

## **From Jeremiah 23: "Woe to the shepherds"**

"Woe to the shepherds destroying and scattering the sheep of My pasture!.....Therefore thus said YHWH Elohim of Yisra'el against the shepherds who feed My people."

The voice of Jeremiah can still be heard crying out against the leaders of modern day Israel.

"MY heart within me is broken because of the prophets.....For both the prophet and the priest have become defiled. Even in My house I have found their evil," declares YHWH.

An echo of that voice was heard several centuries later when Yeshua Messiah decried against the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees of His day. It was the same message. The shepherds of Israel were rejecting the Word of Elohim for the sake of their traditions.

"Therefore I shall gather the remnant of My flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and shall bring them back to their fold.....And I shall raise up shepherds over them, and they shall feed them.....Therefore, see, the days are coming," declares YHWH, "when they shall say no more, 'As YHWH lives who brought up the children of Yisra'el out of the land of Egypt,' but , 'As YHWH lives who brought up and led the seed of the house O Yisra'el out of the land of the north and from all the lands where I have driven them.' And they shall dwell in their own soil."

These words of Jeremiah must be understood in their literal meaning. All the tribes of Israel, and not just Judah, are to be returned to the land of Israel. And new shepherds will be appointed, shepherds who will teach the commandments and the righteous words of Elohim.

"See, the days are coming," declares YHWH, "when I shall raise for David a Branch of righteousness, and a Sovereign shall reign and act wisely, and shall do right-ruling and righteousness in the earth. In His days Yehudah shall be saved, and Yisra'el dwell safely. And this is His Name whereby He shall be called: "YHWH our Righteousness."

Again, the literal meaning is the true meaning, for the Messiah will come and rule in His earthly kingdom. This is the kingdom that Yeshua was referring to when He announced the coming reign of Elohim. Both Judah and Israel are to be restored to the land of their inheritance and to be reunited. All the tribes of Israel will be subject to YHWH and His righteousness.

"And among the prophets of Yerushalayim I have seen a horrible matter: committing of adultery and walking in falsehood. And they strengthen the hands

of evil ones, so that no one turns back from his evil. All of them are like Sodom to Me, and her inhabitants like Amorah.....Thus said YHWH of hosts, "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, they lead you astray..They speak a vision of their own heart, not from the mouth of YHWH."

The 23rd chapter of Jeremiah applies to our day just as well. How many of us as leaders in the household of faith are willing to speak out against the breaking of the Sabbath day, the idolatries of our Christmas and Easter celebrations and the defiling practice of eating unclean food? Instead we just go along with the traditions of those who led us into believing that the commandments no longer apply to Israel, or that the Law has been "nailed to the cross." How many of us today are willing to speak out against these evil practices?

"See, a storm of YHWH shall go forth in a rage, a whirling storm! It whirls on the head of the wrong. The displeasure of YHWH shall not turn back until He has done and established the purposes of His heart. In the latter days you shall understand it perfectly."

Dear Mennonite people and Companions, we should understand that we are in the latter days. We should be repenting of our lawlessness in preparation for the Messiah's coming reign. Instead we are witnessing a terrible onslaught against many of our biblically based values and without any defense. Are we starting to understand?

"I did not send these prophets, yet they ran. I have not spoken to them, yet they have prophesied. But if they had stood in My counsel, then they would have let My people hear My Words, and they would have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their deeds. Am I an Elohim close by," declares YHWH, "and not an Elohim afar off? If anyone is hidden in secret places, would I not see him?" declares YHWH. "Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?" declares YHWH"

By now, as leaders, we should be sick at heart as Jeremiah was (vs 9). How can we go on pretending that we have no sin and that evil will not come about as a consequence? How can we go on denying that we are the Israel of Elohim and that He is calling us to repentance?

Do you really want to be a shepherd of Israel? Then pay attention, because Elohim is raising up a cloud of witnesses against you. Hear O Israel.