

## Is There Any Word From the Lord?

*Jeremiah 37:1-17*

**O**ur world is significantly different now than it was just a few years ago, in many different ways. Besides the constant threat of terrorism, we now have countries that we have helped in significant ways over the years turning against us. Nine states now recognize "marriage" between two homosexuals, after the president of our country came out in support of it. Two states have approved the recreational use of marijuana, and no, one of them is *not* California.

Since late September of 2007, our country's national debt has been increasing at nearly \$4 billion *per day*, and is now hurtling toward \$17 trillion! That number is almost incomprehensible, so picture it this way: If you were to spend a dollar *every second*, it would take you 32,000 years to spend \$1 trillion. People who have been successful in business or investment are being punished for being successful. Others are struggling to find work and provide for their families in massive numbers. We continue to slaughter babies in their mothers' wombs. If scientists were to find a single bacteria on the planet Mars, they would shout, "We've found life on Mars!" And yet the beating heart of a baby inside its mother's womb is not considered enough proof of life.

More than 47 million people are receiving food stamps, with nearly 678,000 of them here in Mississippi alone. Our Constitution, which has served us well for more than 200 years and has helped to make us the strongest nation in history, is being trampled on by our own government. Our government is dictating to us the products we must buy. There is a fast-growing anti-God agenda in our country, and we are told that if we dare to disagree, we are intolerant, bigoted haters. Frank Schaeffer, a New York Times best-selling author, recently published an article calling evangelical Christians domestic terrorists, and calling on the Secret Service and the FBI to investigate and infiltrate evangelical groups. The ACLU and other groups are doing everything they can to eradicate any hint of Christianity from our public life.

Is there any word from the Lord?

There was a time in the nation of Judah when the people refused to pay attention to what God said. In fact, God Himself said, "*I spoke to them, but they did not listen; I called to them, but they did not answer*" (Jeremiah 35:17b). They not only ignored God, but they blatantly disobeyed and turned away from Him. God said

*“They turned their backs to me and not their faces; though I taught them again and again, they would not listen or respond to discipline”* (Jeremiah 32:33). God said of Jerusalem, *“I will hide my face from this city because of all its wickedness”* (Jeremiah 33:5b). And we wonder sometimes if God has not said that about our country as well.

In the middle of all this, God sent Jeremiah to be His prophet, His spokesperson to a culture which was doing its best to eliminate God. Here’s the story:

Zedekiah was king of Judah, and he was in trouble. He had asked for it, because he had rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Now the Babylonian army was besieging the gates of Jerusalem. The prophet Jeremiah had already told Zedekiah what God had to say about the situation, but the Scriptures tell us that the king and all the people refused to listen. They didn’t like what Jeremiah had to say.

That sounds very much like our day, doesn’t it? Particularly verse two: *“Neither he [that would be King Zedekiah] nor his attendants nor the people of the land paid any attention to the words the Lord had spoken through Jeremiah the prophet.”* Folks, we live in a day that has been described as “post-Christian.” Understand what that means. “Post-Christian” is a term used to describe a culture that has turned away from Christian values and influences. In other words, the day when the teachings of Christ influence the decisions we make and the lifestyles we choose here in our country are over. We look around us and see how very little influence the church has anymore, how very little the Words of God are regarded, how even those who claim to be Christians many times do not follow Christ in their lives – and I think we would agree that we live in post-Christian America.

But notice something. Though we read in verse two that the king and all his subjects would not listen to the words of God, we still read in verse three that King Zedekiah sent a message to Jeremiah, saying *“Please pray to the Lord our God for us.”*

Again, that sounds much like what we see in our country. We want the  **blessings**  of God, but we don’t want the  **words**  of God. We want to live like we want to live, and no one should tell us what to do, how to live or how to think. That independent American spirit serves us well until it begins to bleed over into our relationship with God, so that we don’t even want  **Him**  telling us what to do or how to think. And we think that our spiritual lives are totally separate from the rest of our lives. But it doesn’t work that way.

How dare we ask God to bless us when we are in trouble, when we ignore Him the rest of the time? Yet we have done that as individuals and we are doing it as a nation with all our might.

Jeremiah told King Zedekiah that the word from God was that they should surrender to the Babylonians. But that was not what the people wanted to hear. So Jeremiah was accused falsely of treason and thrown into a prison dungeon, where he stayed for many weeks, perhaps months. The Bible says in verse sixteen that it was *“a long time.”*

Then in verse seventeen, the king sent for Jeremiah and questioned him secretly in his house, so no one else would know. The king asked him, *“Is there any word from the Lord?”* And Jeremiah replied, *“There is. Nebuchadnezzar is going to defeat you, unless you surrender to him.”* A little later, in chapter 38, Zedekiah asked Jeremiah again if the Lord God might not help them, and the prophet told him again, *“Surrender.”*

God has entrusted us with the most important message the world has ever known. It certainly may not look like that right now, but everyone is hungering for a Word from the Lord—Christian and non-Christian alike. And what the world wants to know is *“Is there any word from the Lord?”*

With so much confusion, uncertainty, aimlessness, division and yes, even outright rebellion to God, there are voices crying in a wilderness, looking for an answer. Here it is, and it is just as unpopular today as it was then. The word is *“Surrender.”* And here is how it plays out:

*“I have a problem in my home. Is there any word from the Lord?”* There is, and the word is *“surrender.”*

*“I have a problem with sin in my life. Is there any word from the Lord?”* There is, and the word is *“surrender.”*

*“I have doubts about my salvation. Is there any word from the Lord?”* There is, and the word is *“surrender.”*

*“I have this problem with lust. Is there any word from the Lord?”* There is, and the word is *“surrender.”*

*“I have this problem with greed. Is there any word from the Lord?”* There is, and the word is *“surrender.”*

*“I have no devotion to Christ. Is there any word from the Lord?”* There is, and the word is *“surrender.”*

Surrender! Surrender every area of your life to Christ— the way you live, the way you dress, the way you think, your social activities, your relationships, your work, your school, your service to Him, your attitudes, your aspirations, your dreams and goals, your philosophies and ideas. Surrender!

You see, every human sin is like a voice crying out, "Is there any word from the Lord?" The problems we have as individuals and as a nation are all rooted in sin and rebellion against God. The total disregard for God's laws, the problems we have with morality, along with disappointment and fear, of anger and deception, are all problems which are rooted in sin, and the word from the Lord is "surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ!"

Anxiety about the future, guilt over the past, loss of loved ones as the years go by and the sorrow which drags us down, and other problems and doubts and fears that naturally come with increasing age, are problems which are rooted in sin, and the word from the Lord to us is "surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ!"

Is there any word from the Lord? Yes! Yes! Surrender to His will and His way for your life. That is the message that every single human being needs to hear. That is our message— there is no other message. There is no other name under heaven by which men may be saved, other than the glorious, wonderful Name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God!

But let's understand something very, very important. The word to the world, "Surrender," is the same word that God has for us. "Surrender!" God is saying to us that it is time to stop playing games and pretending that we are followers of Christ if we are really not. It is time for us to do what we already claim to do and actually make Jesus Lord of our lives, and the way we spend our time and the thoughts we think and the lives we lead. How can we say to the people out there that God is telling them to surrender when we are not willing to do that ourselves?

In the northeastern part of France, beekeepers recently reported that their bees were producing blue and green honey. When they investigated, they found that a plant about 2.5 miles away had been processing waste from a Mars factory which produces M&M's. The bees had been feeding on that, rather than nectar; hence, the blue honey. Company officials say it is not edible and will not be sold.

Closer to home, in Fayette, North Carolina, bees have been producing blue honey for 100 years. Beekeepers there say it's the berries from nearby huckleberry plants that causes it, and they never know when they will be lucky enough to have it.

Customers say the blue honey has a stronger taste and will even ask for it because they prefer it over the regular honey.

Whether it's M&M's or huckleberries, the color infuses the honey and turns it a different color. And blue is not the only possibility, depending on what the bees ingest. Folks, Christians are the huckleberries, and we are to infuse our culture with an understanding that God loved the world so much that He sent His One and Only Son. We are to change the color of our culture with the teaching that whoever believes in Him should have eternal life. We are to influence our society, starting with our families, our churches and our communities, with the truths that God Himself has revealed to us.

And the only way we're going to do that is to stop pretending that we can live however we want to, act however we want to, talk however we choose, and think that others are going to be drawn to Christ. Is there any word from the Lord for us in these days when our America looks vastly different from the one our founding fathers envisioned? Is there any word from the Lord when our country is in serious financial and moral trouble? Is there any word from the Lord when the people of our country seem intent on thumbing their noses at Almighty God, when even Christian people do not obey God with any degree of passion and consistency? It is time for us to stop *playing* church and start *being* the church!

Yes, there is a word from God, but it is a word that is not very popular. It is a word that flies in the face of what we and those around us really want to do. It is the word "surrender." It starts right here with us. So I'm asking you to surrender your heart, your attitude, your past, your future, everything there is about you, to the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm asking you to totally sell out to Him as Lord of your life. And I'm asking you to do it *today*.