

**INTRODUCTION:**

CHAPTER 23: ¹**Verses 16-17** The false prophets do not give messages from the LORD. They say what they think. They make the people believe that there will be peace. They tell the people that they will not have troubles. That was a popular message, but it gave the people a false sense of security. People wanted to behave in the way that they chose. Of course this is a popular message, and frightened people grabbed it, and held on to it. They did not want to obey the LORD. So, the prophets encouraged them. As a result, the people continued to sin against the LORD. ²The Lord condemns the false prophets who lead His people astray with lies and deceit. *"Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They are filling you with false hopes"* (Jeremiah 23:16). The Hebrew word for "false" implies emptiness or vanity. **17** They still say no evil shall come upon you. The people are being comforted in their evil ways. The people have chosen to believe the false prophets are the true prophets because they speak what the people wish to hear. The sinner wishes to hear that he can continue to live as he pleases without any consequences. They are too filled with lust in their own ways to harken to the true voice of God.

LESSON:**I. JEREMIAH 23:18-20**

23:18 For who hath stood in the counsel of the Lord, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word, and heard it?— Jeremiah is talking about these false prophets. Which one of these false prophets has stood in the presence of the counsel of the Lord (*where God's Will and Wisdom is revealed*)? Who perceived (*seen*) and heard His Word? Who has marked (*noticed and observed and paid attention to it*) and has (*actually*) heard it? If the prophets knew the LORD's message, they would talk about His punishment.

23:19 Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind: it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked. The LORD's punishment on wicked people would come like a fast and powerful wind. A storm symbolizes God's judgment. In verse 17 The false prophets say, *"Ye shall have peace."* How different the message of the true prophet! Did they not perceive the first verse *"Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord."* If the "Under-Shepherds" God place over His flock is warned, how much more for the false prophets. A whirlwind of the Lord; rather, a storm of

¹ <https://www.easyenglish.bible/bible-commentary/jeremiah21-33-lbw.htm>

² <https://biblehub.com/chaptersummaries/jeremiah/23.htm>

<https://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-veresebyverse.html>

PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

GJW

the Lord, even fury, is gone forth, and a dangerously whirling storm – upon the head of the Wicked shall it whirl. The hurricane has already broken out; it will soon reach Jerusalem. (A duplicate of these verses occurs in Jeremiah 30:23, 24).

23:20 The anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly. Jeremiah lets the people know that the anger (the judgment) of the Lord will not turn back; will not diminish, nor calm down until He fully accomplishes; finishes and executes the intent of His heart (*God's divine plan and will*)! It's always part of a larger redemptive plan, which includes both judgment and restoration. However, it's so real that when you get that whipping, then you know the Lord is not playing. They would not understand until the LORD's punishment had happened. Nebuchadnezzar defeated Judah and took the people into Babylon. Then the false prophets should have realized what Jeremiah meant. But even in Babylon, they did not understand Jeremiah's words (Jeremiah 27:19 – 28:8). That's why the verse says: *"In the latter (last) days you will clearly understand it."*

II. JEREMIAH 23:21-22

23:21 I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. Those prophets did not know the LORD; were not in His counsel; He did not speak to them, and their messages showed that the LORD had not sent them! And yet they ran (*with urgency and eagerness*) with a message and prophesied. They were quick to spread their own messages. Not everyone who claims to speak for God is genuinely sent by Him. Does it line up with God's Word? Is there a *"nawing"* (*red-flag*) in your spirit? A true prophet would urge the people to change their behavior (repent and turn from their wicked ways). He would turn the people away from their sins.

23:22 But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.

God gives the possibility of the *"IF."* If they had stood in my counsel where My Will and Wisdom is pronounced and revealed, they would know the truth, and would cause My people to hear My Words! They would have done the opposite of what they did. No, they would have turned My people from their evil way, and from their evil doings. But those prophets encouraged My people to believe that God would never punish them for their actions. God wasn't putting up with this, and would not let them get away with it! God allows us to speak for Him in instances (deliver His message), but it's Him revealing, and we are to say exactly what He says. Jeremiah 23:31 says it all: *"Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith"*



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

III. JEREMIAH 23:23-24

23:23 Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off?—Yahweh is the one who speaks here. He asks three rhetorical questions, yet a warning to the false prophets as if they could hide the very thing God didn't say to them; each of which anticipates a negative response.

1. First, Am I a God at hand? Yahweh is not simply a local god who is concerned only with Judah.

³The rhetorical question challenges the false prophets and people of Judah who believed that God's presence was limited to the temple in Jerusalem. The God who is revealed here is both immanent (present with us)— "**At hand**" equivalent to "**near**", and transcendent (completely beyond us—unknowable except as he chooses to reveal himself), **and not a God afar off**. He's concerned with all of creation—heaven and earth. He is Omnipresent (present) and Omniscience (Knowing)! ⁴Since God is always present, we are accountable to Him in all our actions and thoughts. This awareness should lead us to live lives of integrity and holiness, knowing that nothing is hidden from Him.

23:24 Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord. The next two rhetorical questions with warning from the Lord:

2. Second, Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? ⁵Jeremiah, the prophet is addressing the false prophets and leaders who believe they can act without divine oversight. The "**secret places**" are hiding places where you want to conceal a thing. However, there is no place where we can hide that is beyond Yahweh's seeing or reach. No thought, behavior, or action. No body can hide from the Lord! Both Amos, the prophet, (Amos 9:1–4) and Jeremiah said that nobody can escape from the LORD's punishment. The LORD is near to people. But also, he is above everyone and everything. He can reach the furthest places in space. So, he knows what people are saying. And He knows what they are doing. He knew the truth about the false prophets. Psalm 139:7–13, 15 says:

7Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

8If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

9If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

10Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

11If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.

12Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

13For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

15My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

Hebrews 4:13 says:

13And not a creature exists that is concealed from His sight, but all things are open and exposed, and revealed to the eyes of Him with whom we have to give account.

3. Third, Do not I fill heaven and earth? Yahweh does fill heaven and earth. These verses call them to a broader vision of a transcendent God who is present everywhere, not just in

³ <https://biblehub.com/jeremiah/23-23.htm>

⁴ <https://biblehub.com/jeremiah/23-23.htm>

⁵ <https://biblehub.com/jeremiah/23-24.htm>

<https://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-veresebyverse.html>



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

the temple—not boxed in or confined to one physical location, but and one who cares for all people and not just the people of Judah. Isaiah 66:1 and Acts 7:49 (say the same thing).

1 Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?

Isaiah 40:22:

22 He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in.

SUMMARY:

18-20 God speaks with a barrage of questions through the Prophet Jeremiah to these false prophets who claim to speak for Him. *“Who stood in His counsel? Who perceived and heard His word? Who marked His word, and heard it?”* When choosing false prophets over God’s Word, the wicked have incurred the wrath of God, even a grievous whirlwind shall fall. The anger of the LORD will not turn back until he has executed and accomplished the intents of his heart. In the latter days you will understand it clearly.

21-22 These prophets have taken the liberty to send themselves; rather than seeking God’s calling for their lives, for God had not sent or spoken to them. They have declared their own anointing and behaved as if God has called them to prophesy. Even so, if they had taken the office of prophet falsely yet still taught the people the true words of God, then God would have used them to remove evil from the people. Then they should have turned from their evil ways. Unfortunately, they have not done so.

23-24 Therefore, God reminds the people and prophets that He is nearby, always seeing and hearing what man is doing. *“Am I not at hand and not a God that’s far off?”* The wicked believe they can live as they please because they believe that God cannot see them (Ps. 94:7). *“Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him?”* They falsely believe that God is far removed from human affairs, and therefore will be satisfied with some prayers and sacrifices instead of the actual requirement of God’s approval which is faith and obedience. *“Do not I fill heaven and earth?”* He is not boxed in or confined to one physical location!