

“Who Will Listen to My Warning?”

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Why is it important to explore God’s warnings through Jeremiah and other prophets? Because they have significant application to the nations of today.

Don’t you want people to listen to you, especially when you have something important to say? Imagine, for example, that you see whiffs of smoke rising from a house indicating a fire. You immediately start to warn people living there—but, shockingly, no one pays any attention to you!

At that point you quickly call the fire department, but even then the operator treats your report with indifference. As you watch flames beginning to rise from the house, you

become more insistent. But the operator curtly dismisses you and tells you to get off the phone! Stunned, you hang up and ask: Will no one listen?

It seems unlikely that such a scenario would occur in the report of a real fire. But something like this did *in effect* happen when God's prophets gave urgent warnings to the rebellious ancient nations of Israel and Judah about the devastating inferno of sin in their midst. The response of their leaders and citizens was similar to what was just described. The prophets and their admonitions were repeatedly met with indifference or derision.

When the prophet Jeremiah experienced such reactions he lamented: "Who can I speak to? Who will listen to my warning?" (Jeremiah 6:10, Evangelical Heritage Version).

("To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear?" AFV)

Who heeded Jeremiah? Who really cared? The answer was—*nearly no one!*

He then said: "Their ears are closed; they cannot hear. They're deaf to anything about God. The Eternal's word is offensive to them. They take no delight in it" (Jeremiah 6:10, The Voice).

("Behold, their ears *are* not circumcised, and they cannot hearken. Behold, the Word of the LORD is to them a reproach; they have no delight in it." AFV)

Why is it important to explore God's warnings through Jeremiah and other prophets? Because they have significant application to the nations of today. In fact, many prophetic statements have *dual* application—meaning there's a preliminary fulfillment as well as a later or final fulfillment, often to occur at the time of the end. (You can learn about prophetic duality by reading our free study guide [You Can Understand Bible Prophecy](#).)

Two nations that ignored God's warnings

Before examining Jeremiah's poignant warnings, let's briefly note what occurred in Israel's history following the death of King Solomon in 931 B.C. The Bible explains that at that point, the kingdom experienced a contentious division into two nations—the southern kingdom of Judah, consisting of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and the northern kingdom of Israel, made up of the other 10 tribes (1 Kings 12:1-18).

Soon afterward, God sent several prophets to the northern kingdom—including Elijah, Hosea, Amos, Micah and others—to proclaim strong cautionary messages regarding their disobedience and what would result if it continued (Hosea 4:1-2). For example, Hosea warned that if the nation didn't comply, God would allow it to be invaded and enslaved by the Assyrian Empire. This disastrous event occurred in two waves in the 700s B.C. (Hosea 7:13; 8:14; 2 Kings 15:29; 17:5-6).

In addition, God sent prophets to the kingdom of Judah, including Jeremiah, Isaiah, Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah and others. These faithful servants gave powerful warnings to the leaders and people about the coming result of their persistent disregard of God and His laws (2 Chronicles 36:14-16).

Jeremiah's prophetic efforts spanned 40 years of Judea's tumultuous history. It began during the 13th year of King Josiah's kingship in 627 B.C. and continued until the 11th year of King Zedekiah's reign in 587 B.C.—when troops of the Babylonian Empire conquered the entire nation, subjugated its people and destroyed the temple in Jerusalem.

From the outset of Jeremiah's ministry, he warned the leaders and people that their beloved nation risked this precise calamity if they didn't reject idolatry and other appalling conduct:

“The Lord said to me, ‘From the north disaster will be poured out on all who live in the land. I am about to summon all the peoples of the northern kingdoms,’ declares the Lord. ‘Their kings will come and set up their thrones in the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem; they will come against all her surrounding walls and against all the towns of Judah. I will pronounce my judgments on my people because of their wickedness in forsaking me, in burning incense to other gods and in worshiping what their hands have made’ (Jeremiah 1:14-16, New International Version).

As Jeremiah conveyed these warnings, he also reminded the people of God's great mercy if they responded in sincere humility and repentance (Jeremiah 3:12; 22; 31:20). Indeed, God was tremendously concerned about the Judean people and wanted them to cast off rebellious, profane conduct.

But, then, what about today? Has God somehow changed so that He ignores the mountains of sin committed by the people of our age? The scriptural answer is categorically *no!* God has never changed in His abhorrence of *all* iniquity (Malachi 3:6; Proverbs 6:16-19).

“These six *things* the LORD hates; yea, seven *are* an abomination into Him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that plots wicked imaginations, feet that are swift in running to evil, A false witness *who* speaks lies, and he who sows discord among brethren.” Prov 6:16-19 AFV)

Today’s urgent need to turn to God

Today there is an urgent need for all nations to turn to God in deep respect and obedience. This is especially crucial for the people of the United States, Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the nations of northwest Europe. Why? Because they are the modern-day descendants of ancient Israel. (For more information on this important subject, read our study guide *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*). A significant portion of end-time Bible prophecy is directed toward them.

Plus, returning to God is particularly essential for America since, unlike any other nation, it had a unique, biblically centered formation. The country’s forefathers, who were on the whole deeply religious, recognized the tremendous value of God’s laws outlined in the Bible, and they sought His guidance and blessings in their founding deliberations.

American University School of Public Affairs professor Daniel Dreisbach stated in a speech on May 19, 2017: “The founding fathers read the Bible. Their many quotations from and allusions to both familiar and obscure scriptural passages tell us that they knew the Bible well. Biblical language and themes liberally seasoned their rhetoric; the phrases and the cadences of the King James Bible, especially, informed their written and spoken words. The ideas of the Bible shaped their habits of mind and informed their political pursuits.”

The Declaration of Independence was signed by 56 delegates to the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, in Philadelphia, Penn. The preamble of this famous document expresses how the founders comprehended that the Eternal God created human beings and provided them with inherent rights. It states:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are *endowed by their Creator* with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” (emphasis added throughout). The Declaration notes that the signers were “*appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world* for the rectitude of our intentions” and concludes by stating, “. . . with a firm reliance *on the Protection of Divine Providence*, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.”

To determine the principles of the new American government, the Constitutional Convention was held from May 14 to Sept. 17, 1787, in Philadelphia. One of the most famous of its 55 delegates, Benjamin Franklin, said: "I have lived, sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth: that *God governs in the affairs of men*. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid?"

There is no question that the Bible and Christian principles influenced the lives and actions of America's forefathers. For example, the nation's first president George Washington said, "It is impossible to govern the universe without the aid of a Supreme Being." He also said, "To the distinguished character of patriot, it should be our highest glory to add the more distinguished character of Christian." John Adams, the nation's second president, stated, "The general principles . . . of Christianity are as eternal and immutable as the existence and attributes of God." Virginia governor and famous patriot Patrick Henry wrote, "The Bible is a book worth more than all the other books that were ever printed."

Bible knowledge has deteriorated

Likewise, many former U.S. presidents expressed their strong support of Holy Scripture. For example, 16th president Abraham Lincoln penned: "In regard for this Great Book, I have this to say, it is the best gift God has given to man. All the good Savior gave to the world was communicated through this Book."

Franklin Roosevelt, the 32nd president, wrote: "We cannot read the history of our rise and development as a nation without reckoning with the place the Bible has occupied in shaping the advances of the Republic. Where we have been the truest and most consistent in obeying its precepts, we have attained the greatest measure of contentment and prosperity."

Ronald Reagan, America's 40th president, stated: "Inside the Bible's pages lie all the answers to all of the problems man has ever known. It is my firm belief that the enduring values presented in its pages have a great meaning for each of us and for our nation."

Due to the foresight of America's leaders and its citizens' desire to honor God and observe His laws, He blessed them with great freedom, safety and material prosperity. How tragic, then, to see what has happened in the United States, especially over the past several decades. Sadly, Christianity itself and Bible knowledge in particular have

deteriorated to the point that a substantial number of people today are biblically illiterate.

Lifeway Research of Nashville, Tenn.—which conducts research projects on faith and culture—surveyed 1,000 Americans on their views about the Bible. An article by religion editor Bob Smietana on April 25, 2017, explained the findings:

“[M]ore than half of Americans have read little or none of the Bible. Less than a quarter of those who have ever read a Bible have a systematic plan for reading the Christian scriptures each day. And a third of Americans never pick it up on their own . . .

‘Most Americans don’t know first-hand the overall story of the Bible—because they rarely pick it up,’ [LifeWay’s executive director Scott] McConnell said. ‘Even among worship attendees, less than half read the Bible daily. The only time most Americans hear from the Bible is when someone else is reading it.’”

Additionally, an Oct. 17, 2019 report from the Pew Research Center titled “In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace” states that according to “telephone surveys conducted in 2018 and 2019, 65% of American adults describe themselves as Christians when asked about their religion, down 12 percentage points over the past decade. Meanwhile, the religiously unaffiliated share of the population, consisting of people who describe their religious identity as atheist, agnostic or ‘nothing in particular,’ now stands at 26%, up from 17% in 2009.”

Abandoning the flawless values expressed in the Word of God has led to horrible results. Consider for example, how the sacred marriage relationship has been disgraced through widespread divorce. In addition, the nation has experienced pervasive sexual immorality and perversion as well as the appalling killing of tens of millions of babies through abortion. These and many other evils have left America dangerously close to being branded as a byword for lawlessness among the nations.

As John Winthrop, the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony of New England, warned: “For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us, so that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw his present help from us, we shall be made a story and a byword through the world.”

God's warnings today through His true Church

Similar to how nearly no one listened to God's ancient prophets, most people today will not heed the teachings He gives through His true Church (Matthew 24:14; 28:19-20). The prophet Isaiah described the corrupt conduct of both the people of ancient Israel and their contemporary descendants when he wrote: "This is a rebellious people, lying children, children who will not hear the law of the Lord; who say to the seers, 'Do not see,' and to the prophets, 'Do not prophesy to us right things; speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits. Get out of the way, turn aside from the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us'" (Isaiah 30:9-11).

Such impertinence brings the accelerating loss of God's favor and divine protection. Similar to what happened to ancient Israel and Judah, these modern-day nations, if they choose to remain unrepentant, will ultimately experience a devastating downfall resulting from their brazen disregard of God and His commandments. This punishment will occur during a time described as "Jacob's trouble," when they will be attacked, plundered and vanquished by enemies (Jeremiah 30:5-7).

To avoid this devastating outcome, people must hear and respond to God's urgent warnings to repent and change—expressed today by His Church proclaiming His Word through this magazine, numerous other publications, television and the Internet. The Church has the same responsibility God gave His faithful prophet Isaiah: "Cry aloud, spare not; lift up your voice like a trumpet; tell My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins" (Isaiah 58:1).

Not only does God speak through the Holy Scriptures today, but He also allows what could be termed "wake-up warnings" to alert people to the disasters awaiting them if they choose not to listen and change.

Consider some of the major wake-up calls that have shouted for Americans' attention in the past several years:

- The Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., that killed almost 3,000 people.
- The 2008 global financial crisis, which until that time was the worst economic disaster since the Great Depression of the 1930s.
- The 2020 coronavirus pandemic, which has greatly impacted people's physical and emotional health as well as the entire world's economic life.

- The riots and protests in 2020 that, according to insurance industry estimates, could result in a total of billions of dollars in damage.

Do you hear God's warning?

Will other severe warnings occur to rouse people out of their state of indifference and sinfulness? For example, could there yet be a severe economic depression? What about a massive attack on the nation's electrical power grid? Or a significant cyberattack on business, government and military computer systems? Maybe a great drought that severely limits crop and meat production, resulting in widespread food shortages? Or an enormous earthquake or some other massive natural disaster?

Sadly, since many people today have no interest in knowing God or learning from His divine Word, they will be blind to these and other danger signals that could arise in the coming days (Matthew 24:37-39).

Finally, when Jeremiah asked, "Who will listen to my warning?" he sincerely hoped that his countrymen would hear his message and turn to God in heartfelt repentance (Jeremiah 9:12, 20). Similarly, as God's Church preaches the gospel of God's coming Kingdom as a witness and warns people of the consequences of their sins, we too hope and pray that people will respond positively to God's urgent admonitions. However, just as most people didn't listen to Jeremiah in his day, most will refuse to listen and repent now.

What about you? Will you hear and heed God's warning?