

# RELIGION

## Continually put your trust in God

### Jeremiah 29:1-14

It is difficult for the carnal — fleshly — mind to understand the relationship between the judgment of God and the love of God. These aspects of the nature of God are too often seen as the opposite ends of one line. Yet, the two are closely woven into the nature of the heavenly father — the creator of the universe.

These contrasting concepts seem to have plagued the thoughts of people through the centuries. As the Apostle Paul wrote his letter to the Roman church, he addressed this paradox. He explained that only those with a changed heart could ever hope to understand any part of the “divine mystery.” Romans 8:5-10.

The nation of Judah — the southern kingdom of the chosen nation — had been given many warnings concerning the national sin that had become rampant. The kings had led the people away from the God of their fathers, and had influenced them to serve the pagan gods of the surrounding nations.

Judgment would be poured out upon this rebellious people.

The northern kingdom — the kingdom of Israel — had already been carried away by their captors. The same fate awaited this rebellious group. The king who would be used to accomplish this judgment would be Nebuchadnezzar, the king of the Babylonians. 2 Chronicles 36:13-21. However, this final destruction had been preceded by two other invasions. The first group of captives that were carried to Babylon included Daniel and his three friends. The second “wave” included the prophet, Ezekiel, and many of the skilled workers. Jeremiah 29:2.

There were false prophets who had predicted a “short exile.” Jeremiah 28:3. However, this was not the divine plan nor purpose. God vindicates his own. Jeremiah 28:17. There were some prophets among the exiles that had their own “versions” of this same message of error. Jeremiah 29:21.

### Sunday School Lesson

Rev. James Temples



This faithful prophet wanted the readers — and hearers — to understand the source of this message — “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel...” Jeremiah 29:4a.

These exiles were to understand that God was the “reason” for their present condition — “whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon.” Jeremiah 29:4b. This divine act was necessary for the holiness of God to be recognized by these individuals.

Today, it is often difficult for us to recognize the hand of God in our personal “trying experiences.” Yet, these, sometimes, come into our lives in order for us to understand that there are “consequences” of personal actions, as well as there being the result of

actions of others over which we have no control. Yet, it is important for us to remember that God is aware of all of our situations, and can use this for eternal good. Romans 8:28.

The instruction given by the prophet was, “You can enjoy the ride.” “Build ye houses, and dwell in them, and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished.” Jeremiah 29:5,6.

A divine directive was followed by divine assurance. “And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.” Jeremiah 29:7.

It is interesting to note that during any kind of difficult time, it is possible to find some “spiritual person” who will tell you “what you want to hear.” An

extended exile was not the “popular message” among the captives. Jeremiah warned, “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed. For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the Lord.” Jeremiah 29:8,9.

The divine timetable is, again, given to these exiles. “For thus saith the Lord, that after 70 years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.” Jeremiah 29:10.

The words of the prophet gave to these exiles an insight into the thoughts of God. “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” Jeremiah 29:11.

Many of these exiles, who read or heard the letter from Jeremiah, would

probably not live to see the end of the “70 years” — however, some did witness the laying of the foundation of the new temple. Ezra 3:10-13.

The prophet wrote of the attitude and actions of those who would witness the fulfillment of the prophecy. “Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:12,13.

The promise was important to the people of that time — and continues to be encouraging to people, today. “And I will be found of you, saith the Lord; and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord; and I will bring you again into the place whence I have caused you to be carried away captive.” Jeremiah 29:14.

We need to learn the same lesson of trust that these exiles learned. God still cares.

## ‘Blessed are those who hunger ...’

### Matthew 5:3-6

Hunger and thirst are strong desires that demand to be filled. Therefore, what you hunger and thirst for will determine the direction of your life. My contention is that everyone ultimately gets what they most desire.

**“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness ...”**

God blesses those who desire righteousness. Jesus’ first listeners knew quite literally what it meant to hunger and thirst. Meat was a luxury in Palestine and fresh water was scarce. In those many moments of life when the food and water ran out, nothing mattered, absolutely nothing, except getting what you did not have.

So it is with the spiritual hunger and thirst for God’s righteousness. You don’t have it naturally. You cannot produce it. You can only desire it and receive it by

the grace of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The blessed are the objects of such extravagant grace, grace which puts exuberant hunger in the hearts for the righteousness of Christ.

This is the righteousness desired by the woman at the well (John 4:15), those first disciples (John 6:68), and the Apostle Paul (Philippians 3:6). This is the righteousness desired by Luther, Calvin, Spurgeon and other great Christians.

Believers like these are not necessarily bad people made good, but empty people made hungry, and thirsty and full. They want Christ, and they will not be satisfied until they have him.

So righteousness, the state of being right with God, the state of grace, the place of pardon by the blood of Christ, is something the

### The Gospel Truth

Dr. Charles F. DeVane Jr.  
First Baptist Church



blessed Christian desires more than anything. He receives righteousness by grace through faith, and returns righteousness in works.

God blesses those who practice righteousness. For the Christian, “righteous” is something that God makes you and something God accomplishes through you. It is something you are and something you do. 1 John 3:7-10. Just as the righteous cannot rest until they are right with God by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, so the blessed and righteous Christian cannot rest until God’s righteous-

ness is on display in their lifestyle and deeds.

Righteous people are known through righteous living. Righteous people do things right. They do not make decisions and do work based upon the mores of the culture, the opinion polls of the populace or the altar of convenience and comfort. They simply do the right thing, as informed by the word, the spirit, and the will of God.

David could have killed Saul, but he did the right thing by forgiving and honoring him. Matthew could have remained a fat cat tax brat, but he did the right thing by leaving money to follow the master. Why? Because they were hungry and thirsty to do what is right.

Righteous people are known by their righteous giving. They give love, they give time, they give a witness. If you knew where to get the finest food and drink for free, would you not take it? Would you not share it?

What made Paul the great missionary? His hunger and thirst for the power of

the gospel to impute righteousness in other people. Such people help others get right with God.

**“... for they shall be satisfied.”**

God blesses those who are satisfied with righteousness. Here the precise wording of the text becomes enormously important. “Hunger” and “thirst” are in the present indicative tense (a constant process). “Filled” is future and passive. The state of blessedness is to be found in the hungering and the thirsting now, while its perfect fulfillment is still to come.

Satisfaction is not to be found among the lost, or among the nominal Christian who demonstrates no desire for the word, for worship or for good works.

Satisfaction is found among the true believers whose hearts display a longing for Christ, for his presence, his word, even his imperfect bride, the church. The hunger and the thirst are the blessing now, and the best is yet to come.

Does this mean that in

this life, like the Rolling Stones, that “I can’t get no satisfaction?” Yes, if your search for satisfaction is confined to sex, drugs, and rock and roll. Yes, if your search for satisfaction is limited to money and material things. But you can get satisfaction if you are a Matthew 6:33 Christian. For there is no greater satisfaction than being in the will of God and living according to the word of God. It is quite literally our heaven on earth.

No beatitude cuts to the heart of the gospel better than this fourth one. It is a reflection of Genesis 15 and Galatians 3. It is a background commentary on Romans 1:16-17 and the basis for John 3:16.

Such righteousness is provided only in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Such righteousness is accepted only by those people who are truly “hungry” and “thirsty.” And such righteousness, such hunger and thirst, puts us in a perfect place — the kingdom of God, where true blessings flow.

## You can’t buy a good name

The devil and all his powers of evil are out to kill, steal and destroy everyone good and everything good, because he is evil and he hates good.

He stirs up trouble everywhere he and his gang of thugs go. They are out to steal your good name, your reputation and your testimony. He wants nothing more than to destroy everyone.

He hates God’s very special creation. Mankind. He afflicts and stirs up trouble out in the atmosphere and spirit sphere and God lets him run amok.

Now God can and does at times send things on this universe as a form of discipline and judgment, but it’s not his desire. He’s like a loving parent that has to punish but still loves the child.

As they use to say, “The earth is God’s footstool and sometimes he has to stomp on it to get our attention.” Anyway, the bible says that a good name is rather to be chosen than great

### Other Voices

Gary Toole



riches. How true! Besides your soul, your good name is the most valuable thing you possess. That’s why when a company that has been in business for a good while sells will get more for their name than for their tangible assets.

Once you have ruined your good name or reputation by following the wrong leader, Satan, then it’s hard to restore. You can’t buy back a good name. You can only earn it by proving yourself.

This crook’s brother died and they were both crooks. So, he gave the preacher \$1,000 and said, “Now say something good about Tom.” The preacher was between a rock and a hard place, because the church needed the money for a building project. So, he

said, “Ok, Jack!” At the funeral he said, “Now, folks, Tom was a bad man, but compared to his brother Jack, he was a saint.”

A good name, how precious! Good names are in big demand now. That’s why we have identity theft. Folks stealing names.

One fellow said that he had ruined himself so badly that he wished someone could take his name.

Well, there’s one that truly knows us by name and he knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows the very intent of our heart and it goes without saying, “it is Jesus!”

And the old devil can afflict our mind, he can steal our name, our reputation, but he can’t steal our soul. That belongs to God and the devil can’t steal the word from our heart if it is hidden there.

If we lose out to Satan and lose our soul, then it will be our choice. Can you say amen?

## Ministerial Association meets Aug. 8

The Blakely Ministerial Association will meet Tuesday, Aug. 8 at noon at Magnolias on Main.

Officers for the 2007-08 year include: Nathan Greer, president, Blakely Church of God; Fred Hersey, vice president, First Free Will

Baptist Church; Jim Burgess, treasurer, Blakely Charge, United Methodist Church, and Chuck DeVane, secretary, First Baptist Church.

Meetings are usually held the second Wednesday of the month (except June and

July) at Magnolias.

A dutch treat lunch is followed by prayer and planning for Associational services and ministries.

All local pastors and vocational ministers are welcome and encouraged to attend.

## CHURCH NEWS

### Ebenezer A.M.E.

Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Church in Hilton will have their annual revival July 30 through Aug. 2 at 7:30 p.m. The guest speaker will be Rev. John Davis. Everyone is invited to attend.

### Greater Macedonia

The Greater Macedonia homecoming program scheduled for Sunday, Aug. 5 has been cancelled.

### Shiloh M.B.

Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church will have their annual family and friends day Sunday, Aug. 5 at 2:30 p.m. Their annual revival will be Aug. 13 through Aug. 17 at 7:30 p.m. Rev. Solomon Lyles Jr. of Albany will be the guest speaker. Everyone is invited to attend.

### Oak Grove A.M.E.

Oak Grove African Methodist Episcopal Church will

host the Blakely-Colquitt Circuit revival Aug. 6 through Aug. 8 at 7:30 p.m. Guest speakers will be Rev. Millie A. Rambeau, Rev. Gloria Wynds and Rev. Anthony L. Yarbrough. Everyone is invited.

### Greater Macedonia

Greater Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church will celebrate their 30th homecoming Aug. 3 at 7:30 p.m. and Aug. 5 at the regular Sunday service at 1:30 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend.

### Shiloh M.B.

Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church will have their annual family and friends day Sunday, Aug. 5 at 2:30 p.m.

They are also hosting revival services Aug. 13 through Aug. 17 at 7:30 p.m. Rev. Solomon Lyles Jr., the pastor of New Zion Hill

Baptist Church in Albany, will be the guest speaker. Everyone is invited to attend.

### Chattahoochee River B.A.

The Chattahoochee River women’s conference will be held Saturday, August 25 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Chattahoochee River Baptist Association building on Highway 37 in Fort Gaines.

For more information call 724-7143.

### Wesley Chapel A.M.E.

Wesley Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church will host a youth explosion at the Blakely Civic Center Friday, August 17 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

There will be a motivational speaker, liturgical dancers, gospel DJ and other entertainment.

Everyone is invited to attend.



*Make it a Family Affair*  
Attend a Church of Your Choice This Sunday