremiah what God wanted them to do, 42:1-4.
    2. In trying to get Jeremiah to say what they wanted, the people pretended to announce judgment on **themselves** if they did not heed him, 42:5-6; cf. Harry A. Ironside, Jeremiah, p. 235.
  - C. Obviously, these commanders and their followers did not trust in God's prophet, Jeremiah, but in their *own* judgment!
- III. **Well, this distrust of God's prophet was SELF-DESTRUCTIVE!**
  - A. God said via Jeremiah that the people were to **stay** in **Judea**, 42:7-12.
  - B. He revealed through this prophet that if the people entered Egypt, the feared invasion would follow them there in **judgment**, Jer. 42:13-18.
  - C. Further, God revealed through Jeremiah that He knew of the group's intent to enter Egypt, and that He would judge them for it, 42:19-22.
  - D. **Instead of submitting to God's word through Jeremiah, the listeners chose to DISTRUST Jeremiah's CREDIBILITY, complaining Jeremiah's SCRIBE, Baruch had manipulated Jeremiah to give his message of their staying in Judea, Jer. 43:1-4.**
  - E. Consequently, the commanders and the people left for Egypt, forcibly taking Jeremiah and Baruch along with them, Jeremiah 43:5-7.

- F. Thus, after the group left for Egypt, God's word revealed through Jeremiah that Babylon would invade them **THERE**, Jer. 43:8-13!
- IV. Tragically, **THOUGH** they had **CLEAR EVIDENCE** Jeremiah was **LED** by **GOD**, the Remnant's **DISTANCING** from God clouded their **JUDGMENT** to their **OWN DOWNFALL**:
- A. Ironside (Ibid., p. 235-236) notes a **gulf** existed between the people and God, for they called God **Jeremiah's Lord**, *not* their own, 42:2-5.
  - B. This **alienation** from God caused the Remnant to **overlook** the following signs that Jeremiah was **credible** and **had God's** message:
    1. **First**, though **alone** in predicting Babylon would invade, Jeremiah's word **had come true**, so he **was God's prophet** as Dt. 18:20ff said!
    2. **Second**, Jeremiah's call not to enter Egypt **fit Scripture's credible** warning in Deuteronomy 17:16 against seeking refuge in that land.
    3. **Third**, Jeremiah had **clung** to his view about Babylon's invasion **in spite of** being **persecuted** over **40 years** for it (Jer. 37:16-17). His willingness to **pay** that **steep** price to **keep** his view along with the fact that it **had come true** meant he had **integrity** as **God's prophet**!

**Application:** *To discern godly leaders today, (1) WE must FIRST address our OWN alienation from God by (a) believing on Christ as Savior. We will thus receive the discerning Holy Spirit, John 3:16; Rom. 8:9b; 1 Cor. 2:9-10, 14-15. (b) Then, we adjust to the Spirit's leading through ((a)) confessing any sin we do (1 Jn. 1:9) and ((b)) RELYING on His proddings to heed God's Word, Gal. 5:16-23; 1 Jn. 2:2-6. (2) We will THEN be able to (a) evaluate a leader's past to see if it matches what Scripture identifies as a credible party, (b) check if his views properly match what the BIBLE teaches and (c) see if he has been willing to suffer long and hard for his stands as a sign of his integrity. (3) Scripture also tells us Jesus is with the Church to the rapture (Mtt. 28:20), and that He uses godly leaders to equip the Church in truth (Eph. 4:11-16), so there HAVE to be godly leaders NOW! We only need to KNOW and FOLLOW GOD to DISCERN who they ARE!*

**Lesson:** *The remnant's distancing from GOD left them so blind to reality that WHEN they were burned by an ungodly leader's error, they failed to see the signs that Jeremiah was God's true leader to their own harm!*

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

If anything comes out in print by the author, Dr. Marchant King, I read it carefully and with full confidence that the **author** wrote what he was **sure** was **true**. I do this even **though I NEVER MET the man**, and **though** he is now **deceased**. Here is why:

Miss Pamela Reeve, author of her famous "Faith Is . . ." book once served as a dorm mother at the Multnomah School of the Bible where I attended in the late 1960s. She lived an exemplary life of God's grace before us students, so what she said to us carried great weight with us. Well, before coming to Multnomah, she worked in a Bible College with Dr. and Mrs. Marchant King, and Miss Reeve wrote in a periodical of events involving Dr. King at that institution.

While teaching there, Dr. King came to hold to a view that differed from the school administration's position. Dr. King conscientiously refused to recant, and so lost his teaching job.

However, the **way** Dr. King **reacted** to his dismissal **especially** impressed Pamela Reeve, and impressed me by way of her credible report in that article. Instead of becoming defensive, bitter, and divisive, Dr. King reportedly avoided creating division among the students over the issue, but urged his admiring students to follow the Lord in their lives. Then he quietly left the school and job he loved.

**Dr. Marchant King was a man of INTEGRITY regarding his beliefs, and a man of TRUE CHRISTIAN LOVE in regards to his relationships -- he revealed it in the WAY he LOST his JOB!**

**PARTLY** due to this **TESTIMONY** about him, Dr. King's article on the inadequacy of the Textus Receptus behind the King James Version as written up in Dallas Seminary's **Bibliotheca Sacra** (January-March, 1973, p. 35ff) is what I adopt as my own view on the King James Version. I do so **EVEN THOUGH** Dr. King's view **DIFFERS** from what the respected **DALLAS SEMINARY** Professor, **ZANE HODGES**, a "King-James-only" advocate promotes! As did Dr. King, I believe the exegete must exam each textual variant by using the scholastic data *eclectically*.

**If we walk in fellowship with God, He provides clear signals to reveal WHO is God's CREDIBLE, GODLY leader(s) to follow! He did it in Jeremiah's day, and He does it today!**