

Message #26

Jeremiah 22:1-30

I do not think that political leaders have a clue as to how much God will hold them accountable for the way they governed in regard to Him and His word. God was the One who sovereignly permitted one to become a leader and what leaders need to realize is **that those leaders who promote things that God said were abominable are heading to a major court appearance before Him.**

There will be serious accountability in what they will see happen to their nation, but the greatest accountability will come when they are dead. The moment they die they will face God and will give a serious account of what they did with the power they had.

It was always the intention of God that He lead His people according to His word. It was never His intention for some politician to lead His people in the way he thought things ought to go. **He wanted a man of God who knew the word of God to lead the people of God.**

For 80 years Moses and Joshua led Israel according to the word of God. For about the next 120 years Israel was ruled by various judges in accordance with the word of God. Then God used prophets. But that was not good enough for Israel. She wanted a King. She wanted to be led by a political leader who would tax them and frankly lead them away from God.

One political leader after another surfaced who led people away from God and His word. It was the rare leader who directed the people to turn from evil and worship the true God of the Bible. Most did not and, as a result, those leaders led their constituency right into the chastising judgment of God. But God has a serious message for political leaders:

GOD HOLDS THE POLITICAL LEADERS ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE DIRECTION OF THE NATION THAT LED TO HIS DESTRUCTIVE JUDGMENTS.

That point is clearly seen in Jeremiah 22. Jeremiah is specifically ordered by God to go down to the King's house and proclaim this message to him. He was to aim this message straight at the King. This is not the kind of message that any President, Prime Minister or King would want to hear. But these messages were aimed straight at political leaders.

MESSAGE #1 – God's message to King Zedekiah. **22:1-9** (II Chronicles 36:11-14)

In **verses 1-2**, God wants Jeremiah to go to the King of Judah and demand that he listen to the word of God. **The mistake that most politicians make is that they do not listen to the sacred word of God; they listen to the voice of the godless public.**

God told Jeremiah to remind the King that he sits on David's throne, both the King, his servants and the people in Jerusalem. It wasn't his throne, it was David's throne.

Now the messages that God wanted communicated to Zedekiah was that he had the responsibility as a leader to do what was just and right. He was to govern in a way that was consistent with the word and will of God. There are seven leadership responsibilities mentioned here. The first three are things a leader should do and the last four are things a leader should not do:

Leadership Responsibility #1 - Do justice (mishpat). **22:3a**

The word refers to making decisions and judgments that are right and just according to the law. This word carries somewhat of a forensic sense in that it rewards and punishes (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, pp. 519-520).

Leadership Responsibility #2 - Do righteousness (tsedeq). **22:3b**

The word refers to actually doing what is right and righteous in accordance to God's standards (*Ibid.*, pp. 702-703) If a political leader was really serious about this, he would surround himself with righteous, pious men who know the word of God. Almost all political leaders surround themselves with religious people; but the one who wants the blessings of God will surround himself with those who actually understand the Scriptures, rightly divided.

Leadership Responsibility #3 - Deliver those who have been robbed of power by oppressors. **22:3c**

There are different words used for oppressor in Hebrew. The one here (ashaq) is one that refers to someone who fraudulently and violently uses his power and authority to defraud and hurt the people (*Ibid.*, p. 660). A political leader has the responsibility to defend and deliver the people from these kinds of people.

Leadership Responsibility #4 - Do not mistreat or do anything violent to a stranger. **22:3d**

The word "mistreat" is one that means to do something violent and oppressive to a stranger, someone you don't know (*Ibid.*, p. 352). The word "violent" refers to actually hurting and injuring someone by violence (*Ibid.*, p. 288). Political leaders who want the blessings of God will not permit violent actions to be taken against strangers. A stranger is someone you don't even know.

Leadership Responsibility #5 - Do not mistreat or do anything violent to the orphan. **22:3e**

God pays very close attention to how little children are treated. He especially monitors those who do not have parents.

Leadership Responsibility #6 - Do not mistreat or do anything violent to a widow. **22:3f**

Political leaders have a responsibility to protect widows and see that they are treated respectfully. Those who scam a widow or mistreat or do something violent need to be punished.

Leadership Responsibility #7 - Do not shed innocent blood. **22:3g**

If a political leader sanctions the shedding of innocent blood, he is sentencing himself or herself to a serious eternal judgment of God. Abortion is the shedding of innocent blood. When Jeremiah asks God why God didn't kill him "before birth" (Jer. 20:17), clearly a baby in a mother is a real person and if you end its life you kill it. Political leaders have a responsibility to protect this from happening. They should never support it or fund it.

God says in **verse 4**, if you political leaders will do these things, then the future will be bright. God says I will bless the leader and prosper the leader and he and the people will enjoy a blessed life.

But **verse 5** says if you don't do these things you will become My own personal target for destruction. If the kings obeyed God, the Davidic dynasty would continue. **Verse 5** warns that if the kings do not obey God, the dynasty would be destroyed. In other words, if you do not obey God's word, you will be destroyed, including your family and house.

Jeremiah said God has sworn by Himself that this is the way it will be. There is no more solemn oath than one in which God swears by Himself.

In **verse 6**, Jeremiah refers to Gilead and Lebanon that were known for their beautiful forests. The cedars of Lebanon were valuable trees and wood used for construction. They had been used in David's house (II Sam.7:2, 7) and Solomon's palace (I Kings 7:2-5; 10:17, 21). God warns that if His kings do not obey His word, no matter how strong it had been built, it would come down.

He would cause enemies to cut down their trees and burn down their cities (**verse 7**).

God said He would cause nations to look at what He had done to His own people and they would ask why did God let that happen to His own people? The answer is because they forsook their relationship with God and served other gods (**verses 8-9**). **The political leaders would not obey God so God brought them to destruction.**

It is not beyond the realm of possibilities that God can do this to the United States. He can use an arsenal of things to bring this nation to becoming a horror story. We have seen cities burning down and riots and destruction. We are experiencing a disease that to this point has killed over 400,000 people. People all over the world are looking at this country and asking "What has gone wrong?" "Why is this happening?" The answer is God-mocking political leaders. This nation is not being run by leaders who love God's word and seek to obey it; it is being run by leaders who care more about themselves and the views of the political party and people than they do God.

MESSAGE #2 – God’s message to King Jehoahaz (Shallum). **22:10-12** (II Chronicles 36:2-3)

God says don’t weep for the dead because the dead are gone and are experiencing eternity. They are out of the political mess and nightmare.

Now God had a message for Josiah’s son. The message was he would be taken captive because of the rebellion and he would never return again to this land and place. He would die in a foreign land and never again see the blessings of God in the land.

The fate of dead Josiah was far better than the life and fate of his son Jehoahaz.

It is possible, as a political leader, to so anger God as the people of God that He takes away all of His blessings for the rest of your life and never lets you see His blessings ever again.

MESSAGE #3 – God’s message to King Jehoiakim (Eliakim). **22:13-23** (II Chronicles 36:4-8)

Jehoiakim was made king by Neco, who changed his name from Eliakim (II Kings 23:34, 36-37; 24:1-6; II Chron. 36:4-8).

Jehoiakim will be Jeremiah’s worst enemy. He is a godless and cruel political ruler who hates God and hates the word of God. He hates anyone who teaches the truth of God.

Now the message that God gives to Jehoiakim does not lend itself to him liking Jeremiah. In fact, it is a scathing message designed to warn him that he needs to be right with God.

Message #1 - Woe to him who builds his house without a commitment to righteousness. **22:13a**

Woe judgments are the worst of God’s judgments and Jeremiah aims woe judgments straight at this king. This king was never interested in doing what was right before God.

Message #2 - Woe to him who builds his house without a commitment to justice. **22:13b**

This king was never interested in making decisions that were judicially right in the sight of God.

Message #3 - Woe to him who has people work for him but does not pay them. **22:13c-14**

This king cheated people out of money. He did not pay the people he employed. He builds himself a roomy house with spacious upper rooms and has it paneled with cedar and painted, and he did not pay those doing the work. He thought he was building some monument to himself, when he was building judgment..

Message #4 - Your father was a blessed king who had everything plus he had spirituality.
22:15-16

Life was good for him. He was a just man and righteous man. He was concerned about the afflicted and needy. He knew Me and I blessed him. All was well with him and for him.

Message #5 - You are a vile politician who is only interested in yourself. **22:17**

Your eyes and heart are only on yourself. You are focused on dishonest gain. You will shed innocent blood and you will oppress people and extort money from people.

Message #6 - No one will mourn or lament when you are gone. **22:18**

God would see to it that a great judgment would come on Jehoiakim. He tells him what will happen when he is dead and gone. Two times it is stated no one will mourn over him.

Message #7 - You will be buried with a donkey's burial, dragged off and thrown outside the city of Jerusalem. **22:19**

Now some have claimed that since we don't have any record of this happening to Jehoiakim, it really didn't happen. The only statement we have is in II Kings 24:6 that says Jehoakim "slept with his fathers." Critics say that this describes a peaceful death. But we do not agree. The inspired prediction we have here is very graphic.

Some have suggested that Jehoiakim was peacefully buried but Nebuchadnezzar dug up the body and dragged it outside of Jerusalem, thus fulfilling this very prophecy.

In **verses 20-23**, Jeremiah calls the people all over the land to obey the word of God. Jeremiah calls to the people to acknowledge their sin and not trust in their secure place of residency because God can remove that quickly.

MESSAGE #4 – God's message to King Jehoiachin (Coniah, Jeconiah). **22:24-30**
(II Chron. 36:9-10)

Jeremiah's message to Jehoiachin is that God has rejected you. Jehoiachin was 18-years-old when he became king (II Kings 24:8-17; II Chron. 36:9-10). His father, Jehoiakim, had rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. Jehoiachin only ruled for 3 months before he was taken to Babylon.

He remained in prison until Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 BC. Now what God would do to Jehoiachin is introduced by a solemn oath "As I live declares the LORD."

Message #1 - God says I don't accept you and if you were as dear to Me as a royal king's ring on my right hand, I would rip it off. **22:24**

Message #2 - God says I will give you over to enemies who are seeking to destroy you. **22:25**

God says He will let those he fears to totally find him and dominate him.

Message #3 - God says I will hurl you and your mother to another country and you will die there. **22:26**

Jehoiachin and his mother Nehushta (II Kings 24:8) would be taken captive and you will die.

Message #4 - God says you will not return to the Promised Land. **22:27**

Message #5 - God says you are a totally worthless broken pot. **22:28**

Message #6 - God says I will rout you out of the land and you will not ever prosper. **22:29**

Not one of you will sit on David's throne and rule in Judah again.

God says write this down and take it to the bank.

Now why is God so negative? Because these political leaders were responsible for leading the nation away from Him and His word and truth.

Do you see who is held accountable for the disaster God sends to a nation? It is the political rulers.

PARTING THOUGHTS:

- 1) God raises up political leaders and entrusts them with leadership responsibilities.**
- 2) A wise political leader will surround himself with someone who actually knows the word and truth of God.**
- 3) Political leaders can lead a nation into the blessings of God or into the destructive judgments of God.**