

Whom Do We Fear?

Aug 24, 2021

There was a bad situation in Jeremiah chapter 42 (actually, the whole book, but this particular story starts in chapter 40 – read it for background), which had put the remnant of Judah in danger, in danger of death, due to the very likely to occur- the anger of the king of Babylon. So, the remnant people of Judah went to Jeremiah the prophet to get a word from the Lord, so they would have help from God and know what to do. They were genuine initially with their request, and pledged that if Jeremiah did inquire of the Lord on their behalf, they would obey whatever God told them to do.

But sadly, while Jeremiah was inquiring of the Lord, the people began to plot to do what they wanted, and did not wait for the word from the Lord, nor keep their heart dedicated to God in order to do whatever the Lord told them (v.20). While he was inquiring of the Lord, they planned to go to Egypt.

Jeremiah 42

1 Then all the captains of the forces, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiah, and all the people from the least even unto the greatest, came near,

2 And said unto Jeremiah the prophet, Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the Lord thy God, even for all this remnant; (for we are left but a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us:)

3 That the Lord thy God may shew us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do.

4 Then Jeremiah the prophet said unto them, I have heard you; behold, I will pray unto the Lord your God according to your words; and it shall come to pass, that whatsoever thing the Lord shall answer you, I will declare it unto you; I will keep nothing back from you.

5 Then they said to Jeremiah, The Lord be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all things for the which the Lord thy God shall send thee to us.

6 Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God, to whom we send thee; that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the Lord our God.

7 ¶And it came to pass after ten days, that the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah.

8 Then called he Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces which were with him, and all the people from the least even to the greatest,

9 And said unto them, Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, unto whom ye sent me to present your supplication before Him;

10 If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull you down, and I will plant you, and not pluck you up: for I repent me of the evil that I have done unto you.

11 Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are afraid; be not afraid of him, saith the Lord: for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand.

12 And I will shew mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land.

13 ¶But if ye say, We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the Lord your God,

14 Saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell:

15 And now therefore hear the word of the Lord, ye remnant of Judah; Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; If ye wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt, and go to sojourn there;

16 Then it shall come to pass, that the sword, which ye feared, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine, whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there ye shall die.

17 So shall it be with all the men that set their faces to go into Egypt to sojourn there; they shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: and none of them shall remain or escape from the evil that I will bring upon them.

18 For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; As mine anger and my fury hath been poured forth upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem; so shall my fury be poured forth upon you, when ye shall enter into Egypt: and ye shall be an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach; and ye shall see this place no more.

19 ¶The Lord hath said concerning you, O ye remnant of Judah; Go ye not into Egypt: know certainly that I have admonished you this day.

20 For ye dissembled in your hearts, when ye sent me unto the Lord your God, saying, Pray for us unto the Lord our God; and according unto all that the Lord our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do it.

21 And now I have this day declared it to you; but ye have not obeyed the voice of the Lord your God, nor any thing for the which he hath sent me unto you.

22 Now therefore know certainly that ye shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, in the place whither ye desire to go and to sojourn.

The fear of the king of Babylon was real, and their lives were genuinely at risk. But they did not consider that the king of Babylon was, like everything else, is under the direct control of God. There is a tendency in human beings to follow their fears. But, do we fear God, or man more? Doesn't God deserve our fear, our awe, our highest respect and honor?

These folks did not fear God, they feared other things. It was a symptom of many people's drift from their God during these wicked times of sin in the land of Judah- and these were God's people. Like the time of Sodom & Gomorrah, where wickedness was running rampant, so was the time of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. These people had become darkened in their minds and in their understanding from looking to man and idols, instead of God.

“The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.”
Proverbs 29:25

When we fear other things, we are not fearing God. But when we fear God, we don't have a fear of other things. And, fear is worship, it is giving fear and honor to something or someone-- and for a Christian, that must be for God alone. Worship (in this case, fear) of things that are not God alone, is worship of an idol, it is idolatry.

“And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them.” Psalms 106:36

“Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. 7 Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped. 8 Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.” Psalms 124:6-8

We must commit our heart to the Lord, and fear and honor only Him, and nothing else. Then, when fearful times come, our reflexive action will be to look to the Lord, and to wait for Him, knowing He will not abandon us- not ever. If we do not do this, if we do not trust the Lord, the very things we fear will come upon us, at the Lord's hand. The very thing we have given honor to will be our idol of destruction to us. Trust in the Lord always. “I will never leave you nor forsake you”.

The saddest thing about these folks is that they did not have a heart to follow the Lord- they had wayward hearts, self-directed hearts instead of obedient, yielded, God-directed hearts. The fear and honor of things other than God (a brutal Government in their case), brought a snare upon their hearts, so that when the fearful moment came, they did not follow the Lord their God, but rather trusted their own hearts, and rebelled against God's admonition to them. They perished in Egypt instead of trusting God and prospering in Judah as a remnant. The absolute fact that God is sovereign over all things, was forgotten by them, and they feared things, people, and circumstances, instead of trusting God in all things.

Isaiah 50

1 Thus saith the Lord, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.

2 Why for, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer? Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because there is no water, and dieth for thirst.

3 I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering.

4 The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.

5 ¶The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.

6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

7 ¶For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.

8 He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me.

9 Behold, the Lord God will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.

10 ¶Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.

11 Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of Mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.

When there is darkness, and we can't see to walk, and we don't know where to go ...

Know... that God is Lord, even of the darkness. "I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering"

Know... that you are not to light your own fire. Do not light your own way. Do not trust in your own understanding. Do not have a self-directed heart, but instead trust God, trust Him knowing that He is Lord, even over the darkness. Trust in the Lord always, at all times. Wait for Him. Wait on the Lord, He will come, at just the right time. We must take God's advice:

"Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." (v.10)

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke 21:34-26

"Stand before" is not a position and place, it means to 'serve the Lord', 'to stand before Him in service'. (Jer 15:19, 35:19, 49:19)

We Christians are not to be swayed along with the rest of the world, with their fears and their swaying and moving of the people, but we are to get our marching orders from Jesus Christ, and we are to fear and worship only Him.

As the moon circles the Earth and its gravitational drag pulls the oceans of the world under its force, so also the world is swayed by the wicked one, from one end of the earth around to the other side. The world moves to the pull of Satan, but Christians do not move under that pull, but only by the direction of the Holy Spirit.

"We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *under the sway of* the wicked one."
1 John 5:19 NKJV

"And when He putteth forth his own sheep, He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." John 10:4-5

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."
John 10:27-28

We must stand in firmness and surety of The Rock, Jesus Christ. Faith in Him alone. We must not be swayed with the waves that pull on the world. We must grow and mature in our faith in Jesus Christ.

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" Ephesians 4:13-15

"But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. 8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." James 1:4-8

When we give place to the Devil by entertaining his temptation to fear, or doubt, or not believe upon Jesus and His Word, we become unstable, like waves of the sea. But if we hold firm to the

Word that we have received from the Lord, and if we keep our trust in Jesus, not giving place to the enemy, we will be rock-solid.

There is instability in this world. There is stability in Christ Jesus- this same Jesus Christ who upholds the whole of creation by His Word.

“[God] Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; 3 Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” Heb 1:2-3

Now, re-read this paper once more, so the dullness of mind and the dullness of faith, will pass away.