

**JEREMIAH, PART 1 (RETURN TO ME)
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WEEK 5 (909343)
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SERIES: Jeremiah, Part 1 (Return To Me)

TITLE: Program 22 – What Are You Worshiping?

TUESDAY (10/13/09)

OPEN

Are you worshipping something that you have conceived in your mind that is going to make you happy? Are you worshipping something that you are building, that you are constructing? Like a house, or a boat, or some dream that you are fulfilling, and you're making things to go along with it? Do you know what that's called? It's called idolatry. We'll talk about it today.

PART ONE

You know, we talk about idolatry, and that's what we're studying in Jeremiah. And as we look at that we think, "I don't have statues." We saw yesterday in the program that God's saying, "You know, you cut down a tree, and you carve this thing with your own hands. And, and you put gold and silver on it. And then you're afraid it's going to fall over, so you nail it down with your own hands." And then He compares this idol that man has created. You've got to know that idols are a man's creation. They are

something that came out of men's mind. You look at all the Greek gods, and you can trace it back to Ulysses and others. These are figments of men's imagination. And yet, somehow, we take what we imagine, and then we give it shape, and we give it form. And we carve a statue, or we sculpt it, or build it and construct it. And then, all of a sudden, we are bowing down to the works of our own hands. And God says, "Hey! This is what you're worshipping? This is what the nations are doing. Look at that and look at Me. I'm the only one that is a true God. There is no other. You're looking at something that you create; I'm the Creator." And so we came to that point in Jeremiah chapter 10 where He's talking about that these people that worship these idols are, **"...Altogether..."**, verse 8, **"...stupid and foolish in their discipline of delusion...."** And vanity. He says, **"...Their idol is wood!" (Jeremiah 10:8)** So then, once again, he says, **"But the LORD..."**, verse 10, **"...is the true God; He is the living God...."** (Jeremiah 10:10) These are inanimate objects. They don't have breath. They don't have life. They can't speak. They can't walk. They can't produce. They are produced, but they can't produce. And so he says, **"...He is the living God and [He is] the everlasting King...."** (Jeremiah 10:10) Not only is He God, but He is to rule forever and ever and ever. Then he says in verse 12, **"It is He [God, that] made the earth by His power, who established the world by His wisdom; and by His understanding...has stretched out the heavens...He utters His voice, there is a tumult of waters in the heavens...."** In other words, we think water on earth, but there is a tumult of waters in the heavens. **"...He causes the clouds to ascend from the end...the earth; He makes lightning for the rain, and [He] brings...the wind [out of the]...storehouses."** (Jeremiah 10:12-13) Why are you worshipping something that can't speak, something that you have to nail down, something that you have to carry when here is the Living God who's in charge of all creation? Who is in charge of the heavens? Who is in charge of the weather? Who is in charge of man? And then he shows you the contrast.

Remember when we were talking about that great American philosopher, yesterday, Forrest Gump who says, “Stupid is as stupid does.” He says, **“Every man is stupid, devoid of knowledge; every goldsmith....,”** now listen, **“...is put to shame by his idols....” (Jeremiah 10:14)** You make an idol, and it puts you to shame. **“...For his molten images are deceitful....” (Jeremiah 10:14)** Now before we go any further. Before you think, “Yeah, that is stupid.” What are you giving yourself to? What consumes your time? What are you building? What are you constructing? What does it have to do with the image of God? You say, “I’m not to pursue sports?” No, I’m saying sports aren’t to be your God. “I’m not to pursue power?” No, you’re not to pursue power. You’re to pursue the Kingdom of God. (See Matthew 6:33) And if God then wants to put you in a position of power that’s fine. You’re not to pursue riches. God may make you rich, and that’s all right, but you’re not to pursue them. [We are to pursue holiness without which no man will see the Lord. We are to pursue peace with all men.] (PARAPHRASE, Hebrews 12:14) We are to pursue godliness, that’s what we are to pursue. We are to pursue to be like God, not to make gods. It says, **“...For his molten images are deceitful...there is no breath in them. They are worthless, a work of mockery; in the time of their punishment they will perish.” (Jeremiah 10:14-15)** And then once again he contrasts this with God. The portion of Jacob; who’s the portion of Jacob? It’s God. **“The portion of Jacob is not like these; for the Maker of all is He....” (Jeremiah 10:16)** He’s taking you back to the fact that God created the heavens and the earth and Israel, this nation that He’s raised up, this nation to whom Jeremiah is preaching, **“...Israel is the tribe of His inheritance....”** And then he makes this statement, **“...The LORD of hosts is [He]....” (Jeremiah 10:16)** Jehovah Sabaoth is He. What does that mean? It means He is over all the hosts of heaven. He is over all the armies in the heavens. He is over the good angels, the bad angels. He is over the devil. He is over all the inhabitants of the earth. He is over all. Why would

you worship something less than God? I want us to go back, and I want us to look at idols. I want us to go back to right after the flood. I want us to go back to the time when men knew, when everyone on the face of this earth knew and understood that God was God. In Genesis chapter 9, God has flooded the whole earth. God has destroyed man and beast off of the earth. Everything that was not in the ark that went through the flood was destroyed. There are eight people on that ark. There are two of certain kinds of animals, and there are seven of other kinds of animals to make for sacrifices. The flood is over, the animals are off the ark, the people are off the ark, there is only eight. And it says, **“And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.’”** (Genesis 9:1) All those eight people knew that God was God. They knew what God had done. They knew. They lived before the flood. They lived through the flood. They lived after the flood. They all knew God. They knew that He was the One that caused the flood. He’s the One that subsided the flood. He’s the One that tore up the earth and He’s the one that did it. They know it. And then you come down to Genesis chapter 9, and it says in verse 18, **“Now the sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem...Ham and Japheth; and Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated.”** (Genesis 9:18-19) So what I want you to see is, there was a time when there were no idols because they knew who God was. And knowing Him, they didn’t need any other God at all. But now watch, I want you to go from there to Genesis chapter 10. And in verse 32, it says this, **“These are the families of the son of Noah, according to their genealogies, by their nations...out of these the nations were separated...after the flood.”** (Genesis 10:32) So the father of every single nation and the father who brings forth these nations, and He delineates them in Genesis 10. They know that there is one God because the story has passed on. It says, **“Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words...[and] they journeyed east.... [And**

then] they said...‘Come, [and] let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly.’ And they used [the] brick for stone, and...they said, ‘...Let us build...a city, and a tower whose top will reach [unto] heaven, and let us make...ourselves a name....’” (Genesis 11:1-4) They’re in trouble because God has told them through Noah that they are to spread across the earth, and that they are to multiply and they are to fill the earth. Now they are saying, ‘Oh no, we’re going to build a tower that goes to heaven. And we are going to have a city. And we’re going to make a name for ourselves.’” Ah, now it’s about men. Who are those guys that got off that ark? They were sinners. The flood came and judged men, but it did not change the heart of man. Man still needs to be redeemed. [So God comes down to see the tower. He says, “They are one people. They are one language. What they begin to do, they will be able to accomplish. Nothing will be impossible. So let’s confuse their language because then they cannot take their skills and communicate with one another. So He scattered them.] (PARAPHRASE, Genesis 11:5-7) Verse 8, “...abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. Therefore [that city’s] name was called Babel....” (Genesis 11:8-9) Remember that. Who’s the enemy that’s coming from the north against Israel? Well, God is not yet named that enemy in Jeremiah, but we’re going to see it’s Babylon. Babylon has its roots all the way back here. And He called it Babel because the Lord confused the language of the whole earth. This is where idolatry is beginning. We’ll be right back.

PART TWO

We’re talking about idols, and I’ve got to tell you, don’t miss tomorrow’s program because you’re going to meet someone who worshipped idols. Who was a Buddhist combined with Hinduism and everything. You don’t want to miss her story. But the first time that you can find the word idol or gods with a little “g” is in Genesis chapter 31: 19. “**When Laban had gone to shear**

his flock, then Rachel stole the household idols that were her father's."
(Genesis 31:19) Rachel is the wife of Jacob. Jacob's name is going to be changed to Israel. Israel is going to have 12 sons, and they will be the 12 tribes of Israel. You come down to verse 30, and Jacob is leaving with his wives. And she, and he's leaving Laban and he says, **"Now you have indeed gone away...[but] you [long] greatly for your father's house...why did you steal my gods?"** **(Genesis 31:30)** You're leaving me. But I know this, I know you've got my gods. I know you've got my idols. I know that you long greatly for me. I know that if you had your way, and you didn't have this husband, you'd stay with me. And then it says, Jacob's saying, ["If you find idols on any one of these people that are leaving with me they're going to die."] **(PARAPHRASE, Genesis 31:32)** Well, good night! They're sitting under the love of his life. The love of his life is not Leah, the other wife, it is Rachel, but he doesn't know that she has Laban's idols! And so what you have, it says in verse 34, **"Now Rachel had taken the household idols...put them in the camel's saddle, and she sat on them. And Laban felt through all the tent but did not find them. [And] she said to her father, 'Let not my lord be angry that I cannot rise before you, for the manner...women is upon me'...."** **(Genesis 31:34-35)** I'm having my period. And it says, **"...So he searched but [he] did not find the household idols."** **(Genesis 31:35)** So what do you find? You find idolatry being inserted there. Where did these idols come from? Well, Romans tell us, and I believe those idols came from the nations because that's where Laban came from. And remember by now Abraham has been chosen out of the nations to become a great nation, a nation that belongs to God. So now we come to Romans chapter 1, and surely if you know the Word of God, your mind has gone to Romans 1. It's talking about [men being without excuse because creation testifies to God's invisible attributes.] **(PARAPHRASE, Romans 1:20)** The sun, the moon, the stars, all of creation says, "Hey, there is a creator." Not only that, but there's a witness within.

And yet, when men close their eyes to creation, when men close their hearts to the witness within, “...even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God [they did not] give thanks...they became futile in their speculations...” (Romans 1:21) Futile means vain, it means empty, it means stupid. It says, “...And their foolish heart was darkened.

Professing [themselves] to be wise, they became fools, [they] exchanged the glory of [an] incorruptible God for an image...,” and that’s what Jeremiah 10 is all about, “...[An image] in the form of corruptible man...of birds [of]...four-footed animals and crawling creatures.”

(Romans 1:21-23) And that’s just the beginning. When you turn from the knowledge of God, when you make yourself an idol, Beloved, is when you get in trouble. Now if you go from there, and even if you would look at Psalm 115 and we don’t have time to go there. But look at Psalm 115

“...They have eyes, but they cannot see; they have ears, but they cannot hear...” (Psalm 115:5-6) They have a mouth, but they cannot speak. This is what people are worshiping. And see, if you are worshiping things, and achievements, and goals instead of worshiping God then you’ve turned your

back on God. In Exodus chapter 20, and I quoted it before, but in Exodus Chapter 20, He says, “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.” (Exodus 20:2) So now we have moved Jacob, and his sons have gone to Egypt. And now God has brought them out of Egypt, and He says, and Egypt is full of other gods. And He says, “You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself [any] idol...[of] any likeness of what is in heaven above...on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD [am] your God, [and I] am a jealous God....” (Exodus 20:3-5) He’s not envious; He owns everything.

But He is jealous, and rightly so because He made us for Himself. And so you see idolatry, if you think about Solomon, you think about how Solomon’s heart was turned away. And how he created high places for the

idols of his wives that came from the nations and how it turned Him away from God. (See 1 Kings 11:3-8) And what do you see? Idolatry, idolatry, idolatry in the life of Israel, and what is God about to do? We're going to see it. God is about to judge them because of these idols. Now when you look at an idol, 1 Corinthians 8, verses 4 to 6. You might want to write it down. And chapter 10, verse 19 to 21 tells us that an idol is nothing. An idol is absolutely nothing. It is the work of man's hands. (See 1 Corinthians 10:19-21) And when you look at 1 Corinthians, and you look at chapter 8, there is a verse that you need to put next to verse 5 and 6. In verse 4 it says, **"...There is no such thing as an idol in the world, and...there is no God but one."** (1 Corinthians 8:4) And then he says, **"Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom...all things [exist] and we exist for Him...[the Lord Jesus Christ there is] one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him."** (1 Corinthians 8:6) Next to that write Deuteronomy 6:4: the Great Shema which says, **"Hear, O Israel! The LORD...our God,...is one!"** (Deuteronomy 6:4) There is no other God. You say, "But I don't have idols," Well, I want you to look at Colossians chapter 3 before you say that because Colossians chapter 3 is talking about things that you are to lay aside, things that are wrong. He says, **"Therefore..."** in verse 5, **"...consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry."** (Colossians 3:5) O Beloved, has your idol toppled? Has the things that you have purchased with your money and the pursuit of money, are they going away? Are they falling through your fingers? And you can't hang onto them? You know, in a sense, that's good because now you're going to discover that it is God who supplies all your needs, who has said to you, [If you will seek me first, my kingdom and my righteousness, I'll take care of your food, I'll take care of your shelter, I'll take care of your clothing.] (PARAPHRASE, Matthew 6:25,33) There's only one true God and that's the God we all need.