

PTB2-15:HouseOfGodReally?

The Big Lie: We Are the House of God

The Big Lie of God's people in Jeremiah was that they claimed the Temple of God for themselves while their lives showed otherwise.

"Do not trust in these lying words, saying, 'The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD are these.'" (Jeremiah 7:4)

3-1: The Big Lie in the Word of God by God's People.

1. The Big Lie in Jeremiah.

Not only was it a big lie as they claimed to be the House of God anymore, but also it was a big lie to trust in the simple chant, like a praise God, that "THESE" are the Temple or House of God. There was a day and time when the Temple at Jerusalem was indeed the House of God; chosen as a special place for the name of God, but that spiritual reality had long ceased to be because of the bad habits of God's people for which God through the Prophet Jeremiah demanded amendment (Jeremiah 7:5) The call of God through His Prophet was that they "thoroughly" amend their ways and doings, also amend to practice "righteous judgement" between neighbors. The ultimatum was given by God to God's people that the only way they could continue to any live in this place of Jerusalem and Judaea was by the complete overhaul of their way of life! It is not that they were so much worse than their foreign neighbors, but that they had become the same. **{It reminds Christians, God's people today, of how Paul in Ephesians 4:17 and following says don't live like the other Gentiles, and further "this is not the way your learned Christ. The equivalent today would be for church members not to live like the rest of the world.}**

God's people of Jeremiah had created a false concept in their own mind that the House called by the name of God was actually a "Den of Thieves". It was truly an idol for the real House of God. They were dominated by a philosophy of living and religion which said we can live all week as we wish, then we can come to church on the Sabbath to make the House of God a HIDEOUT for our un-amended ways.

"Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes?" (Jeremiah 7:11)

Part of the big lie of their philosophy was that there were "wise" and the law of the LORD was with them. God and His Word was on their side, and whatever they were

doing or how they were living was right! (7:8) However in reality, the Prophet has to tell them: they had rejected the Word of God (7:9). Therefore there was no more real wisdom left for them to have all the answers. Yet Prophets and priests in the land, all the religious leaders, kept saying "Peace, peace" when there really was no longer peace in the land; and that too was part of the big lie. Humans then and today have a novel way of making out signs of spiritual revival in a nation, when God is in the very process of bringing numerous calamities on a nation--those times like now in America where there is no healing of the land.

Part of the Big Lie was this false sense of security while they continue to live in a habit of disobedience to the laws of God. You get that impact best in the NIV.

"Can you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn sacrifices to Baal, run after other gods which you have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house which bears my name and say 'We are safe!'--just so that you may continue doing all these abominable things?" (Jeremiah 7:9,10)

2. The Big Lie in the Second Cleansing of the Temple by Jesus.

The second time Jesus cleansed Herod's Temple at Jerusalem, also the time where He quoted from the Prophet Jeremiah (7:11) about the "Den of Thieves" and from Isaiah (56:7) of the original intention for the Temple as a House of God, there was that same contrast between the original intention of the building as a House of God and of Prayer and what attenders there had come to make of it, a Den of Thieves. Did Jesus understand and intend all the message of Jeremiah, especially in the Temple Message of chapters 7 and 26, to be part of what He was telling the temple worshipers of His day. Well certainly, if you recognize, as you must, that all along in the Old Testament Prophets, it was the Spirit of God at work in this Prophets, then you also recognize both Jesus and God the Father as the original source of these teachings from Jeremiah. However, we would note here in Matthew 21, even as in the first temple cleansing of John 2, the immediate focus of Jesus is somewhat different. Jesus first in His actions was after the profit makers in the temple area: those who bought and sold in the temple, also the money changers. And you will note from the quote of Matthew 21:13 that Jesus positively puts up front the intention and command of God for the Temple in that it was, as written in Isaiah, to be a House of Prayer. What God created, dedicated, and honored was a House of Prayer; what man had created and subverted from the original plan was a Den of Thieves.

In short the Big Lie here was not only a duplication of the big lie of God's people in the time of Jeremiah, but that God's People were using the House of God for their own personal profit and gain.

3. The Big Lie of the first cleansing of the Temple by Jesus.

At the first cleansing of the Temple by Jesus as recorded in John 2, there was also the same element of personal profit and gain, except now according to Jesus the leaders had allowed the House of God to become a "House of Merchandising", a business if you would.

"And He said to those who sold doves, 'Take these things away! Do not make My Father's House a house of merchandising.'" (John 2:16)

The crowd of evil doers was about the same in the first case as in the second: while in the first case it was the merchants of sheep, oxen and doves and the money changes, in the first case, in the second case it was the merchants {**actually we can not excuse the mega-churches today and others who promote their wares under religious disguises of "faith resources" when we say it was merchants in the temple, for the dominant wording is just "those who bought and sold", as if they were ordinary members**} who bought and sold in the temple, the money changers, and in particular the sellers of doves.

3-2: The key question is Can this happen in God's House today?

I suppose the key question that we must answer to our own personal satisfaction is, "Can this same thing happen in God's Houses of Worship today?" AND "Does this same thing happen in many Houses of God throughout the land today. The obvious answer would have to be YES, YES, and YES. Any time there is the continued violation of the laws and commands of God by God's people without an amendment of their ways, any time they make the House of God, their local church if you would, a Hideout for their Bad Habits and ways, anytime they find a false sense of security in their House of God, then they are just as guilty as God's people of Jeremiah and the time of Jesus.

1. In churches today like in the past among God's people, the big lie include efforts to contain God and the truth of God into our building. God's people of Jeremiah as you read thought they were "wise" and right. That the Bible was with them, yes even God was with them, so that they could not no wrong. They believe the lies of their religious leaders that there was Peace and spiritual revival in the land when the opposite in the sight of God was actually the case.

a. God let people know always during the time of consideration of a House of Prayer and Worship, that He could not and would not be contained in such a building. There was most generally the discussion brought up by God and His Prophets as to even the possibility that God would ever again, after the Garden of Eden, live and dwell among

His people. Granted He would agree to His name being placed on a building dedicated to the worship of Him, but not that He would come and live in that building.

b. Of course in New Testament times, it came to be understood that the temple of God would be the church people, and again you must go back to the church as the total body of Christ the only roll of which is written in heaven and the names of which are known only by God.

c. Increasing in the Old Testament, especially in the book of Isaiah, hints that God would finally again dwell personally with man on a new heart are given; and then finally we see in happen in Revelation 21. It is only as this old earth and old heavens are destroyed, God's creates a new heaven and new earth, and a New Jerusalem is lowered down from heaven where God will eternally dwell with new men.

d. By the way in the New Jerusalem, there is no temple or house of God, because Jesus and God Himself become the temple. So that all Houses of God are only temporal and insufficient representations of the final Temple of God in the New Jerusalem.

2. Also today, like in the past, part of the big lie is that we are the people of God. When the people were saying "The Temple of God, the temple of God, the temple of God are these", it implied that these people are the people of God. A mistake often made by Houses of Worship today. It is very common to confuse the people of God in any local church with the church roll of the "church of the firstborn written in heaven". You may have some members of your local church who are also members of the church written in heaven; but by no means can you say like the local churches of Christ **{they would object to local but it is true based on the New Testament approximately 128 usages of the word "church"}.** and many others, that the local church roll is the same as the church written in heaven. You see how this is a big lie comparable to that of God's people in the past. If any group could build a building, and sustain a building for years, as the House of God, regardless of what the people were like that came each Sabbath into the House of Worship, there would be no real meaning to "Den of Thieves" in Jeremiah and from Jesus.

3-3: Denial of the Calamities from God on America.

Churches and church members are in self-denial about the calamities from God as well about the Falling Away. It is a corollary of the Big Lie for Today's Churches to Deny Responsible for the current condition of the Land and the People. While at first it may not seem fair to hold the churches in America responsible for the rash of calamities since 911, they were previously responsible for the blessings that came on the American land and the people; and the blessings and curses of keeping covenant with God work

both ways. Yes, God sends these calamities like floods, fire, tornadoes, hurricanes; but the reality of the situation is more that God has long ago established in His Word the blessings of national obedience and the curses of national disobedience, so that it is more a choice of the decisions made by the people in the churches whether blesses or curses will come. And then there is the bottom line with which we must agree as believers in the Bible of Romans where Paul argues that God is the potter, and the clay can not say to the potter, "why have you made me like this?"

The free ride of assumed righteousness is over. You must produce righteousness or have your church cast out of the presence of God. That churches could have their candlesticks removed during the first century in Asia Minor is the clear teachings of the Word of God in Revelation, none the less applicable today; in fact, even more so applicable as we find ourselves deep in the Falling Away. About the only basic Bible question to ask at this point is, "When in the life and status and history of any church, can you say that God has cast them off or Christ has removed their candlestick." Certainly the association or the denominations of the conventions will not remove them as they are no more righteous than the churches, besides they need the money from the church to maintain that vast denominational bureaucracy supported by the people of the churches. {Don't you recall "like the priest like the people, and like the people like the priest?"}

3-4: God's People are God's People.

Did I hear a protest to make the churches responsible for recent calamities in American like God held the Hebrews responsible for the welfare of the land and the people in the Old Testament? Part of that protest would be that we know live under the New Testament {and new covenant} rather than under the Old Covenant of the Old Testament! Well, God's people are God's people no matter in what generation; and if God's people, at least the majority of them, are not in the churches then where are they. I will grant you the argument that during the time of Jeremiah, like Thompson writes in his commentary, God's people did exist that were not Temple goers, also in the time of Elijah numbered by God Himself as 7,000 of His own people who had not bowed the knee to Baal. And granted that while the nature of God's people began to change drastically after the days of Christ on earth as the majority became more Gentiles than Jews, that change was planned by God and predicted early in the Old Testament; and as far as the applicability of the covenant of the Old Testament on God's people today, Jesus made it clear that He with His teachings from God the Father came to make the law {covenant} clear, not to destroy it. Further that "one jot or tittle" would not pass from the law or the Old Testament until all was fulfilled. {If you fail to understand the present nature of God's people as more Gentiles than Jews until the time of

the "fullness of the Gentiles" is complete, then please read and study afresh the book of Romans.}

There is no getting away from the jot and tittle of "If my people which are called by my name" being applicable to the churches of America today; nor is there also an escape from the need for them to: (1) humble themselves, (2) pray, (3) seek the face of God, and (4) turn from their wicked ways. That there is the need for this kind of what might be called "revival" in the land because the recent series of calamities in the land, this is just one evidence, and granted from the Old Testament, that there is the need for this change in the churches. There are many other reasons we see today for a change in the churches, in their "ways and actions" to borrow some words from Jeremiah: (1) the gap that exist between Christ with the teachings of Christ and the churches; (2) the vast proliferation and expansion in unsound Bible doctrine which Paul calls in II Timothy 4:4,5 intolerance toward sound doctrine; (3) obvious follies among church members like noted in II Timothy 3:1-9 which remain publicly unrevealed **{churches have exceeded the capability of the government in the cover-up and P.R. of corruption}**; (4) the lack of love and unity among all churches and Christians which Jesus spoke of in John 14 as an evidence to the world for Christ and evangelist **{today it is working in the opposite direction", and the trend promoted by men like Warren and Olsten is more for the exclusiveness of the local church}**; (5) the massive "heaping up" of Bible teachers with itching ears, some preachers of sound doctrine are heaped out of their churches where the desires of members have taken priority over the control of Christ and the Spirit **{another gift of unsound doctrine from Warren where "purpose" determined by the desires of individual members has been glorified above and beyond that of the Holy Spirit or Christ driven church and life}**, but even more preachers with some new things to say and new ways to say it not in "the pattern of sound words" of the Bible, are heaped up in pulpits across the land, in the Bible chairs of colleges and Seminaries--often in the name of fundamentalism where community customs and traditions have become a substitute for real Bible, all over TV, in conferences where faith resources has become a buzz word to merchandise in a house for God like the Den of Thieves of Jesus' day, and just anyone with a desire to teach Bible is teaching; and while we could go on and on with evidences, only two more are mentioned: (6) the splitting of churches and denominations **{opposite of the "oneness" Jesus prayed for among His people of all time}** caused for the most part by a "fighting spirit" which Pastor James reminds us comes from "the spirit within us that lusteth to envy **{yes, yes, many smart denominational leaders of the SBC have tried to justify the recent split into three parts of the SBC and the wars that continue, you still must be intellectually honest enough to admit with James where these fights come from, and further to admit as almost any preacher knows that there is no salvation apart from premillennialism and the Scofield Bible notes, or so the fundamentalist think}**; and (7) while tares

have always been in the churches like in the kingdom, the size of the tare population in the churches has grown both proportional to booms in population and to the rising tide of the mystery of lawlessness, also the extent of the influence of the tare population in the churches has grown as the world has come to exert more and more influence in the churches, often trying to eliminate all distinction of between "in the world" and "of the world".

Even as a Baptist leader of 50 years ago said, "We Baptists are many but we are not much", so today we have progressed far beyond that among Methodist, Baptists, Presbyterians, and all people who chose to call themselves by the name of God to the extent that now we can call churches, like Jesus and Jeremiah did, a "Den of Thieves". Granted it is not fair to call all churches across the board a "Den of Thieves", although certainly the series of calamities across the land demand that most of them be called that, we must use the same criterion that Jeremiah and Jesus used to call any group of God's People a "Den of Thieves".