

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.**
(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)*

#03-0952

A Hammer Which Shatters A Rock #6

April 4, 2009

“Is not My word like fire?” declares the LORD, “and like a hammer which shatters a rock?” (Jeremiah 23:29)

In the last issue of this series, we began to consider the context of Jeremiah 23. Based on verses 1-2, the point was made that the church leaders have scattered and driven away the Lord’s people. As stated previously, the heart of the nation is a reflection of the church-at-large. Another way of stating this is that on the church level, the pastor-teachers have scattered and divided the Lord’s people, and, on the national level, the political leaders have divided the American people. Think about it! The political system of the US has divided the nation; sometimes it seems that the division has been right down the middle, so to speak. I realize that people say this is the way it is supposed to work with a two-party system. But what good has come of it lately? Consider the church and how much division there is along so many different lines of emphasis. There is really not much difference between the church and the heart of the nation. We all are divided. But it is more than this; the nation is divided because the church is divided. It all starts with the church. A divided kingdom cannot stand (Mark 3:24).

Now, I want to press on to another facet of Jeremiah 23 that deals with the prophets. I may be pushing the envelope a bit, but I propose that, on the prophetic level, the prophets have been leading the Lord’s people into futility, and, on the national level, the news media and the innumerable experts that are interviewed each day across all forms of media have been leading the American people into futility. In other words, the media are merely a reflection of the many false prophets speaking for the Lord. The media are just as much a part of the heart of the nation as the politicians are, for they filter and influence what is presented as news to Americans each day. Bear with me!

Jeremiah lamented over the prophets of his day.

(9) As for the prophets: My heart is broken within me, all my bones tremble; I have become like a drunken man, even like a man overcome with wine, because of the LORD and because of His holy words. (10) For the land is full of adulterers; for the land mourns because of the curse. The pastures of the wilderness have dried up. Their course also is evil and their might is not right. (11) “For both prophet and priest are polluted; even in My house I have found their wickedness,” declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 23:9-11 NASB)

“Also among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a horrible thing: The committing of adultery and walking in falsehood; and they strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one has turned back from his wickedness. All of them have become to Me like Sodom, and her inhabitants like Gomorrah.” (Jeremiah 23:14 NASB)

The Lord of hosts responded to Jeremiah’s lament.

(16) Thus says the LORD of hosts, “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility; they speak a vision of their own imagination, not from the mouth of the LORD. ”... (18) “But who has stood in the council of the LORD, that he should see and hear His word? Who has given heed to His word and listened?” (Jeremiah 23:16, 18 NASB)

(23) “Am I a God who is near,” declares the LORD, “And not a God far off? (24) Can a man hide himself in hiding places so I do not see him?” declares the LORD. “Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?” declares the LORD. (25) “I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy falsely in My name, saying, ‘I had a dream, I had a dream!’ (26) “How long? Is there anything in the hearts of the prophets who prophesy falsehood, even

these prophets of the deception of their own heart, (27) who intend to make My people forget My name by their dreams which they relate to one another, just as their fathers forgot My name because of Baal? (28) The prophet who has a dream may relate his dream, but let him who has My word speak My word in truth. What does straw have in common with grain?” declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 23:23-28 NASB)

(30) “Therefore behold, I am against the prophets,” declares the LORD, “who steal My words from each other. (31) Behold, I am against the prophets,” declares the LORD, “who use their tongues and declare, ‘The Lord declares.’ (32) “Behold, I am against those who have prophesied false dreams,” declares the LORD, “and related them and led My people astray by their falsehoods and reckless boasting; yet I did not send them or command them, nor do they furnish this people the slightest benefit,” declares the LORD. (Jeremiah 23:30-32 NASB)

There were many saying that they were speaking for the Lord, but it was not from the mouth of the Lord; it was from their own imagination. They were leading the people into futility, which means “to be in vain in action, word, or expectation; to lead astray.” In other words, they were leading the people into a false hope. They had not stood in the council of the Lord; therefore, they were not speaking for the Lord but for themselves.

Even today, the Lord reminds the prophets that He is still in charge and that He sees and hears all that is going on in the heavens and on earth. This is one of the criteria of a particular **biblical worldview**. He hears what the prophets proclaim, and He judges their words and their dreams to see if they prophesy falsehood from the deception of their own hearts. But notice that the result of this falsehood is the leading astray of the people so that they will forget His name. The Lord compares their false dreams to straw and His word to grain. The people need grain for nourishment not straw, which are hollow stocks or fodder of little value. What the prophets are doing does not even give the people the slightest benefit.

In our day, it is amazing how many are going to and fro speaking for the Lord. They proclaim dreams, visions, and words from the Lord. Some do this every day as if the Lord speaks to them continually. The Lord, along with His apostles, warned that there would be false prophets and teachers in the last days. See issues #01-0705, September 25, 2007, *Flee From These Things*; #02-08136, October 31, 2008, *A Supernatural Working of Deception*. Who is speaking for the Lord today? How are we to discern? I propose that those who are truly speaking for the Lord, whether by word, vision, or dream, direct hearts to the Lord, encouraging them to be joined to their Head in thought, heart, and action, and give the true hope or expectation of the word of God, which relates to God becoming all in all, the coming of the kingdom (reign) of Christ and God to this earth, and believers being conformed to the image and character of Christ, which means they receive immortal, glorified, spiritual bodies through transfiguration. Those who speak for the Lord proclaim “Thy kingdom come” and realize that the kingdom of Christ is not of this realm. Further, they love the Lord, His people, and the whole world. Those who direct hearts to a man’s ministry, name, or vision, or to earthly riches most likely are speaking falsehood.

Now, for the part that might push the envelope a bit, so to speak: If the heart of the nation is a reflection of the heart of the church-at-large, perhaps the media and, to some degree, the politicians are a reflection of the false prophets. It is amazing how many so-called experts are proclaiming their views through virtually every media outlet imaginable to anyone who will listen or can read. Their messages run the gamut from telling us how bleak our future is and how we are to survive, to how wonderful our future will be and how we need to relax and trust certain people, for it all will work out just fine. Without doubt, expert opinions are offered every minute of the day that influence many in their thinking and actions. **These are the modern-day false prophets of man.** It is amazing how many people are making a living (money) by telling others their opinions on every subject under the sun. What did Solomon say about the sun: **I have seen all the works which have been done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and striving after wind** (Ecclesiastes 1:14 NASB). There is no profit under the sun. The only true profit to be gained is in Christ, for He alone contains all the riches of God. This brings us back to the beginning of Jeremiah 23: **“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the LORD, “When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land.”** (Jeremiah 23:5 NASB)