

Jeremiah's commentary on the modern church

I have made the point elsewhere that Judah exiled in Babylon typifies the end-time church ruled by the Babylonish antichristian world government that is to come. The return of the Jews to Jerusalem after the exile typifies the restoration of God's people to their inheritance; the construction of the second temple speaks of the erection of the house of God (the church) in the new world.

This means that the period immediately before this, the situation in Judah prior to the exile, refers to the time just before the rule of the antichristian world government, which I have affirmed, is the time that we are in today. It is a time of tribulation for the church.

This is the period during which Jeremiah prophesied so powerfully; prophecies that his contemporaries rejected, but which time proved to be true. In general Jeremiah castigates the Jews for their sins against both God and man, chiefly for their idolatry, which resulted in judgment. The Jews denied their calling from God and ruined their testimony with spiritual adultery.

All this means that there is great value in looking at some themes in Jeremiah's message and seeing how far they correlate with what is going on in the church today. It is my view that this correlation is both accurate and significant. We have much to learn from the clarity of the judgments spoken by Jeremiah on behalf of the Lord.

Relationship with God issues

There is no fear of God in the church

'Do you not fear Me?' says the LORD. 'Will you not tremble at My presence'. Jer 5:22

They do not say in their heart, 'Let us now fear the LORD our God'. Jer 5:24

If there is one thing that summarises the modern church, it is that there is no fear of God.

In the past, even secular, worldly people had a certain respect and fear of God, despite being sinful atheists. Thus, for instance, non-Christian men would take off their hat when entering a church or while standing at a funeral prayer. Today, supposedly Christian Charismatic worship leaders wear baseball caps and headscarves when leading worship. This shows that modern Charismatics have less fear and respect for God than previous non-Christians.¹

Today, people that call themselves Christian have no fear to do anything they like in a church service, and thus behave in multiple wicked ways, even blaspheming. Because they have no fear for God they feel at liberty to do anything they like. Recently an American youth leader at a conference of many thousands repeatedly blasphemed on stage and saw nothing wrong with it. When subsequently criticised by church people other leaders actually defended his actions. There is no fear of God.

Today 'Christians' can sin, even in church meetings and couldn't care less because they do not fear God. Christians attack and slander other brothers, even using lies,

¹ The covering of men's head in church is forbidden in 1 Cor 11:4, 7.

misrepresentation and false testimony; the internet is full of this. Some supposed leaders have even called for the death of certain critics or wished that they could shoot them personally. There is no fear of God.

Some false but famous Charismatic preachers openly affirm that believers are 'little gods' that have the power to command God to do their bidding under certain circumstances (faith and confession). Others use magic techniques² to command the fulfilment of their dreams and desires. All this reveals no fear of God.

They do not fear God because they do not want to obey his commandments. They claim to love Jesus but Jesus himself said, 'If you love Me, keep My commandments' (Jn 14:15) and 'He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me', (Jn 14:21). Thus you can see those who do not fear God in the way that they disobey God's word time after time.

Only a fool disobeys God, the Lord of Hosts and ruler of all things. Non-Christians that wilfully disobey God will be sentenced to hell for all eternity. Christians that disobey God unrepentantly will be chastised and suffer; in some cases this judgment leads to death.³ Between these two are people that call themselves Christians but are only professing believers; they too will suffer the judgment of hell; all their church attendance will gain them nothing. Only a fool would tolerate this. Why not get right with God and gain hope for the future? 'Fear God and do well' is good advice.

But those who do not fear God fail to see the simplicity of this. They claim lofty things; they claim to have spiritual power; but they are fools because they do not fear God. No one can sin unrepentantly and fear God. Those who justify and excuse their sin will face an angry God and will not find grace on the Last Day.

Who would not fear You, O King of the nations? For this is Your rightful due. For among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, *there is none like You.* Jer 10:7

Rebellion against God in the church

But this people has a defiant and rebellious heart; they have revolted and departed. They do not say in their heart, 'Let us now fear the LORD our God'. Jer 5:23-24

They *are* all stubborn rebels, walking as slanderers. *They are* bronze and iron, they *are* all corrupters. Jer 6:28

Rebellion against God is extremely serious; it is worse than witchcraft.⁴ It is the outcome of the lack of godly fear. Those who let their failure to fear God lead to outright rebellion are lost; they were never truly saved.

Rebellion is to revolt against God's word and to disobey his commands. Where do we begin to illustrate this today – such disobedience of Scripture is rampant everywhere. There are church leaders in this country that have even stated that we do not need the Bible at all. Apart from that, every false prophet who leads people away from Scripture is a rebel.

In Judah the majority of the people were classed as rebels and these died in the exile or the wars and famine that preceded it; only 4,600 went into Babylon as exiles proving that

² That is what the visualisation of Yonggi Cho basically is.

³ E.g. Ananias and Sapphira plus the Corinthians that partook of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner.

⁴ 1 Sam 15:23, 'For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you.'

Isaiah was right when he prophesied a very small remnant would be saved. Only a small part of the population returned to Jerusalem seventy years later. If disobedience to God's word is an expression of rebellion, then rebellion is commonplace in the church today.

Let me illustrate rebellion with a particular sin. A person ceases to fear God and his word and commits adultery. This is sin caused by a lack of fear of God and disobedience to the Bible. However, this person was a true believer whose fall was not final. He repents of his sin and seeks God's forgiveness and leads a good life afterwards. David is an example of this; a believer who makes a mistake but later repents. However, another person commits adultery and never repents. This person had been a church leader and was seen as a godly, righteous man. He preached great sermons and was widely loved; but he dies in his sin. This is rebellion and it shows that the person was never truly saved, despite all his church experience.

The majority of the Judaeans were rebels who died in their sin.

The lack of true faith in the church

'Judah has not turned to Me with her whole heart, but in pretence', says the LORD. Jer 3:10

This is just as serious a matter today as it was in the time of Judah. Then, the elect constituted only a small remnant; the majority of the Jews were unbelievers who suffered God's wrath. Similarly today there are huge numbers of people in churches who think that they are saved when in fact they are not. Jesus himself warned us that many are called but few are chosen.

I believe that relatively few in the churches have turned to God with their whole heart; the majority of 'Christians' have only pretended to do so. This is why so few people fear God and so many Christians feel able to excuse their sins.

They flattered Him with their mouth, and they lied to Him with their tongue; for their heart was not steadfast with Him, nor were they faithful in His covenant. Ps 78:36-37

The church has forgotten God

My people have forgotten Me days without number. Jer 2:32

They have forgotten the LORD their God. Jer 3:21

You have forgotten Me and trusted in falsehood. Jer 13:25

My people have forgotten Me, they have burned incense to worthless idols. And they have caused themselves to stumble in their ways, From the ancient paths, to walk in pathways and not on a highway, to make their land desolate and a perpetual hissing; everyone who passes by it will be astonished and shake his head. I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy; I will show them the back and not the face in the day of their calamity. Jer 18:15-17

How can it be that a church which uses the names of God and his Son every day have forgotten God?

It is so often true that calling upon the name of God in praise and song is just empty words. Evangelicals would say that when Christian cults and sects worship God, it is an empty thing; it has no spiritual value. If someone has followed a false Gospel that preaches a false Christ (Gal 1:6-7) then the subsequent worship in that place is not genuine. They may use the right words but they have no value.

In the same way evangelical churches can spout empty praise all day long if the hearts of the people are not right. The point in Jeremiah's time is not that the worship of Yahweh ceased; it continued day in and day out. However, in addition people did not worship God genuinely, but offered incense to Baal, 'the queen of heaven',⁵ and other gods. The services continued in the temple but at home people worshipped an idol upon their roof or on the nearest hilltop.

Thus the church can superficially follow God in all sorts of forms, and yet in its heart has really forgotten God.

If a person worships with the congregation on Sunday but from Monday to Saturday sins with abandon and spends all his time celebrating in the world, then that person has forgotten God. If a person attends church but has no qualms about slandering brethren, spreading gossip and justifying his sin, then he has forgotten God. If a person sings church hymns on Sunday but regularly blasphemes Christ then he has forgotten God.

According to our texts above, Christians forget God when they:

- Trust in falsehood.
- Have idols before God.
- Stumble in their ways.
- Walk in paths that are not from God, not following Christ.
- Ignore the ancient paths (i.e. ignoring God's word).

Just one of these means that God is forgotten in reality; yet many supposed Christians commit several of these sins.

If God's word tells you not to envy, but you are envious and do nothing about it, then you have forgotten God because you have forgotten his word. If you ignore God's word then you ignore God. You cannot ignore the Bible and still be a disciple of Christ. The Bible is the practical, material expression of the words of Christ given by the Spirit of Christ; you cannot forget Christ's word and claim to know Christ.

The modern church is utterly ignorant of God's word, and many even reject it as being valid in the current world. These people have forgotten God, or never knew him in the first place.

The church has committed spiritual adultery

Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know, and *then* come and stand before Me in this house which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered to do all these abominations'? Jer 7:9-10

According to the number of your cities were your gods, O Judah; and *according to* the number of the streets of Jerusalem you have set up altars to *that* shameful thing, altars to burn incense to Baal. Jer 11:13

For the LORD of hosts, who planted you, has pronounced doom against you for the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke Me to anger in offering incense to Baal. Jer 11:17

⁵ This is Ashtoreth; the moon goddess of the Phoenicians, their principal female deity; frequently associated with Baal, the sun-god, their chief male deity. These names often occur in the plural (Ashtaroth, Baalim). She was the Ishtar of the Accadians and the Astarte of the Greeks. Under the name of Ishtar, she was one of the great deities of the Assyrians. Solomon introduced the worship of this idol (1Ki 11:33) as the 'queen of heaven' (Jer 44:25).

They have burned incense to worthless idols. And they have caused themselves to stumble. Jer 18:15

They have forsaken Me and made this an alien place, because they have burned incense in it to other gods whom neither they, their fathers, nor the kings of Judah have known, and have filled this place with the blood of the innocents (they have also built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire *for* burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or speak, nor did it come into My mind). Jer 19:4-5

They have offered incense to Baal and poured out drink offerings to other gods, to provoke Me to anger. Jer 32:29

Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying: 'You and your wives have spoken with your mouths and fulfilled with your hands, saying, "We will surely keep our vows that we have made, to burn incense to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her." You will surely keep your vows and perform your vows!' Jer 44:25

This was the most serious of Israel's sins. Judah began in a better place but ended up being worse than the Northern Kingdom (Jer 3:10-11).

Spiritual adultery is the sin of worshipping idols and trusting in foreign gods rather than God. Usually the sin involved syncretism; having a superficial faith and ritualistic worship of the true God but secretly placing more trust in Baal or Ashtaroath. Thus Judah worshipped both Yahweh and Baal. Sacrifices were given to God in the temple but more often Baal was worshipped at home.

The modern church is just as syncretistic as Judah, or perhaps worse. Some sections of the church today are filled with idol worship and foreign gods. Covering this subject succinctly is difficult, as it is so pervasive.

The worst of idol worship began in the mid-1800s and progressed until today. In the 19th century the idols were rooted in rationalism; thus liberalism, modernism, evolutionary theory and new forms of Bible criticism elevated the place of secular thinking above God's word. Miracles were rejected; the authority and authenticity of the Bible denied and human logic given prior respect. Some parts of the church continued in this liberalism in the 20th century and ceased to have any testimony of God at all; this is despite the fact that recent discoveries have shown that most of the rationalistic claims 150 years ago have been proved false.⁶

In the last 40 years the pendulum has swung and logical rationalism has been replaced by sensual Post-Modernism.⁷ Along with this has been the increasing acceptance of oriental religion and occult philosophy in churches and the world. This is most clearly defined for Christians by the 'paradigm shift' demanded by John Wimber. This was the acceptance of a pagan trust in the esoteric and a shift away from dogmatic truth.

The net result of this in Charismatic Churches (already open to many occult notions since the 60s) was complete acceptance of ideas, doctrines and practices that originated in pagan religions. The gullibility of Wimber himself led him to accept ghosts, nymphs, dryads (tree

⁶ For example, claims that writing is recent and that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch are now debased. Claims that archaeology denied the Bible have also been shown to be false; all archaeology has proved the truth of the Bible, such as the testimony of an ancient Hittite Empire, now confirmed by modern archaeology but originally denied by archaeologists in the 19th century.

⁷ Post Modernism is against systematic modernism and sceptical about scientific panaceas.

spirits), spiritual auras, astral travelling, demonic invasion, and even the value of saintly relics.

To list current practices that have their roots in the occult or oriental religions would require a book. To name a few: Yonggi Cho's teaching on visualisation to incubate faith and get your desired objects is an ancient occult technique but features particularly in a brand of Buddhism (Soka Gakkai) popular in South East Asia. Essentially it is a form of magic. The phenomenological effects seen in the Toronto Blessing which were so damaging (screaming, shouting, falling backwards, wild jumping etc.) are the same as produced by the dangerous Hindu Kundalini Yoga and are developed in the same way by extreme passivity and suggestibility to a leader. Many of the methods used in Charismatic healing meetings derive from Mesmerism (hypnotism) which originated in oriental occultism.

It is not just these extreme matters, more ordinary features also derive from paganism and occultism. Tongues spoken as gibberish is not Biblical but it is a feature of witchcraft, paganism and oriental religions.⁸ The laying on of hands to impart power and gifts is common in occultism and paganism. The repetitive chanting of Charismatic worship, and the singing in the Spirit that leads to passivity, is common in shamanism and pagan religions but has no place in Scripture.⁹

Many features of modern Charismatic churches are straight out of the occult and heathen religion. This is idol worship and spiritual adultery.

The hubris of self-esteem in the church – the failure to listen to God

They did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels *and* the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward. Jer 7:24

'They have walked according to the dictates of their own hearts and after the Baals, which their fathers taught them', therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Behold, I will feed them, this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink'. Jer 9:14-15

Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but everyone followed the dictates of his evil heart; therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded *them* to do, but *which* they have not done. Jer 11:8

This evil people, who refuse to hear My words, who follow the dictates of their hearts, and walk after other gods to serve them and worship them, shall be just like this sash which is profitable for nothing. Jer 13:10

And you have done worse than your fathers, for behold, each one follows the dictates of his own evil heart, so that no one listens to Me. Jer 16:12

They said, ... 'we will walk according to our own plans, and we will every one obey the dictates of his evil heart'. Jer 18:12

Just as selfishness is common in modern society, so selfishness has become commonplace in the church today. There was a time in church history when whole congregations were devoted to doing good to others and were engaged in charitable work. Many gave their whole lives and spent themselves in service to others, often for people they did not even know in foreign lands. Today it seems to me that most Christians are focused on what they can get for themselves: healing, security, money, affluence, cherished luxuries, excitement, entertainment in church services, full-time ministry, power etc.

⁸ Biblical tongues were real human languages spoken by someone not trained in them.

⁹ 'Singing in the Spirit' in 1 Corinthians is not group chanting on a single note to a rock band but the prayer in tongues that is sung and not recited.

I know many people who are dissatisfied with their church, who abhor false teaching within it and loath many practices of authoritarian leaders. Yet they stay there year after year because they like the worship and social life. This is selfishness leading to disobedience. As long as they can have their Charismatic shot in the arm every Sunday morning, they will tolerate all sorts of unbiblical practices. This is just plain disobedience.

Jeremiah is the prophet who tells us that the human heart is desperately corrupt and wicked (Jer 17:9). This does not just apply to non-believers; the heart of the old man in believers is equally corrupt; this is why they can sin. It is vital that Christians put on the new man every day and continue to walk in the Spirit; if not they will express the old nature with its wicked heart.

In the passages above God condemns following the heart of the old nature. Those who let their old nature dictate to them will not only fail but will be judged by God. True Christians will be chastised to repent but non-Christians will suffer eternally.

The worst possible counsel you can give a person is to 'follow your heart', which is a mantra for the modern age. I have known people follow their heart into fornication, adultery, apostasy, and all sorts of wickedness. This is why we have the Bible. Our heart can deceive us but God's word teaches us the way to go. 'Follow God's word' is the only safe counsel.

Despite this, the last 40 years has seen an explosion of church counselling that is based on elevating self-esteem. This is the opposite of the counsel of Jesus to deny yourself and to take up your cross. Ministry after ministry and counsellor after counsellor has taught people that elevating self-esteem resolves all their insecurity. This is nonsense. It is just selfishness gone wild. If people actually esteemed others instead of themselves and sought their good they would find that they would gain far more peace. Apart from that, such counsel is Biblical:

Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Phil 2:4

Therefore let us pursue the things *which make* for peace and the things by which one may edify another. Rm 14:19

We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Rm 15:1

Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's *well-being*. 1 Cor 10:24

If you really fulfil *the* royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself', you do well. Jm 2:8

Sadly, the modern church is filled with selfishness and often follows the dictates of its wicked heart.

The prostitution of the church

The mercantile factory in the church

'Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen *it*', says the LORD. Jer 7:11

'Mercantile', which arises from the Italian for 'merchant', simply means relating to trade or commerce. Before Britain had an imperial empire it had a mercantile empire based upon

annexing foreign states to use as trading bases. The church as a mercantile factory means that it has become a place for making profit, partly through trading actual goods, but also through trading spiritual 'blessings'. It is a place where people can get rich through making promises and selling stuff.

Material commerce

The modern church is riddled with commercial enterprises which historic churches simply would not recognise. Even those few churches that seek to do good are corrupted by commerce. They sell audio CDs and DVDs of church sermons and claim back tax paid through Gift-Aid. They establish conferences, Bible camps and seminars which people have to pay to attend. Often such churches are already fat on the tithed contributions of the saints. If you must tape teaching, why not make it freely available to your flock?

However scandalous churches go much further than this. Many churches have taken sermon and teaching media into a full-blown money-spinning organisation of its own. Highly specialised, fast-copying equipment is used to peddle its wares to a submissive captured audience who soak up media from their church but fail to read or listen to alternative material. Then books by the leader are vigorously marketed from the platform so that the whole congregation buys them.

Then there is the marketed media which is pushed outside the church boundaries. I know one teaching VHS tape in the early 90s, by a preacher in the UK, which alone earned tens of thousands of pounds. In America, mega-churches and TV evangelists can earn millions from one item.

Spiritual commerce

This profiteering is just sickening. It is where some authoritarian figure, often a TV preacher, promises healing or wealth to those who send in their hard earned cash. This is little different to the promises of the Roman Church to provide salvation for those who paid for indulgences, which provoked the Reformation.

Then there are those who write a book claiming to have discovered some spiritual secret which can release you into all sorts of blessing, which you can get when you buy his book. Only fools would do this since the Bible promises to provide everything you need to grow in grace (2 Tim 3:15-16) at no cost.

Leadership commerce

Among My people are found wicked *men*; They lie in wait as one who sets snares; They set a trap; They catch men. As a cage is full of birds, So their houses *are* full of deceit. Therefore they have become great and grown rich. They have grown fat, they are sleek; Yes, they surpass the deeds of the wicked; They do not plead the cause, The cause of the fatherless; Yet they prosper, And the right of the needy they do not defend. Shall I not punish *them* for these *things?*' says the LORD. 'Shall I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this?' Jer 5:26-29

This is where it becomes very profitable to be a church leader or a famous preacher. Many have become millionaires on the back of this. Using deceit instead of Biblical teaching, such men garner massive profits, much of which comes from tithes of gullible followers.

These famous preachers do not actually do any proper leadership job; they do not counsel people, they do not visit folk at home; they do not catechise; they don't even get involved in the running of the church. All they do is perform on stage and collect millions. They don't help the poor and needy but they use deceit to fool people.

It is well known that certain Charismatic preachers have fleets of limousines, dedicated security staff, Lear Jets (one has his own airport), multiple homes, servants and accounts in tax havens.

Even more apparently godly leaders in evangelical organisations charge huge amounts to come and speak in local venues. Such folk advertise that for several thousand pounds they will come and do their show in your church.

Building commerce

This is where a dedicated church building, being a large open space, becomes a valuable asset to those who wish to hire it. Many churches that have gone down the route of building or converting large buildings for use as a church rent it out at great cost when it is not in use for the church. I know one Charismatic church building that is regularly used by the town council because it has the best appropriate convention space in the area, plus it has a convenient car park opposite.

Meetings commerce

This is where meetings are televised and sold to TV networks at huge profits. Often the programmes are televised church services, but sometimes they are videos of conferences, seminars and celebrations. Some are both televised and sold as DVDs.

In addition there are there are the videos of worship times and sermons posted on YouTube which are accessed free but often have lucrative adverts preceding them.

The commerce of gifts

Almost every modern church pushes an unbiblical method of giving. This is based on a series of errors:

- That the church under the New Covenant is required to tithe; that is, give a tenth of unearned income.
- That the tithe must be always given to the leadership of the church to use as it sees fit.
- All the chief workers in the church should be full-time and paid a salary and pension scheme.
- Key church leaders should be assisted to buy a local home, or even be given one freely.
- The church should always seek to purchase a dedicated building for development of church activities.
- In addition, gift days are necessary whenever the church activates a new strategy, sets up new leadership posts or requires new capital expenditure.

All of these premises are false; there is no Scriptural value in them at all. This is not the place to discuss these issues in full; however, the key NT teaching on giving is that:

- It must be freely given (not under pressure).
- It must be based upon what you determine is the right amount as you prosper.
- That it is only given as God directs you and no one else (in terms of amount and target).
- That the main target of gifts are the poor and needy in your locality.
- The only leaders who are full-time are itinerant preachers and no one else. Even these must rely on faith gifts not a salary.

Den of thieves

The modern church is a veritable den of thieves. Very few churches have avoided the charge that they make a great deal of money from the saints, often through deception. Those supposed churches and church leaders that have become rich through the gifts of

the saints have no credibility whatsoever; they are charlatans. No man should become rich through ministry; the Lord condemned the rich and praised the weak.

The church should be a place of giving and not receiving. The church should be giving of its prosperity to the poor, and vulnerable in society. Even the apostate Roman church throughout history did this much; many monasteries and monks did huge amounts of charitable work. Yet today's modern churches, though they may criticise the errors of the Catholics, cannot even match the good charitable works that the Roman church did. Instead they amass large amounts of money to themselves.

Personal sins in the church

Lying in the church

'And like their bow they have bent their tongues for lies. They are not valiant for the truth on the earth. For they proceed from evil to evil, and they do not know Me', says the LORD. Jer 9:3

[They] will not speak the truth; they have taught their tongue to speak lies; they weary themselves to commit iniquity. Jer 9:5

Sadly, there is a great deal of lying in the modern church. Like the world, it seems that many Christians feel that lying is a small necessity and that 'white lies' are acceptable. This itself is a lie. All lies are sin and there is never a need to lie.

As well as a lack of truth in the church, being a lack of God's word, there is also a lack of telling the truth. This pervades all things, from the lies of false teachers bringing error into the church to the personal lies that people tell each other.

The worst form of lying is bearing false witness. This, in itself, pervades the church today where ministries fall over themselves to personally slander their critics. I have lost count of the times when I have criticised the error of someone in a logical, Biblical fashion and instead of attacking the argument, they have instead slandered me in public, failing to deal with any of the points that I made at all. This is called an ad hominem argument (attacking the person not the message) but it is also slander and bearing false witness.

Those who lie will never bear any spiritual fruit.

Therefore, putting away lying, 'Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbour', for we are members of one another. Eph 4:25

Do not lie to one another. Col 3:9

Hypocrisy and deceit in the church

'Their tongue is an arrow shot out; It speaks deceit; One speaks peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in his heart he lies in wait. Shall I not punish them for these things?' says the LORD. 'Shall I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this?' Jer 9:8-9

Everyone will deceive his neighbour. Jer 9:5

'Your dwelling place is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know Me', says the LORD. Jer 9:6

Deception is the prime characteristic of the end times; both the Lord and the apostle Paul warned us that this would be so. Likewise, deceit in the church becomes so strong that the

church falls into apostasy. Today there is widespread deception in both the church and the world.

When Christians fall into deception it is because they refuse to know God. Those that know God will be strong and do exploits (Dan 11:32) but those who do not know God will collapse in deception and believe all sorts of erroneous things.

Deception is falling away, that is what the word means. Those who accept deceitful doctrines will apostatise from the faith and show that they do not know God. On this judgment we can say already that the vast majority of the Christian church in the world today is already apostate because it is filled with deceitful teachings and aberrant practices.

Wickedness

Men whom I will slay in My anger and My fury, all for whose wickedness I have hidden My face from this city. Jer 33:5

There is a great deal of wickedness in the modern church. Wickedness is evil, bad, everything that is the opposite of good or holy. When a church or its leaders do something bad or fail to do the good that they are called to do, then they are wicked.

For instance, when a church is called to care for the poor, raise money for the needy and vulnerable, but instead spends it on expensive buildings and providing affluent salaries for a multitude of leaders, it is wicked. The failure to care for the poor is a repeated divine criticism of Judah's kings, princes and rulers. God takes this matter very seriously. Yet in a time when 4 million people are going hungry in the UK, few evangelical churches are actively involved in providing food and support.¹⁰ Middle class churches just sit in their ivory towers wasting money on building schemes and leaders while children are starving just a few miles away from them. This is wickedness.

I have written many papers demonstrating that the present coalition government is rousing God's anger by making the poor much poorer, making the rich much richer, and plunging literally millions into poverty. The greatest suffering is amongst working people who cannot afford food and their bills, and the disabled who have borne the brunt of austerity cuts. This is wickedness. And yet many churches and Christians have supported this policy, while the wife of one famous church leader in the biggest Charismatic stream is actually an advisor to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions who is causing all this criminal devastation for political reasons (it is not pragmatic and does not save money).¹¹

Aside from this neglect, there is outright commission of iniquitous acts. Many famous and popular church leaders have lied, cheated on taxes, been caught in sex scandals, have been guilty of fornication, adultery and homosexuality, have been found to be alcoholics or drug

¹⁰ A number of liberal churches are, however. I know that a few evangelical churches do some work in this area, but a few soup kitchens here and there are not enough. The whole church needs to abandon its false practices and do charitable work.

¹¹ As many expected, the national debt is actually going up; tax receipts are diminished, growth is based on a flimsy whisper of bank speculation, cheap money and more debt, the supposed recovery is much later than other advanced western nations, banks have not been regulated properly, the housing bubble is out of control, wages have not recovered and are being squeezed, manufacturing is in decline and a worse than ever crash is imminent. The desperation of the Chancellor is shown in the fact that GDP also now includes prostitution and the porn industry. Proof that the recovery is false is shown in the fact that interest rates have not gone up. One example of how austerity measures do not save money is that if you cause malnutrition and hunger, people who were previously contributors end up in hospital where a bed costs £4-5,000 per night.

abusers, have left wives and families – and so it goes on. There has never been a time when there has been so much immorality amongst church leaders.

Within the church membership it is common to find expressions of significant sins that no one seems to care about. Instead of people repenting and confessing their sins to one another, we find people boasting about sins committed, such as cheating the taxman, fiddling expenses, buying lottery tickets, immorality and so on. I once met a prospective Baptist church leader who saw nothing wrong with visiting prostitutes. I knew a pastor's son who chose his university on the basis of being able to sleep with as many girls as possible during his time there. I knew another Baptist church moderator who regularly used lies and duplicity to deal with church problems that he could not face.

Despite all of this, it is easy to find church websites that are full of wickedness. One famous Jewish Root teacher goes out of his way (in on-line newsletters) to melodramatically castigate his critics in the foulest ways imaginable (I have been a victim). He uses slander, defamation, lies, bears false witness, uses highly derogatory and hateful terms, attacks innocent people that cannot retaliate, has called for the death of critics, and used wrath. One church denomination even took him to court for defamation, endangerment and lies, and won. Yet he is highly popular internationally, despite his teaching being founded on heresies of the worst and most blasphemous kind.

Other websites are filled with hate and entirely focus their ministry on one problem to the exclusion of the whole counsel of God. Thus there are churches that appear to do nothing but vilify Gay people in the most unkind ways. No good will come from ministry founded upon hate. We could continue in this vein.

Without any doubt, there is a great deal of wickedness in the modern church.

Issues related to a lack of truth and knowledge

The lack of Biblical understanding in the church

For My people *are* foolish, they have not known Me. They *are* silly children, and they have no understanding. They *are* wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. Jer 4:22

Hear this now, O foolish people, without understanding, who have eyes and see not, and who have ears and hear not. Jer 5:21

They are altogether dull-hearted and foolish. Jer 10:8

How many in the modern church could be called 'silly children' with 'no understanding'? Such are not necessarily wicked people who strive after sin like some, they are just extremely foolish and end up snared by Satan through believing stupid things.

For instance, in the mid-90s another deception filled the evangelical church for several months. This was the nonsense of gold dust on people appearing during frenzied meetings or gold replacement fillings appearing automatically. There was not one single accredited proven case of this; not one. I met people who were in meetings where this was claimed to have happened and who believed it to be true. When I asked if they saw it with their own eyes they said, '*Well, actually no*'. After a time it was so farcical that the claims just drifted away. All those who believed this lie were 'silly children'.

Another example was the massive impetus given to claims about Celtic spirituality in the 90s, now largely disappeared. This was laced with claims about the miraculous gifts

experienced by the Celts in the early British church. This was mainly sponsored by a radical Charismatic stream that was already neglecting the Bible and accepting all sorts of nonsense (one branch even performed a rain dance in Wales in the town centre!). I met the original proponent of this heresy and debated it with him and later wrote a book about it.¹² A serious study of the Celtic church shows that the claims of miracles were mostly legends and myths that grew up later, such as Brendan camping overnight on an island that turned out to be a whale. The movement was nothing but a caricature and a return to pagan mysticism dressed up as Christianity.¹³ People who followed this mysticism were foolish, silly children that followed myths and fables.

The reason why people follow this sort of nonsense is that they have become gullible because a) they do not know God and b) they neglect Biblical teaching. As a result of their ignorance they accept rubbish instead of godly truth.

Foolishness follows a dearth of understanding. Understanding comes from accepting Biblical truth. It is the job of genuine teachers to impart understanding to God's people and equip them to minister truth. When people have understanding, they are then equipped to serve God and walk after him in holiness.

For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. Col 1:9-10

Leadership issues

False prophecy in the church

The prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after *things that* do not profit. Jer 2:8

Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who prophesy in My name, whom I did not send, and who say, 'Sword and famine shall not be in this land' -- 'By sword and famine those prophets shall be consumed!' Jer 14:15

They prophesied by Baal and caused My people Israel to err. Jer 23:13

Thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets: 'Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall; for from the prophets of Jerusalem Profaneness has gone out into all the land.' Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless; they speak a vision of their own heart, not from the mouth of the LORD'. Jer 23:15-16

I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in My name, saying, 'I have dreamed, I have dreamed!' How long will *this* be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies? Indeed *they are* prophets of the deceit of their own heart, who try to make My people forget My name by their dreams which everyone tells his neighbour, as their fathers forgot My name for Baal. Jer 23:25-27

Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They make you worthless; they speak a vision of their own heart, not from the mouth of the LORD'. Jer 23:16

¹² 'Modern Celtic Spirituality'; still available on Amazon (I get no royalties).

¹³ The real Celtic church contained many fine saints that held Biblical doctrines.

How long will *this* be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies? Indeed *they are* prophets of the deceit of their own heart, who try to make My people forget My name by their dreams which everyone tells his neighbour, as their fathers forgot My name for Baal. Jer 23:26-27

The modern church is filled with the worst forms of false prophecy. It is riddled with it. There are extreme movements such as the New Apostolic Reformation (the old Apostolic and Prophetic / Signs and Wonders movements) where multitudes of men and women claim to be authoritative prophets according to the style of an OT prophet.

All this is despite the words of Jesus himself who said that this sort of office of prophet ceased with John (Matt 11:13; Lk 16:16). This is why we do not see the phrase, 'Thus says the Lord' in the NT.

These prophets speak and write all sorts of hubris and mystical rubbish that, amazingly, sell in millions. One of these charlatans even describes visions where he talks to the apostle Paul (impossible Lk 16:26) and says that Paul submitted to him. What hubris! Others teach that these prophets will soon rule the world. They are going to have a shock when the Lord returns. Repeatedly such Charismatic prophets get caught up in scandal after scandal, exposed as adulterers, liars, alcoholics, sexual abusers and homosexuals.¹⁴ Yet people still listen to them!

Below these charlatans are a more moderate layer of Charismatic self-styled prophets that criticise the shenanigans of the radical prophets and yet are themselves false prophets. They still adopt the pose of an authoritative OT type of prophet and claim to know the future. Often these types of prophets have a different eschatology to the former sort and often teach in messianic Christian circles.

Below these are the many people that prophesy in the churches; people who are not considered to have the office of prophet but who regularly prophesy in the church.

All of these speak out of their own false hearts just like the many prophets in Judah. Their prophecies fail because they are not prophecies at all.

These prophecies arise from various sources.

There are the prophecies that simply come from over enthusiastic fleshly emotionalism and mysticism. Such folk may not mean any harm but it is dangerous none the less. I have seen many simple folk get caught up in the atmosphere of a Charismatic worship time and then prophesy something that was just rubbish or well meaning words. At their worst they prophesied a future event that did not happen. This is serious and requires repentance. Many famous church leaders have done this and never repented.

Then there is the prophecy that is slightly darker and arises from a person's old nature and is spoken in deliberate falsity. This usually comes from pride and seeking to impress people.

Then there are the prophecies that come as a result of demonic temptation. Perhaps a good man can be caught up in this and submit to a rogue thought unaware that he is being manipulated by the enemy. This needs repentance too.

¹⁴ See my book 'Charismatic Catastrophe' for examples.

Above this there is the outright satanic control of a person whose ministry of a prophet is entirely controlled and empowered by demonic means. Such are the radical Charismatic prophets whose ministry is downright heretical continually and whose lives have been found wanting.

Through all of the above the Charismatic church today, of all stripes, is plagued with false prophets. They are worthless and lead to deception.

False shepherds leading the church astray

My people have been lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray; they have turned them away *on* the mountains. They have gone from mountain to hill; they have forgotten their resting place. All who found them have devoured them; and their adversaries said, 'We have not offended, Because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, The LORD, the hope of their fathers.' Move from the midst of Babylon, go out of the land of the Chaldeans. Jer 50:6-8

'Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!' says the LORD. Jer 23:1

And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria: They prophesied by Baal and caused My people Israel to err. Also I have seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem: They commit adultery and walk in lies; they also strengthen the hands of evildoers, So that no one turns back from his wickedness. Jer 23:13-14

'Therefore behold, I *am* against the prophets', says the LORD, 'who steal My words every one from his neighbour. Behold, I *am* against the prophets', says the LORD, 'who use their tongues and say, "He says". Behold, I *am* against those who prophesy false dreams', says the LORD, 'and tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies and by their recklessness. Yet I did not send them or command them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all', says the LORD. Jer 23:30-32

The Lord's people today have forgotten their resting-place. They are sheep that have been scattered on every hill searching for a mountain top experience but have lost their trust in God. They are a flock that has been led astray. As a result they are being devoured on the right hand and on the left.

They are devoured by heresies, by exploitative leaders, by desires for selfish experiences and self-satisfaction. All in all they are being devoured by the enemy that walks around seeking people to devour, people who are not protected by a shepherd who cares for them more than himself.

The church has been progressively led astray; deceived from following God's word to following every sort of false teaching possible. By failing to search out God's word they have submitted to errors and lies, often through the fantasies of false prophets.

Being astray means walking on a path that is not following God, is not following Christ, and thus is following the enemy. The deception is rank in that they think they are doing well in this straying, but in fact they are getting closer and closer to the pit of hell.

Walking after Christ, walking in the Spirit, requires a very careful consideration of God's word in order to be on a straight and narrow path. The narrower the path the more care to check with God that it is safe. If you deviate even one degree from a narrow path of following Christ, before long you are on a path that is miles away from the true path. Thus the modern church is generally miles away from where it should be. It is not following God but is following the enemy.

The shepherds that should have cared for the sheep, fed them God's word and directed them on the narrow path, have instead fed themselves and guided the sheep onto rogue paths that lead to sin and wickedness. The flock of God today is walking aimlessly without proper shepherding towards destruction.

True shepherds put themselves on the line to nurture and protect the sheep. Modern shepherds have elevated their status in the church, stolen the people's money, garnered for themselves riches and authority, or even celebrity, and have completely neglected the sheep.

There is no Biblical church leadership that is not directly involved in caring for the sheep. That is because the only church leaders are elders who are all committed to being pastors (shepherds). Yet today we see church leaders who never get involved with the sheep at all. They never visit the sheep at home to catechise and counsel them, They delegate all the leadership jobs to lower unbiblical orders of leaders. Yet they gallivant around the world from conference to conference soaking up celebrity. This is utterly unbiblical. Such are false shepherds. With shepherding like this, no wonder the sheep get led astray.

Trusting in men; celebrity in the church

Thus says the LORD: 'Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the LORD'. Jer 17:5

It is odd that the more certain false shepherds behave wrongly, the more many flocks follow them. It is like an abused wife that cannot leave her cruel husband.

Thus many in the church today trust in the men that they follow and comfort themselves that they are in the church of so and so, who is a big name. They stop thinking for themselves and only do what the name tells them to do. They cease giving to the poor as God directs and give all their money to the name. Thus the church often becomes little more than a pop show where people crowd to see this or that man.

Sometimes people travel thousands of miles to see the latest prophet or speaker because they feel that God is there but not in their home church. When the Toronto Blessing began, thousands of people travelled thousands of miles to get the blessing because God was with the men in Toronto. This behaviour only proves that those who did this had no faith. We do not need to travel to find God, he is always with his people but is only perceived by faith. When the mystical phenomena moves on, so these people travel to the next place where exotic things are occurring. When Toronto died down people travelled to Pensacola. When that died down people travelled to Lakeland. And so it goes on.

All of this is trusting in men. It is folly.

The more you trust in man, the more you make the flesh your strength and the less you trust God.

Rejection of true ministry

Then they said, 'Come and let us devise plans against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come and let us attack him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words'. Jer 18:18

Therefore the princes were angry with Jeremiah, and they struck him and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe. For they had made that the prison. When Jeremiah entered the dungeon and the cells, and Jeremiah had remained there many days. ... Then Zedekiah the king

commanded that they should commit Jeremiah to the court of the prison, and that they should give him daily a piece of bread. Jer 37:15-16, 21

They took Jeremiah and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the king's son, which *was* in the court of the prison, and they let Jeremiah down with ropes. And in the dungeon *there was* no water, but mire. So Jeremiah sank in the mire. Jer 38:6

Now Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken. And he *was there* when Jerusalem was taken. Jer 38:28

In every move of God in history there is usually a reaction against godly men. Thus men that God uses to bring change get rejected, slandered and vilified. One can think of Augustine, Wycliffe, Tyndale, Luther and Calvin in this regard.

Thus there were no shortage of prophets in Judah that prophesied lies out of their false hearts, yet Jeremiah, whose uncomfortable message was genuine, was vilified, slandered, attacked and put in prison. In fact he was imprisoned more than once and beaten before he was imprisoned, then left without proper food. On another occasion he was thrown into a miry cistern. In the end he was kidnapped and forced to go to Egypt where Jewish tradition tells us that he was stoned for prophesying more uncomfortable things.

In a time of downgrade where most of the church is hurtling headlong into apostasy and deception, the men that stand out from the crowd and bring the truth will get attacked. This is happening today. There are very few who speak the truth and stand against the tide with a genuine Biblical message, and these often get attacked and mistreated.

The more the modern church apostatises and becomes more and more pagan, the more genuine prophets that speak God's word will be attacked and demonised. In the final analysis under a totalitarian antichristian empire, such prophets will all be killed and the world will rejoice.

Judgment

The city is to be given to Babylon

Therefore thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it. And the Chaldeans who fight against this city shall come and set fire to this city and burn it'. Jer 32:28-29

The city of Jerusalem is a picture of the church. The external aspect of Jerusalem, its walls, houses, temple etc. were burned down. This is symbolic of the church at the end where all the current external forms will be eradicated. All the denominations, streams and sects will vanish. There will be one universal world church, sponsored by the state, which will be called 'Christian' but will be a compromised and evil syncretism of spiritualism and antichristian ideas. The Three-Self Church in China prefigures this.

The Jewish inhabitants that were not killed by the sword, famine or pestilence, were taken as exiles into Babylonia. This symbolises those professing Christians at the end, the majority of those in the church that will embrace the end-time, state, antichristian church, captured by demonic lies. Serving this state church will be serving the satanic government.

The external church is given to Babylon. This is a great theme in Revelation where the end-time captivity of the external church and national governments is pictured in dramatic terms as a Babylonian whore.

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, 'Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication'. So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast *which was* full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name *was* written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marvelled with great amazement. Rev 17:1-6

Most of the modern church simply does not understand this, but a few that preach a sound Gospel have, in recent days, come to the conclusion that the visible church is on the point of complete collapse. God is bringing the churches into collapse as part of his providential plan and as judgment for their failure to operate Biblically. More and more godly pastors are seeing this happen all around them and are forced into the conclusion that the godly church must go underground.¹⁵ Even those who originally denied my word when I first explained this years ago are now seeing the reality of the situation as the Reformed church in the UK is broken up and marginalised.

Some are putting their hopes on revival and pray and organise conferences for this – it will not avail. God's word is that the visible church will fall away.

Now all those triumphalist, mostly Charismatic, churches and Christians that teach a coming global revival will capitulate into the antichristian, pagan church of the end – unless they repent beforehand, leave this sorry apostate work and go underground.

Conclusion

Now some will claim that this is a very negative and doom-laden teaching that should be rejected. This is exactly what the Judaeans said to Jeremiah. What is necessary is the truth, whether it is negative or not. The positive message of the false prophets proved to be utterly useless in Judah when Nebuchadnezzar came storming in.

When a person is sick he does not want someone to be positive, to tell him good news, to say that all will be well and do nothing. He wants a doctor that will accurately diagnose his illness, give him the bad news and then give him corrective treatment. This is what true prophets, like Jeremiah, did and this is what I am seeking to do.

Like Jeremiah, therefore, I stand against all the millions of Christians that are teaching a coming global revival where the church will be triumphant over the world and everything

¹⁵ For instance, small Reformed Baptist churches that have preached a Calvinistic Gospel are dwindling so that many congregations are only a handful of people. More and more of the larger sound Baptist churches are splitting and fragmenting through schism, resulting in small assemblies (often with no pastor). Only the Met. Tab. has a very large congregation but is on a slippery slope with no foreseeable replacement for the ageing, sick pastor.

will be full of power and blessing. This is not what God's word teaches. [See my previous papers explaining this.]¹⁶

Thus we must see what some may call 'negative' and act accordingly. This means forming new underground churches in homes according to the Biblical pattern.¹⁷ Then the church will be like salt in the earth, powerful but hidden. Its power will be seen, not in great churches and advertising, but in prayer and a quiet, local testimony to Christ.

¹⁶ Such as, 'Are we in the end-time tribulation?'

¹⁷ See, for example my 'Church Practices Weighed'.

Comparison of key progressive issues

The situation in Judah	The situation in today's church
<p>There is no fear of God in the church 'Do you not fear Me?' says the LORD. 'Will you not tremble at My presence'. Jer 5:22</p> <p>They do not say in their heart, 'Let us now fear the LORD our God'. Jer 5:24</p>	<p>The universal problem today is a lack of the fear of God; which is why people can feel free to sin without conviction. The toleration of a bad conscience is proof of a lack of the fear of God in the church.</p>
<p>Rebellion against God in the church But this people has a defiant and rebellious heart; they have revolted and departed. They do not say in their heart, 'Let us now fear the LORD our God'. Jer 5:23-24</p> <p>They <i>are</i> all stubborn rebels, walking as slanderers. <i>They are</i> bronze and iron, they <i>are</i> all corrupters. Jer 6:28</p>	<p>The proof of an innate rebellion against God is the universal failure to honour God's word and the continual disobedience to it.</p>
<p>The lack of true faith in the church 'Judah has not turned to Me with her whole heart, but in pretence', says the LORD. Jer 3:10</p>	<p>The modern church is filled with merely professing Christians as a result of the preaching of a false Gospel for over 100 years. Some churches, such as Charismatic churches, have a large majority of false believers within them. This is why they easily tolerate pagan occult practices and heretical doctrines.</p>
<p>The church has forgotten God My people have forgotten Me days without number. Jer 2:32</p> <p>They have forgotten the LORD their God. Jer 3:21</p>	<p>By focusing on things other than Christ, such as the self, or church celebrities, the church shows that it has forgotten God. Disobedience to the Bible is another proof of this.</p>
<p>The hubris of self-esteem in the church – the failure to listen to God They did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels <i>and</i> the dictates of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward. Jer 7:24</p>	<p>Again, the modern church would rather listen to false prophets, celebrity preachers teaching lies and authoritarian leaders rather than study what God actually says in his word.</p>
<p>Ignorance of God's word, refusal to listen to God For My people <i>are</i> foolish, they have not known Me. They <i>are</i> silly children, and they have no understanding. They <i>are</i> wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. Jer 4:22</p> <p>And they have turned to Me the back, and not the face; though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not listened to receive instruction. Jer 32:33</p>	<p>The ignorance of God's word today is unparalleled in history, apart from the Dark Ages when there were no vernacular Bibles available. The shocking ignorance of Bible doctrine is lamentable.</p>
<p>Disobedience to God's word No one turns back from his wickedness. All of them are like Sodom to Me, And her inhabitants like Gomorrah. Jer 23:14</p>	<p>Disobedience will necessarily follow ignorance. But worse than they, even those that claim to read their Bible demonstrate terrible disobedience to it, even amongst leaders and teachers.</p>
<p>The prostitution of the church 'Has this house, which is called by My name, become a den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen <i>it</i>', says the LORD. Jer 7:11</p>	<p>Many modern churches are now one huge marketing organisation using multiple means to make money through conferences, books, CDs, DVDs, gift days etc. Church leaders often become affluent, or even rich, people.</p>
<p>Lying in the church 'And <i>like</i> their bow they have bent their tongues</p>	<p>The modern church is 'not valiant for the truth on the earth' in so many ways. It does not generally seek out the truth of God's</p>

<p><i>for</i> lies. They are not valiant for the truth on the earth. For they proceed from evil to evil, and they do not know Me', says the LORD. Jer 9:3</p> <p>[They] will not speak the truth; they have taught their tongue to speak lies; they weary themselves to commit iniquity. Jer 9:5</p>	<p>word but is satisfied with multiple heresies. It does not act in truth but behaves dishonestly; multiple famous leaders have been caught telling lies about their moral lapses etc. The failure to act upon conscience has led to many compromises of the truth. Apart from this: leadership structure is not true; meetings are not true; worship is not true; and so on.</p>
<p>Hypocrisy and deceit in the church 'Their tongue <i>is</i> an arrow shot out; It speaks deceit; <i>One</i> speaks peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in his heart he lies in wait. Shall I not punish them for these <i>things?</i>' says the LORD. 'Shall I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this?' Jer 9:8-9</p> <p>Everyone will deceive his neighbour. Jer 9:5</p> <p>'Your dwelling place <i>is</i> in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know Me', says the LORD. Jer 9:6</p>	<p>Following on from a failure to speak and act in truth, there is a great deal of hypocrisy in the church. The Internet is full of preachers who 'lie in wait' to attack another preacher, using hypocrisy.</p> <p>The level of deceit in the church is beyond belief. The church is teaching deceitful doctrines, deceitful practices, deceitful worship; leaders are deceitful, structures are deceitful and more.</p>
<p>Rejection of true ministry Then they said, 'Come and let us devise plans against Jeremiah ... and let us attack him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words'. Jer 18:18</p>	<p>Sadly this is very common in the church today. People who teach historic, consistent Calvinism are ridiculed. The modern supposed Calvinism that is popular in the US is not Calvinism at all but a modified Amyraldism mixed with Charismaticism. Genuine admonition is unpopular. Interest in true theology in the congregation is at an all-time low.</p>
<p>False shepherds leading the church astray My people have been lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray; ... All who found them have devoured them. Jer 50:6-8</p>	<p>The fact that the church is so riddled with heresies and aberrations shows that the leaders are deceived and leading the church astray. The shocking ignorance of Biblical doctrines, and even the true Gospel, also reveals that the sheep are lost.</p>
<p>Trusting in men; celebrity in the church Thus says the LORD: 'Cursed <i>is</i> the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the LORD'. Jer 17:5</p>	<p>The modern church, of all stripes, is awash with a focus on celebrities. Leaders and preachers act like rock stars and live separated from the flock. Authoritarianism prevails in Charismatic churches and some other denominations.</p>
<p>False prophecy in the church The prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after <i>things that</i> do not profit. Jer 2:8</p> <p>They prophesied by Baal and caused My people Israel to err. Jer 23:13</p>	<p>The Charismatic church is badly affected with false prophets on all sides. These prophets have led the church into aberration after aberration where occult ideas have permeated the church. The Kansas City Prophets, then the Toronto Blessing and the prophetic movt. that followed brought in occultism (such as Kundalini yoga, channelling and visualisation).</p>
<p>Idolatry in private All the houses on whose roofs they have burned incense to all the host of heaven, and poured out drink offerings to other gods. Jer 19:13</p>	<p>Idolatry is one of the greatest sins in the modern church. In private people prefer a host of things to God: television, addictions, music, gossiping, TV sports, socialising, carousing, drink etc.</p>
<p>Idolatry in public high places They built the high places of Baal which <i>are</i> in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through <i>the fire</i> to Molech. Jer 32:35</p>	<p>Idolatry is equally expressed in public. Supposed Christians pay more attention to watching sports, playing sports, popstars, theatre, cinema, concerts, than God.</p>
<p>Idolatry in the temple They set their abominations in the house which is called by My name, to defile it. Jer 32:34</p>	<p>Idolatry in the church itself is rampant everywhere, especially in Charismatic circles. Church-goers seek entertainment in a multitude of forms rather than sober worship of God. People submit to occult practices and teaching rather than obey God. People express the results of occult experiences (shouting, screaming, falling over, etc.) rather than manifesting godly self-control.</p>
<p>Sin; especially ignoring the poor and needy 'The children of Israel and the children of Judah have done only evil before Me from their youth. For the children of Israel have provoked Me only</p>	<p>A variety of sins are manifest in the church today. One of these is the ignoring of the needs of the poor and needy even within their own church as well as those outside. Few churches deal with this matter properly.</p>

<p>to anger with the work of their hands', says the LORD. Jer 32:30</p> <p>All the evil of the children of Israel and the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke Me to anger -- they, their kings, their princes, their priests, their prophets, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Jer 32:32</p>	<p>Sinful practices are not limited to the congregation but are expressed by all sorts of leaders. Indeed, some of the most famous leaders are the worst sinners.</p>
<p>Sacrificing their own children They built the high places of Baal which <i>are</i> in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through <i>the fire</i> to Molech. Jer 32:35</p>	<p>Modern Christian parents are guilty of sacrificing their children's spiritual well-being in submission to exposing them to occult practices and pagan events. This is especially true in Charismatic and Pentecostal churches.</p>
<p>The anger of God This city has been to Me a provocation of My anger and My fury. Jer 32:31</p> <p>Men whom I will slay in My anger and My fury, all for whose wickedness I have hidden My face from this city. Jer 33:5</p>	<p>The anger of God is evident in the lack of spiritual life in the churches and the lack of proper evangelism. The national Christian population continues to diminish whilst paganism continues to grow. Church after church is closing down while many only have a handful of members. Meanwhile large Charismatic churches are filled with merely professing Christians.</p>
<p>Invasions of Chaldeans The Chaldeans who fight against this city shall come and set fire to this city and burn it. Jer 32:29</p> <p>Roofs burned – the judgment fits the crime The Chaldeans who fight against this city shall come and set fire to this city and burn it, with the houses on whose roofs they have offered incense to Baal and poured out drink offerings to other gods, to provoke Me to anger. Jer 32:29</p>	<p>As God prophesied in his word, the end-time church is increasingly invaded by Babylonian tendencies. These Babylonian influences include affluent materialism, occult religion, pagan ideas, worldly structures, pragmatism, human philosophy, a focus on money and selfishness.</p> <p>Those committed to pagan idolatry in the church will find that the source of that idolatry (Satan) will ruin them in the end. God will judge idolaters.</p>
<p>Series of exiles The exile was in three phases.</p>	<p>The end-time corruption of the church to become completely Babylonian will be via a series of capitulations and compromises.</p>
<p>City taken fully into Babylonia: by sword, by famine, by pestilence Now therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city of which you say, 'It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence'. Jer 32:36</p>	<p>The end of the current apostasy of the church will be a complete capitulation to an end-time antichristian world state. Those that oppose this will be killed (sword). There will be a great famine of God's word accompanied by the complete corruption of the outward church to make it sick (pestilence). The end result is the complete reversal of the church to become totally Babylonian, that is, subservient to Satan. The external Christian church at the end is a mockery; it is a synagogue of Satan not a godly assembly.</p>

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