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5 MINUTE LESSONS ON THE KINGDOM OF GOD

# The Warnings of the Prophet!

Many times when I think of false prophets I think of people who come to deceive and turn people away from the Lord (Matthew 24:11; 2 Peter 2:1). But have you ever thought of a false prophet proclaiming peace? That's exactly what was taking place in the days of the prophet Jeremiah.

The people of Israel had turned away from the Lord and the prophet Jeremiah was sent to warn the people to repent and turn from their sin to avoid the judgment and destruction that was to come (Jeremiah 36:3 NLT). It was a hard message for the people to hear, and instead of heeding the warnings they rejected them and found it more comforting to listen to the words of false prophets that proclaimed the Lord's peace and protection over their lives (Jeremiah 23:16-17, 21-22 NLT).

*<sup>16</sup>This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies says to his people:*

*'Do not listen to these prophets when they prophesy to you, filling you with futile hopes.*

*They are making up everything they say.*

*They do not speak for the Lord!*

*<sup>17</sup>They keep saying to those who despise my word,*

*"Don't worry! The Lord says you will have peace!"*

*And to those who stubbornly follow their own desires, they say, "No harm will come your way!"*

*<sup>21</sup>I have not sent these prophets,*

*yet they run around claiming to speak for me.*

*I have given them no message,*

*yet they go on prophesying.*

*<sup>22</sup>If they had stood before me and listened to me,*

*they would have spoken my words,*

*and they would have turned my people*

*from their evil ways and deeds.'" (See Acts 26:18; Luke 24:47)*

*(Jeremiah 23:16-17, 21-22 NLT)*

In the book of Acts we see this same call to repentance and a turning from darkness to light.

*“<sup>17</sup>...I am sending you to them <sup>18</sup>to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.” (Acts 26:17-18 NIV)*

But the people in the time of Jeremiah stubbornly followed their own desires and the false prophets of the day encouraged their behavior by saying, “No harm will come your way!” (Jeremiah 23:17 NLT).

They also invoked the name of the Lord to give authority to their false prophecies (Jeremiah 23:35-36 NLT).

*“<sup>35</sup>You should keep asking each other, ‘What is the Lord’s answer?’ or ‘What is the Lord saying?’ <sup>36</sup>But stop using this phrase, ‘prophecy from the Lord.’ For people are using it to give authority to their own ideas, turning upside down the words of our God, the living God, the Lord of Heaven’s Armies.” (Jeremiah 23:35-36 NLT)*

*“<sup>9</sup>Do not listen to your false prophets, fortune-tellers, interpreters of dreams, mediums, and sorcerers who say, “The king of Babylon will not conquer you.” <sup>10</sup>They are all liars, and their lies will lead to your being driven out of your land...” (Jeremiah 27:9-10 NLT)*

God’s message for the people was one of repentance, to turn from their own evil ways and deeds (Jeremiah 23:22 NLT).

*“<sup>22</sup>If they had stood before me and listened to me, they would have spoken my words, and they would have turned my people from their evil ways and deeds.” (Jeremiah 23:22 NLT)*

So the Lord sent Jeremiah to warn the people and proclaim His message.

*“...the Lord gave this message to Jeremiah: <sup>2</sup>Get a scroll, and write down all my messages...write down every message, right up to the present time. <sup>3</sup>Perhaps the people of Judah will repent... Then I will be able to forgive their sins and wrongdoings.” (Jeremiah 36:1-3 NLT)*

*“<sup>6</sup>...go to the Temple... and read the messages from the Lord that I have had you write on this scroll. Read them so the people who are there from all over Judah will hear them. <sup>7</sup>Perhaps even yet they will turn from their evil ways and ask the Lord’s forgiveness before it is too late’...” (Jeremiah 36:6-7 NLT)*

*“<sup>10</sup>Baruch read Jeremiah’s words on the scroll to all the people...” (Jeremiah 36:10 NLT)*

After the people at the Temple heard the scroll, the palace administrative officials also asked to hear the scroll.

*“<sup>15</sup>Sit down and read the scroll to us,’ the officials said, and Baruch did as they requested.*

*<sup>16</sup>When they heard all the messages, they looked at one another in alarm. ‘We must tell the king what we have heard,’...” (Jeremiah 36:15-16 NLT)*

*“<sup>21</sup>The king sent Jehudi to get the scroll. Jehudi brought it... and read it to the king as all his officials stood by. <sup>22</sup>It was late autumn, and the king was in a winterized part of the palace, sitting in front of a fire to keep warm. <sup>23</sup>Each time Jehudi finished reading three or four columns, the king took a knife and cut off that section of the scroll. He then threw it into the fire, section by section, until the whole scroll was burned up. <sup>24</sup>Neither the king nor his attendants showed any signs of fear or repentance at what they heard. <sup>25</sup>Even when... begged... not to burn the scroll, he wouldn’t listen.” (Jeremiah 36:21-25 NLT)*

Unfortunately the king and the people repeatedly rejected warnings from the Lord and it ultimately resulted in their ruin. The words of Jeremiah may have been hard to hear and not as comforting as a promise of peace, but they were spoken for their benefit. How different would the story have been if they had listened and repented?

Submitting to the Kingdom of God means submitting to God’s reign and rule, turning from our own ways and turning to Him (Acts 26:18).

We would be wise to listen to the words of Scripture. Not just the ones that are comforting and make us feel good, but all of the admonitions of Scripture. For they were written for our benefit. How we respond to God’s Word matters. When we come across a portion of scripture that is hard to hear or understand will we meditate on it searching for its meaning, or callously ignore it like the king that threw it in the fire?

*“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.<sup>17</sup> God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NLT)*

## Questions

**1** It doesn’t matter what you do. God loves you and will always give you peace. Repentance doesn’t matter.

True or False

- 2 The rich man in Luke 16 asked for someone to come from the dead to witness to his brothers so they would repent and not come to this place of torment. What was the rich man told?
- 3 Is it true that those who God loves He rebukes and corrects?
- 4 Everyone seems to say “The Lord told me this” and “The Lord told me that”. Should we be more careful when speaking in the Lord’s name?
- 5 Is it true that some people cut some of the Word of God out by ignoring it even as the king cut it from his scroll?
- 6 What if a sign or wonder did happen, but it led you to a false god?

### **We want to hear from you!**

We would love to hear your feedback on these lessons and how you use them in your own study or in discipling others. If you have any thoughts, stories, testimonies, comments, or questions we would love to hear them!

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## Answer Key

- 1** It doesn't matter what you do. God loves you and will always give you peace. Repentance doesn't matter.

**False**

***“<sup>16</sup>This is what the Lord of Heaven’s Armies says to his people:  
‘Do not listen to these prophets when they prophesy to you,  
filling you with futile hopes.***

***They are making up everything they say.***

***They do not speak for the Lord!***

***<sup>17</sup>They keep saying to those who despise my word,***

***“Don’t worry! The Lord says you will have peace!”***

***And to those who stubbornly follow their own desires,  
they say, “No harm will come your way!”***

***<sup>21</sup>I have not sent these prophets,***

***yet they run around claiming to speak for me.***

***I have given them no message,***

***yet they go on prophesying.***

***<sup>22</sup>If they had stood before me and listened to me,***

***they would have spoken my words,***

***and they would have turned my people***

***from their evil ways and deeds.”*** (Jeremiah 23:16-17, 21-22 NLT)

***“<sup>17</sup>...I am sending you to them <sup>18</sup>to open their eyes and turn them from  
darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may  
receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified  
by faith in me.”*** (Acts 26:17-18 NIV)

***“and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his  
name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”*** (Luke 24:47 NIV)

- 2** The rich man in Luke 16 asked for someone to come from the dead to witness to his brothers so they would repent and not come to this place of torment. What was the rich man told?

***“He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets,  
they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”***  
(Luke 16:31 NIV)

**3** Is it true that those whom God loves He rebukes and corrects?

***“Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent.”***  
(Revelation 3:19 NIV)

**4** Everyone seems to say “The Lord told me this” and “The Lord told me that”. Should we be more careful when speaking in the Lord’s name?

***“<sup>35</sup>You should keep asking each other, ‘What is the Lord’s answer?’ or ‘What is the Lord saying?’ <sup>36</sup>But stop using this phrase, ‘prophecy from the Lord.’ For people are using it to give authority to their own ideas, turning upside down the words of our God, the living God, the Lord of Heaven’s Armies.”*** (Jeremiah 23:35-36 NLT)

**5** Is it true that some people cut some of the Word of God out by ignoring it even as the king cut it from his scroll?

***“Jesus told him ‘No! The Scriptures say, “People need more than bread for their life; they must feed on every word of God.””*** (Matthew 4:4 NLT)

***“Yes, he humbled you by letting you go hungry and then feeding you with manna, a food previously unknown to you and your ancestors. He did it to teach you that people need more than bread for their life; real life comes from feeding on every word of the Lord.”***  
(Deuteronomy 8:3 NLT)

***“All Scripture (even the Old Testament) is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.”*** (2 Timothy 3:16 NLT)

**6** What if a sign or wonder did happen, but it led you to a false god?

***“Suppose there are prophets among you or those who dream dreams about the future, and they promise you signs or miracles, <sup>2</sup>and the predicted signs or miracles occur. If they then say, ‘Come, let us worship other gods’—gods you have not known before— <sup>3</sup>do not listen to them. The Lord your God is testing you to see if you truly love him with all your heart and soul. <sup>4</sup>Serve only the Lord your God and fear him alone. Obey his commands, listen to his voice, and cling to him.”***  
(Deuteronomy 13:1-4 NLT)