



Jeremiah 4

Jeremiah CHAPTER 4

Let's turn to Jeremiah 4 and continue our study through the Bible. In 3:22 the LORD called for backsliding children to return. "Return ye backsliding children and I will heal your backslidings." Now the judgment of God that is coming has been prophesied.

If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the LORD, return unto me: and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not remove (4:1).

The idea behind it is that you must really return. If you will return, really return. Return with your whole heart. You remember that the LORD had complained of the fact that they had not turned to Him with their heart but only feigned and that was not acceptable to the LORD. If you will return, return and the promise of God, I will put away your sin and your abominations out of My sight and you will not be removed.

And thou shalt swear, The LORD liveth, in truth (4:2),

Now, it is easy to fall into a spiritual jargon where it becomes a part of your vocabulary but it is not really meaningful. There are phrases that we become accustomed to using. Quite often in our use of them it is just a phrase. Years ago when I grew up in Pentecostal churches, a lot of times the preachers tried to speak as though they had the fire and the anointing and would suck a lot of air when they spoke. A lot of times they would use hallelujah, praise God, bless God hallelujah! as they would fill in trying to get their next thoughts. It was just meaningless words.

So often we use the phrase, Oh praise the LORD! but we are not really thinking that. It is possible to use spiritual jargon and spiritual phrases, it is possible that they become a part of our vocabulary but it is not meaningful.

I think of when king Saul had been commanded by the prophet of God who gave to him God's word that he was to go down and utterly destroy the Amalekites. God had a long-standing judgment upon the Amalekites. They attacked the nation of Israel when they first came out of the bondage of Egypt. It was a sneaky rotten attack and God claimed that He had this long-standing feud with the Amalekites. In the Law when He said when you come into the land and you are settled there and you become strong then you are to come back and whip them. So at the time of king Saul, Israel had become strong from a military standpoint and so the word of the LORD came through Samuel the prophet to Saul the king, go down and settle the account with the Amalekites and utterly destroy them, don't leave anything alive. Saul went down, the LORD delivered the Amalekites into his hands, but he saw that some of the sheep and some of the cattle were very well favored, they were good stock. He decided not to destroy them but to bring them back and to mix them with the herds that they had.

As he came back and the prophet Samuel came to meet him by this time Samuel was blind. He was an old man probably had cataract and he could not see. He came out, no doubt heard that Saul was returning, he came out to meet Saul. There was a common phrase in those days, as the LORD liveth! It was kind of one of those "praise the LORD" terms, oh bless the LORD type of terms. As the LORD liveth!

When the prophet Samuel met him Saul said, "As the LORD liveth!" It was good spiritual jargon. "I have done everything the LORD has told me to do." He is a liar, he did not. Samuel said, "If you have done everything the LORD has told you to do, then what means the bleeding of the sheep and the lowing of the cattle that I hear?" Then he rebuked him because he failed to obey God. "Did you not know that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. It is better to obey." Saul then said, "Oh I brought them back to sacrifice to the LORD." He said, "It is better to obey than to sacrifice." To harken to God is better than the fat of rams.

Now in Jeremiah's day there was a spiritual term that the false prophets and true prophets were using, it would appear that Jeremiah used this phrase in the context of which we receive it, and it was the phrase, the

burden of the LORD. When a prophet was ready to give some kind of word from the LORD to the people he would say, oh the burden of the LORD. This is what God is burdened about. He would begin his prophetic utterances with the phrase, the burden of the LORD. So the LORD said to Jeremiah, and we will get to that as we move along through Jeremiah but it will be a few weeks, so He said, "Jeremiah there is a phrase that I don't want to hear you use again, I am sick of it. I hear it all the time. They go around saying, 'The burden of the LORD, the burden of the LORD' and I did not lay any burden on them."

I think a lot of people are like that saying, "The burden of the LORD, the burden of the LORD, oh this heavy burden of the LORD" and the LORD is saying, "I did not lay any burden upon you, at least no heavy burden, My yoke is easy, My burden is light." The LORD said not to use that phrase again, it is over used among the false prophets and if you use that phrase I will not speak to you again. That is pretty severe.

And thou shalt swear, The LORD liveth, [and as I said, that was a common phrase. Saul used it, as the LORD lives], then swear it in truth, not just idol words, in truth, in judgment, and righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory (4:2).

If you serve the LORD in truth then the nations will see the blessing of God and they also will bless the LORD. One of the worst things that can happen to the church is people who claim to be born again believers, claim to be right on kind of Christians, for them to live a hypocritical life. It brings a reproach on the cause of Christ. Here is a nation that is supposed to be a godly nation, they were know as God's people but they were not God's people and it was bringing a reproach upon God. Their lives were bringing a reproach upon God. Because of their sin they will be judged and wiped out. The nations are going to say, "Look, they trusted in God but they got wiped out." But in reality they were not trusting in God. So God is asking them to be genuine and honest when they swear by the name of the LORD that they do so in truth and in judgment and in righteousness. One of the worst things in the world is to swear by the LORD and to tell a falsehood, lie when you are under an oath before the LORD. So the LORD is telling them to return, then really return; get rid of your abominations and you will not removed. When you swear that the LORD lives let it be in truth.

For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns (4:3).

They had become hardened to the things of God, the seed, the word of God was no longer penetrating into their hearts. So God is saying to break up that fallow and hardened ground and then not to sow your seeds among the thorns. God is looking always for fruit. Jesus said, "I am the true vine, My Father is the husbandmen, and every branch in me that bringeth forth fruit, He washes it and cleanses it that it might bringeth forth more fruit. Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me and let My words abide in you and so shall you bring forth much fruit." And that is what God wants; is that there be much spiritual fruit coming forth from your life. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness and God wants that fruit coming out of your life. That is God's purpose and desire and the ultimate intent of God is that your life should bring forth fruit that is pleasing unto Him, fruit that bears witness of your relationship with God.

There are various kinds of soil upon which the word of God falls, the seed that is planted. There is some that does not take it all, there are some people that hear the Scriptures and it doesn't even take, it does not penetrate. There are others that are like stony ground, no depth of earth, so it is warm and it springs forth first. But because there is no depth it is there on the rocks. Over in Israel you will see these, especially around Bethlehem, rocky hillsides with little pockets of dirt. In the spring you will see they are the first to blossom first with the anemones and they have these beautiful little flowers but they are also the first to dry up because they are just little pockets of dirt in the rock itself and because there is no depth it dries up quickly and the little plants die very quickly.

Then there is the seed that fell among the thorns, and here is the warning here. Don't sow your seed among the thorns. Because, Jesus said, the thorns will grow up with it but then they will choke it out before it bears fruit. For the thorns are the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches and the lust for other things. So break up the fallow ground, don't sow among thorns.

Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem (4:4):

Now today in the church we have the right of baptism. The right of baptism signifies a new life. The old life that was governed by the flesh, the old nature from Adam, we reckon to be dead, crucified with Christ. So in baptism we bury that old life, the life that was governed by the flesh, we renounce it, we reckon it to be dead and we bury it. As we come up out of the water we come up with that newness of life, the life of the Spirit in Christ Jesus. So it is a symbol of our renouncing the old life of the flesh that we might now live the life of the Spirit living after the Spirit.

Now if you have been baptized but you are still living after the flesh, your baptism was meaningless. If you are still are governed by the flesh, living after the flesh, seeking after the things of the flesh but say, "Oh well I was baptized!" that baptism was meaningless. I don't care how many times you have been baptized, it is still meaningless unless it has happened in your heart, there is really in your heart a renouncing of the life of the flesh, a real turning away from that life.

Paul the apostle said the same was true with circumcision, that it wasn't really the fleshly act that counted before God but it was the circumcision of the heart that God was seeking, that is in your heart. The idea again is cutting away the flesh and the idea was that Abraham was to be the father of a spiritual nation and God made the covenant with Abraham that He would make of him a great nation, a spiritual people. That sign of the covenant would be the circumcision of the male child on the eighth day. They were trusting in the ritual as people today are trusting in some ritual.

You ask a person about their salvation, "Oh yes I was baptized as a child." But you are living like the devil. And that sprinkling of water on your face when you were a kid does nothing as far as giving you a standing before God. You have to be born again. You cannot trust in some ritual for salvation. Paul's argument with the Romans is a legitimate argument in that if it is a circumcision of the heart that counts before God, not just a fleshly ritual but it is the circumcision of the heart that counts before God then the Gentiles who are living the life of the Spirit though they were not physically circumcised, though they did not have the physical ritual their uncircumcision counts for circumcision because in their hearts they are living after the Spirit.

For those people who are insisting on immediate baptisms or talk about baptismal regeneration, you are not really saved until you have been baptized, Paul's argument is something that they need to consider because baptism really, again, is not a physical right. Peter said it is not the washing away of the flesh, the filth of the flesh, but it is of a new consciousness before God, it is the heart that God is looking at. The circumcision of the heart is what the LORD is calling for here. He is saying that He wants them to really from their heart to serve Him, live after God, cut away the life of the flesh.

lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings (4:4).

It is really a turn or burn message that God is giving to them. He is calling on them to make a real turn to the LORD, return then truly return. Put away your abominations. When you swear, let it be in truth. When you swear by the name of LORD then let it be in truth and in justice and all, so let it be the real, from your heart, a denying of the life of the flesh or else His fury like fire will burn and no one will be able to quench it.

Declare ye in Judah, and publish in Jerusalem (4:5):

The former message was given to Israel in the north but in verse three He turns to Judah and Jerusalem and now He is again saying, declare in Judah and publish in Jerusalem and say:

Blow ye the trumpet in the land: cry, gather together, and say, Assemble yourselves, and let us go into the defenced cities (4:5).

Now the warning is coming that their destruction is on the way; that they have taken a path that is opposed to God, they are being forsaken by God and God is going to use the Babylonians as His instrument of judgment against them. The trumpet was blown in order to warn the people of impending danger.

Set up the standard toward Zion: retire, stay not: for I will bring evil from the north, and a great destruction (4:6).

This evil from the north is the Babylonian army that God is going to bring to be His instrument of destruction. The lion, remember in the dream of Daniel when he saw the nations, the lion represented Babylon and it was destroyed by the bear. Here:

The lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles [or the nations] is on his way; he is gone forth from his place to make thy land desolate; and thy cities shall be laid waste, without an inhabitant (4:7).

Judgment is coming, the Babylonian army is on its way, they are going to waste your cities, they are going to leave the cities without an inhabitant.

For this gird you with sackcloth, lament and howl (4:8):

Sackcloth was a sign of mourning, it was a camel's hide but it was worn backwards. The camel's skin is prickly. It would be miserable to wear it against your body for sure. It was worn by the people as a sign of mourning. It was a way of inflicting yourself and to show great penitence or also to show great sorrow and great mourning. They would afflict themselves by putting on this sackcloth. So the LORD is saying a time of great mourning is coming so gird yourself with sackcloth and lament and howl:

for the fierce anger of the LORD is not turned back from us (4:8).

They did not return to the LORD with their whole heart, they did not swear by the name of the LORD in truth, they continued to live after the flesh, they refused to walk after God and the things of the Spirit and therefore they have determined their own destiny as is always the case with man. It would be totally wrong for them to now blame God for the desolation and destruction that is coming. God gave them the out. God warned them what was going to happen if they did not return. And yet they refused to return and now the destruction is on the way and when it comes it would be totally wrong for them to blame God and say why would God allow such a thing to happen to us.

God always is fair. In judgment God is fair. God gives a person warning over and over again. God says, "Now look, if you continue on that path you will be destroyed. If you continue to live after the flesh it is going to destroy you." God gives His warning but people so often, like Judah, disregard the warnings of God and they continue stubbornly, steadfastly toward destruction. When their destruction comes it is manifestly wrong to blame God for it. I have often said that God has yet to send a man to hell. I don't believe that God has ever sent anyone to hell.

I believe that man chooses his own destiny and goes to hell by deliberate choice and by rejecting every innovation that God has sent to him to turn him away. He ultimately tramples underfoot the Son of God and counts the blood of His covenant where with He was sanctified an unholy thing and he does despite to the Spirit of grace and he goes in by his own deliberate willful choice and the rejection of the grace of God and the mercy of God and every invitation of God to turn from the path of sin and to the path of righteousness. No man in hell can say, "Well God is not fair, He sent me here." They are there by their own deliberate, willful disregard of every invitation that God has given to them to turn from their sin. So the destruction is on its way.

And it shall come to pass at that day, saith the LORD, that the heart of the king shall perish (4:9),

Now the king is to be the inspiration of the people. He is the one who is supposed to inspire the people to fight, to stand up, to defend yourself, but the king will have a weak heart. He will find some place to hide. The heart of the king will perish rather than leading the forces he will be cringing before the enemy.

and the heart of the princes (4:9);

The leadership of the nation is going to collapse.

and the priests shall be astonished [the spiritual leaders], and the prophets shall wonder (4:9).

It speaks really of the terrible degeneration of the nation when the leaders fail, not only the governmental aspects but the spiritual aspects have failed, the people are left to wander and perish.

Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! surely thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have peace; whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul (4:10).

During this time as the Babylonians were approaching, there were false prophets that were saying to the people, "Peace, peace." As we get on in Jeremiah we will find God rebuking those who say, "Peace, peace." when there is no peace. They were by their false prophecies lulling the people into this spiritual apathy. Even so as there are those today that say, "Oh that will not happen here and my, you know, anyone who talks about the judgment they do not understand. The things like this have always happened." People are giving a false sense of security saying that God will not judge and God will be very lenient. They are causing people to rest in a false security.

So were the prophets doing in the day of Jeremiah. Now the prophets used to draw attention by doing interesting things. When we get to Ezekiel we will find some interesting things that Ezekiel did to draw attention to the prophecy. With Jeremiah there was some interesting things. The LORD told Jeremiah to go out and buy this beautiful new coat, gorgeous expensive coat and to wear it through the city. After he had worn it through the city and everyone was remarking if they had seen that coat that Jeremiah has then the LORD said to take it out to the river of Euphrates and bury it under a rock in the river. So he took it to the River Euphrates and buried it under a rock. And then after a period of time the LORD said to go back and get your coat again. He went back and he lifted the rock and there was the coat and the little bugs had eaten holes in it and the colors had run and it was just really an ugly thing. The LORD said, "Now put it on and wear it again through the streets and as you do preach to the people and say, 'Israel was once beautiful in the eyes of the LORD, greatly desired but now she is filled with filth and is no longer beautiful and desirable. He made a powerful sermon illustration.

In the days of Jeremiah one of these false prophets made a set of horns. Horns were always a symbol of power. He made them out of wood. He came in to the king's court with these horns doing a big dance, and he said, "And thus shall Israel drive out the Babylonians." So Jeremiah took the wooden horns and broke them. And he said, "Thus will the power of Israel be broken and they will fall to the Babylonians." So this guy went out and he made iron horns and came back. He said that the horns cannot be broken. He and Jeremiah were going back and forth on this horn bit. The false prophets were prophesying that there was going to be peace. So Jeremiah echoes their prophecy by saying,

Ah, Lord GOD! surely thou hast greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, We shall have peace (4:10);

Well that is one of those cases where the guy said, "The burden of the Lord, the burden of the Lord. Peace, Peace." And God said that He didn't lay that burden on them.

whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul. At that time shall it be said to this people and to Jerusalem, A dry wind of the high places in the wilderness toward the daughter of my people, not to fan, nor to cleanse (4:10–11),

There is going to come this dry wind that will be destructive. In those days that east wind which came as ours do in the fall. We get our Santa Ana's. The dry wind out of the desert. They get the same thing over there, they call them the Sorochos. This dry wind comes out of the desert in the fall. But they would use it often in the winnowing of the grain. They would throw the grain in the air and the wind would drive the chaff away and the grain would fall back on the threshing floor. This wind that is coming though will not be wind that will fan the threshing floor nor cleanse the chaff away but it will be a wind that will destroy, it will be a full wind.

Even a full wind from those places shall come unto me: now also will I give sentence against them. Behold, he shall come up as clouds, [He is talking about the Babylonian army], and his chariots shall be as a whirlwind: his horses are swifter than eagles. Woe unto us! for we are spoiled (4:12–13).

God is just still pleading, it is still not too late.

O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved (4:14).

I see how God pleads with the sinner, how God pleads with man. In Jeremiah the LORD said, "Turn ye, for why will ye die, behold, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." And God is pleading with them even at the last hour, God is still pleading. God is calling on them to wash their heart from their wickedness that they might be saved.

How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee (4:14).

The vain thoughts of thinking you are not going to face judgment, that somehow you are going to escape from the Babylonian invasion and from being destroyed by Babylon.

For a voice declareth from Dan, and publisheth affliction from mount Ephraim (4:15).

The armies were already in the northern part of the country. Dan was the northern most city in Israel. The invaders coming from the north would come down through the Golan Heights. The first place they would get to would be Dan. Already they received word from those in Dan that the Babylonians have taken Dan and they have moved from Dan down into the area of Mt. Ephraim, down into the central part of the country. Still these people were resting in a false security because these prophets were saying that it will never come here. Peace, we are going to have peace.

Make ye mention to the nations; behold, publish against Jerusalem, that watchers come from a far country, and give out their voice against the cities of Judah (4:16).

They have already studied the defenses, they have already prepared their attack.

As keepers of a field, are they against her round about; because she hath been rebellious against me, saith LORD (4:17).

The whole cause was their rebellion against God. The LORD said to King Asa, "The Lord is with you while you will be with Him, if you seek Him He will be found, if you forsake Him He will forsake you." This is a basic principle of God. The Lord is with you if you will be with Him. If you seek God you will find Him but if you forsake Him He will forsake you.

Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee (4:18);

It is your fault, you have really set your own destiny.

this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart. My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot

hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war (4:18–19).

The prophet himself is ripped up inside for this. Here is the eminent danger and destruction, it is on it's way. Yet the people will not repent and they still live carelessly, they still walk after the flesh. The prophet feels so helpless as he is warning them of the impending doom. They are disregarding. This is why he is known as the weeping prophet, all the way through we will find Jeremiah weeping over the conditions of the people and over the impending judgment that is coming. He feels so helpless and frustrated because the people will not harken to what he is saying.

Destruction upon destruction is cried [it speaks of a total destruction]; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment (4:20).

The destruction that is determined shall come. The land will be totally destroyed and spoiled and it will come in a moment and sudden, they will fall to the Babylonians. So often times God is merciful to a person and He deals with him in mercy. Over and over again God will be patient and deal. There comes a time when God says, as He did in the days of Noah, "My spirit will not always strive with man."

"There is a time, we know not when, a line, we know not where, that marks the destiny of men twix sorrow and despair. There is a line by us unseen but yet once it has been crossed even God Himself in all of His love has sworn that all is lost."

The Bible says that he that is often being reprov'd and hardens his neck will suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy. So often you think that you are just getting by with things because God has not brought judgment. You seemingly are still prosperous, it seems like everything is going well and God has not judged. People begin to get a little smug. They feel, "Well God does not really care or God approves of my wicked lifestyle," because He has not done anything about it but God is just merciful and gracious but there is a limit and God's Spirit will not always strive with man. Many are just wiped out in a moments time, suddenly the judgment of God falls.

Thus is the same with the nation. Over and over again God warned. He sent His prophets to them to warn them but they continued their deadly plunge to destruction.

How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet? (4:21).

This standard was set to Jerusalem. The standard of the Babylonian armies. How long will this destruction take place, how long will this war go on, this siege against Jerusalem, the sound of the trumpets and battle? How long will the battle rage?

For my people is foolish, they have not known me (4:22);

The tragedy with a lot of people is that they do not really know God. They preach a soft syrupy God, an extremely lenient God, an almost amoral God. They really don't know that He is a God of righteousness and justice and thus judgment; and a God of wrath against those things that destroy and defile. The wrath of God shall appear from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth of God in unrighteousness. People don't really know God. So God is declaring that they don't know Me, they are foolish.

they are sottish children (4:22),

The word *sottish* is drunkenness or stupid. The LORD is really saying that they are stupid as far as the things of God, their knowledge of God. Like a drunk who has lost his sense of judgment, so the people are without any sense of judgment, which is stupidity.

they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge (4:22).

They know all about evil. They have searched and studied the things of evil. I look today at the world in which we live and I see how many people are involved in Satanism and witchcraft. I see the numbers growing who are involved in the New Age movement, who are learning how to contact their guides, their spirit guides and are seeking to be directed and lead by these spirit guides. There are all kinds of books available on learning to communicate and receive guidance from the spirit guides. They are wise in evil but they are so ignorant in the ways of truth.

Thus the prophet now sees the nation, in sort of a visionary form, he sees what is going to happen, what is going to transpire as far as Judah is concerned.

I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void (4:23);

It was wasted and desolate.

and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD, and by his fierce anger. For thus hath the LORD said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end (4:23–27).

God's mercy and grace still. It is interesting that this phrase of Jeremiah parallels Genesis 1:2, "and the earth was without form and void and darkness covered the face of the deep and the Spirit of God moved over the face of the water." But this description without form and void. Now, first of all it is to be noted that what Jeremiah is seeing, the first and primary interpretation of the passage has to do with the condition of Judah after the Babylonian siege and destruction. That is the primary interpretation. But with Scripture there is often a secondary interpretation. There are those who see in this, reading into it a secondary interpretation, because of the parallel with Genesis 1, those who teach what is commonly known as the gap theory, whereas Genesis 1:1 talks about original creation. In the beginning God created, *bara*, the heavens and the earth. They read verse two of Genesis, "but the earth became wasted and desolate" or without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

They teach that God when He originally made the earth that He did not make it without form or void because that is contrary to the nature of God. God does not make things desolate, God makes things with a purpose and with a plan. They turn to Isaiah 45:18, "For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens, God Himself that formed the earth and made it, He has established it, He created it not in vain. He formed it to be inhabited. I am the LORD and there is none else." So Isaiah declares that God didn't form the earth in vain. And as I say they argue that it is contrary to the nature of God to create something desolate, that God in His creative acts always created that which was good. When God saw the things which He had created and God said that it was good. So to create something wasted and desolate would be contrary to the nature of God.

So they say in a time past, an indeterminate time past, God created the heavens and the earth, the original creation that Genesis 1:1 speaks of the original creation of the universe. And just how long ago nobody knows, the scientists are still guessing. But that original universe that God created became without form and void. Those life forms that God had created were destroyed, those life forms which had inhabited the earth were destroyed and that the earth stayed in a state of ice age for perhaps some billion years, an indeterminate amount of time. But beginning with Genesis 1:3 we have the re-creative acts of God as He recreated the earth in order to place man in his present form upon it.

There are suggestions that maybe the earth was inhabited by Satan and this was his sphere of the kingdom of God which he ruled and that it was destroyed in the fierce anger of God when Satan and his armies exalted themselves against God. If you are interested in this gap theory, there is a book by Pember that is called *Earth's Earliest Ages* and he probably sets forth the gap theory more completely than any other writer.

There are problems with the gap theory as there are problems with the day-age theory, that each day in Genesis was an age period of indeterminate time so that there were seven ages of creation over billions of years. There is also problems with the young earth theory, that in six days God created the heaven and the earth and placed man upon the earth, rested on the seventh day then Satan came to Adam and Eve in the garden shortly there after. That young earth theory doesn't really give a place for Satan's fall and being cast out of heaven if you hold literally that the whole universe is created just a short time ago and that man appeared on the literal sixth day of creation and God rested on the seventh. Satan soon appeared on the scene but it does not give space for Satan's rebellion and fall.

It is interesting, the various theories that have been propounded. This gap theory has some very interesting aspects to it. I have to confess that with each of the theories, I see their valid points and I see their difficulties and I am really not settled in my own mind just exactly how God did it. That is one of the interesting things that I am looking forward to when I get to heaven, to have it explained to me just how He did do the whole thing. Having a little bit of an inquiring mind I will find it very fascinating to get some answers to things that I do not presently know. Those that hold to the gap theory do use Jeremiah here as describing the earth in Genesis 1 and speaks of it being destroyed by the fierce anger of the LORD.

For thus hath the LORD said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end (4:27).

This a prophecy against Judah. The double interpretation, God wiped out the earth that was and the races that were, and that accounts for the fossils and all but He didn't make a full end but recreated it for man after Adam in his present form.

For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black: because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it (4:28).

At this point the die is cast. They have gone over the limits. The judgments that is coming is determined, there will be no reprieve, it is too late. What a tragic thing in a person's life when they have hit that point of no return, when God writes them off and says leave them alone, I have given them up.

The whole city shall flee for the noise of the horsemen and bowmen; they shall go into thickets, and climb up upon the rocks: every city shall be forsaken, and not a man dwell therein. And when thou art spoiled, what wilt thou do? Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou rentest thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair; thy lovers will despise thee, they will seek they life. For I have heard a voice as of a woman in travail, and the anguish as of her that bringeth forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion, that bewaileth herself, that spreadeth her hands, saying, Woe is me now! for my soul is wearied because of murderers (4:29-31).

So this sad and tragic condition of Judah that is leading to their destruction and the time of sorrow and grief that are appointed upon her. Now it happened, just as the LORD said it would, it happened. The Babylonians came, the land was destroyed, the cities were destroyed, Jerusalem was raised. Today you can go in Jerusalem and walking down the side of the hill of Ophel from the dung gate of the present city, down towards the Spring of Gihon, you can look where they have been excavating in the last few years, you can see the flattened houses that were there in Jeremiah's time. In fact, as we move along in Jeremiah we will come to the Baruch the son of Neriah, they have even found his seal that Jeremiah speaks about. He was sort of a notary public. The scribes were sort of the notary public of those days and they had their seals and they would seal their document and then they would put their stamp to leave the impression. They have found there in the ruins the seal that Jeremiah speaks about.

I have asked the tourist guides over there to make some of those up. I said that every tourist that would come would love to have that with the Scripture, just a replica of that little seal. I would love to have one. In B.A.R magazine recently they have pictures of this seal of Baruch the son the Neriah. You can see a layer of

ashes. It speaks about them as burning the city. You can see the layer of ashes from the fire. It happened just like God said and warned them that it would. God has declared that a day of judgment is yet to come upon the earth that is worse than anything that has ever happened in history. A day of great tribulation as God's judgment will come upon the earth. Judgment that has been held in reserve throughout the centuries, but that God again is going to judge the earth by fire and is going to destroy the inhabitants out of the earth and the Bible tells about this coming day of judgment and yet people are much like they were in Jeremiah's day. They are callused against the things of God. They will not harken to the voice of God and yet the day of judgment has been set and I believe that already is in motion that destruction of which God speaks. I am thankful to say concerning the Lord's people that we have not been appointed to wrath but to stand before the Son of God. But this world is in for a real time of sorrow and judgment and it behooves us to obey the Lord, to walk after God, to return to God with all of our hearts, to make our commitment to God complete.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your Word and for the certainty of the things that you have declared. We thank you Lord for your faithfulness and your fairness; your faithfulness in warning the people of what was going to happen, your patience Lord. Father, we thank you that you have been patient with our generation and yet Lord we know that your Spirit will not always strive and that day will come when the door will be shut and those who are within that ark of safety in Christ will be preserved while the world perishes. Lord, we pray that you will help us as Jeremiah to faithfully give your warning to the people and Father, may many turn and live after righteousness, truth in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.