

# PROPHETS, PRIESTS AND PEOPLE

## INTRODUCTION

- I. Sometimes we use letters of the alphabet to stand for certain things, when ALL things under consideration begin with the same letter.
  - A. On television, Alex Trebek talks about the 3 P's, Price, Price and Price, with reference to life insurance.
  - B. In the Bible, about 600 B.C. the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah uses the same 3 letters to describe Prophets, Priests, and People in his day. Read Jer. 5:30-31 (NKJ)
    1. The KJV and the ASV use the word "wonderful" instead of the word "astonishing" as in the NKJ.
    2. Then, there is a marginal note in the ASV that states "or, astonishing," as an alternate rendering, but with our common use of the word "wonderful", it seems more appropriate in THIS passage to use the word "astonishing," which corresponds with the next adjective, "horrible."
- II. Now let's look at the 3 P's of the text in Jeremiah which describes the state of the People of God, the Jews, in 600 B.C.

## DISCUSSION

### I. 1<sup>st</sup>, the PROPHETS. (Read Jer. 5:31)

- A. Most of the prophets fulfilled their role very well, as spokesmen FOR God, to reveal God's will in *instructing* and *warning* the people of His covenant.
  1. Some of the prophets include Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and many others, as well as many "oral" prophets, who spoke to the people, but were not inspired WRITE books, such as Elijah and Elisha.
  2. Some of the "oral" prophets departed from the will of God, or were false prophets, who taught ERROR to the people instead of what God said.
    - a. Some would tell the people that they were NOT going into bondage, when the true and faithful prophets said they were.
    - b. Some would tell the people in bondage that they would not be in bondage long, when the true prophets said they would. Jer. 27:13-18
- B. Jeremiah begins by talking about the **false** prophets who instigated the problems by teaching FALSE DOCTRINE in the first place.
  1. There were inspired prophets in the first century church who revealed the pure word of God.
  2. They were soon replaced by preachers who were supposed to preach the inspired word, but like the prophets of old, they **departed** from the will of God, and caused a departure from the truth by the people. 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 1 John 4:1; 2 Pet. 2:1-2
  3. Today, so-called preachers have taken multiplied millions of people into spiritual captivity and give human names to the institutions they have formed.
    - a. Charles Taze Russell once foretold that "millions now living will never die," and everyone living at that time HAS died.
    - c. In the 1970's, there were publicized prophecies that Jesus would return before that decade ended, but He did not.

### II. 2<sup>nd</sup>, the PRIESTS. (Jer. 5:31)

- A. The priests were “sacrifice offerers” and they basically **ruled** the spiritual lives of the Israelites, but some did so by their “own power”, and were apostates, just as were the Prophets.
1. The Priests were supposed to be God’s ministers. Joel 1:9
  2. Many times in the O.T., the words “prophets’ and “priests” were joined together in the same verses.
  3. A few passages from the O.T. show how the Priests were corrupt. Lam. 4:13; Zeph. 3:4 ; Mal. 1:6
- B;. In the New Testament age, every Christian is a priest, to offer his own sacrifices, and DO God’s will, as taught in the inspired book.
1. The one ruler under God is Christ, His Son. Matt. 28:18
  2. Christ guided the 12 apostles to reveal His word FOR the church. 1 Cor. 14:33
  3. Local congregations, when fully developed, are to have a plurality of elders to rule and guide them in worship and godly living.

### **III. 3<sup>Rd</sup>, the PEOPLE. (Jer. 5:31)**

- A. As a result of the Prophets and Priests, the People “loved to have it so,” and were a BIG PART of the rebellion of the whole nation of Israel.
- B. TODAY, the multitude of PEOPLE “love to have it so”; that is, the false teaching and guidance of false prophets and leaders.
1. Some love the simplicity of sprinkling instead of immersion.
  2. Some love the system of many denominations so they can believe what they want to believe.
  3. Some like the doctrine of “impossibility of apostasy” so they can participate in some of the normally forbidden things, because they can now do these things as “saved” people without being condemned.
  4. Some like the sound of the organ and piano with their singing of hymns.
  5. Some like a simply plan of salvation, such as “faith only” or the “sinner’s prayer”, to avoid the effort that goes into baptism.

#### **CONCLUSION**

- I. The ultimate question is, **“What shall they do in the end?”** Jer. 5:31
- A. The word “they” can apply to all three groups, “Prophets, Priests and People,” as all are held accountable to God for HIS word. John 12:48
1. The Prophets and Priests are held accountable for lying to and misleading the People.
  2. The People are held accountable for believing lies instead of the will of God. Matt. 15:9-14
- B. Undoubtedly, it will be an “astonishing and horrible thing” to find that a religious life was in vain because the word was not followed. Matt. 7:21-23; Jude 14-15
1. The “end” of sin will be eternal death. Prov. 14:12; Rom. 6;23
  2. In the words of a prophet, “Why will you die?”
- II. The opportunity for you to be saved from sin or return from apostasy, is extended now.

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