

# ***The Jeremiah Connection***

## **Excerpt 2 From Chapter JEREMIAH Paula Leanues**

Jeremiah was wholly committed to the call. There was no embellishing, taking away from or compromising the word of the Lord. Ordained for his purpose before he was born (Jeremiah 1:5), and called at a young age (1:7), he was overtaken by a burden of the Lord to warn Jerusalem and Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel, that if they did not repent of their wicked ways, judgment would come to their land.

He was hated and ridiculed as much as the few who had the boldness in our day to say that 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina were judgments of God for the sin of our society. Even if put more lightly – “God removed his hand of protection from us during these catastrophes” – they were statements reprimanded by a lynching from the media and average American. This isn’t the kind of message a self-satisfied society wants to hear.

No way God could be this cruel, they said. We don’t believe in such a God (but will believe in anything – anything – else that makes us feel good).

Jesus said in Mark 3:24, “And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.” There could be so much strife from within, the kingdom will weaken and be overtaken by another, or the kingdom could, because of its argumentative climate, self-destruct by losing any of its economic and diplomatic pull with other nations.

After the death of Solomon, Israel was split into two, the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. This was a judgment on the kingdom by God for Solomon’s idolatry and blatant disregard of God’s covenant with David (1 Kings 9:1-9). Eventually, both northern

Israel and southern Judah were conquered, the north by the Assyrians in 722 BC, and the south in 586 BC by the Babylonians, approximately at the same time they were also conquering the Assyrians.

By sending judgment of a divided kingdom, and knowing that a kingdom divided against itself will not stand (those are Jesus' words), God knew the end result. But He knew the heart of the people. Solomon's descent into sin, idolatry and lasciviousness was just the beginning. God's people became idolatrous, worshiping other gods and entertainments, and pleasure-seeking.

Both the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel enjoyed prosperity for a time, but neither kingdom survived. Prosperity and the freedom that comes from blessings so often cause people to fall away from God. We have a tendency to "get comfortable" when things are good. Lazy attitudes come, and sin is eventually rampant. It doesn't have to be – there's that issue of free will – but sinking into sin as a result of prosperity is a common pattern. We're preoccupied with our blessings, the blinders are put on and we stop walking straight.

Since at the time of Jeremiah's prophesying, the northern kingdom had already been conquered by the Assyrians, Judah in the south should have taken notice. But they failed to learn the significance of the fall of the north, and continued living in their ways of sin.

We follow in their mistakes not just by not learning from them, but in part by failing to see the significance of current events, such as increased global earthquakes, floods and other natural disasters, famine, wars, and the all-out worldwide hatred for modern Israel and the Jews. Jesus Himself prophesied these signs and said we were to "Watch...and pray always" in order to be "accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." (Luke 21:36)

Church – there is a preparation we must go through in order to stand before God. If Jesus really is coming back for a Church “not having spot, or wrinkle” (Ephesians 5:27), then we should have done our soul searching yesterday. We can be changed in an instant at the Rapture, but I don’t think our lackadaisical ways are going to earn us any brownie points in heaven. We have an obligation to obedience. We need to kick our spirits into the game and stop pretending like there’s nothing catastrophic going on out there. But instead, we prepare our next social event and look the other way. There are terrible things happening all over the world. The attitude is, if it’s not happening in our backyards, why should we pay attention?

We are the same crowd Jeremiah faced when he came with the Word of the Lord. After receiving a vision of the devastation that was about to come upon the land of Judah, he was beckoned by God: “Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it. And though they say, The LORD liveth; surely they swear falsely.” (Jeremiah 5:1, 2)