

Why Your Relationship With God Isn't a License to Sin

During the time of Jeremiah the prophet, the people in Jerusalem were doing what we as modern-day believers are sometimes guilty of: trusting in the blessings of the covenant while ignoring the curses of the covenant. Why, the very temple of the creator of the universe was in their midst! But this wasn't their first time to misunderstand.

Over a thousand years earlier, during the time of the judges, they took the ark of the covenant into battle against the Philistines. They imagined it to be a type of lucky charm, but they were roundly defeated, and the ark was captured. In Jeremiah's day, they felt they were immune to defeat because they had the temple to trust in.

They were much like some of today's Christians, who believe having their little Jesus statue or even saying "magic words" such as "Jesus loves me" somehow makes them immune from God's judgments when they behave in the most ungodly ways. It's as if they tell themselves, "Trouble is coming, so let me pull God out of my pocket and rebuke the enemy, and then I'll just put God away, as I can't have Him interrupting the good times!" This is what was happening in Jerusalem.

God was loudly speaking to the Israelites, telling them to mend their ways. He even told them not to trust in the temple, yet all they could repeat was, "The temple of the Lord," over and over. God said those were lying words. It was only if they thoroughly mended their ways—properly executing judgment; not oppressing the stranger, fatherless or widow; not shedding innocent blood and not walking after other gods—that He would allow them to stay in the land.

God asked the people whether they really believed they could

steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely and burn incense to Baal and other gods, and then stand before Him in the very house called by His name and say that they were delivered to do all these abominations. And the house called by His name had become a den of thieves! This was the very reference Yeshua used in His day about the rebuilt temple when He drove out all the money changers, exclaiming that His house was to be a house of prayer, but they had made it into a den of thieves.

I hear comments all the time from Christians today that show they believe they have been released to do every type of abomination because they are covered by the blood and the law is done away with. They have a big surprise coming!

God told the Israelites to go take a look at what He did to Shiloh because of the wickedness of the people. Again, He told the people He rose up early to speak to them, but they would not hear; He called them, and they didn't answer. He said that therefore He would destroy the house called by His name in which they trusted.

Very soon God will judge the modern generation of believers who think the same way. It will be a case of "Can you hear Me now?"

God wanted to bring out a very important point. He reminded the Israelites that when He delivered the people from Egypt, He didn't mention anything about burnt offerings or sacrifices. The only thing He commanded them to do was to obey His voice, and He would be their God, and they would be His people. The problem is they did not listen then, and they weren't listening now; they had been going backward and not forward.

God then declared again that He even got up early, sending all His prophets to them, yet they refused to listen, followed the dictates of their own evil hearts and went backward and not

forward. All they did was stiffen their necks, behaving worse than their fathers had. God told Jeremiah to go ahead and speak these words to them, even though they wouldn't obey Him. He told Jeremiah to give them a call, and he would see that they wouldn't answer him either. It's as if God was asking Jeremiah to walk in His shoes and see how it felt.

How do you think God feels when we disregard His commandments and ignore the voice of the Holy Spirit calling us to mend our ways? I can only imagine His disappointment at the rift in our relationship with Him. Yet He doesn't threaten to destroy us or our places of worship. Because of what His Son, Yeshua, did on the cross, He is always gracious to forgive us when we ask and to turn His face toward us once again. {eoa}

This article is excerpted from chapter 6 of Decoding the Prophet Jeremiah by Mark Biltz Charisma House 2020).

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