

“Truth is Perished”

A sermon was preached by Jeremiah at the gate of the temple of Jehovah (Jer. 7:1). The thesis of the sermon was that *“truth is perished”* from the people of God (Jer. 7:28). God’s people would neither receive instruction nor obey it (Jer. 7:28). They made the decision to walk by their own human ideas (counsels) and thereby illustrated their stubbornness (Jer. 7:24). A state of delusion governed their minds. They continued to offer up sacrifices to God; however, the Lord would not accept them (Jer. 7:21). They continued to place their trust in the temple of Jehovah; however, they had no love for truth or justice (cf. Jer. 5:1). They had sinned in that they listened and gave heed to false prophets rather than to the Lord who created them (Jer. 7:8). The consequence of these actions was that the wrath of God would be poured out upon them (Jer. 7:20). Such a people had no true desire for truth; **truth had perished** in their hearts and, therefore, the Lord commanded Jeremiah not to pray for such a people (Jer. 7:16).

Symptoms of a sin-sick society where truth has perished:

The symptoms of spiritual sickness are revealed in Jeremiah 7-8. Repentance would have served as the *“balm of Gilead”* (Jer. 8:22); however, God’s people continued in their stubborn ways, saying, *“What have I done?”* (Jer. 8:7). Judah illustrated that *“truth is perished”* when they said, *“We are wise, and the law of Jehovah is with us”* (Jer. 8:8). Note that *“covetousness”* and *“dealing falsely”* (Jer. 8:10) were identified as Judah’s sins (including the prophet and priest) even though they proclaimed that *“we are wise, and the law of Jehovah is with us.”* Many brethren today are living in such a state of delusion. They proclaim that all is well when all is disastrously wrong in their lives. A sin-sick society believes all is well when God’s view is just the opposite.

Practical Application:

What can we learn from this? We learn that our individual conscience does not determine whether we are acceptable to the Lord (cf. II Cor. 1:17). Secondly, we learn that while I may think that I am not *“covetous”* nor one who *“deals falsely”* with brethren, by my words and actions I may prove otherwise (cf. II Cor. 4:1-2). A Christian can fit the mold of being covetous and false when they never intended to be that way. Judah’s problem was that while they *“walked in their own counsels”* (Jer. 7:24) and proclaimed, *“We are wise,”* they were truly deluding themselves and others (Jer. 7:8). **When brethren proclaim they are righteous when wickedness reigns in their lives, truth has perished in their hearts.** No amount of sincerity will change that such ones are in error. Their character is proved by their actions.

Some of our brethren today are telling us that a false teacher is not false unless his character is flawed. Interestingly, the false prophets of Jeremiah’s day determined their innocence based upon the same supposition. God’s view was totally different than their view. God saw the people’s lack of fear (Jer. 5:22), shame (Jer. 6:15), knowledge (Jer. 8:7), and humility (Jer. 8:6) when He looked to their every day words and actions. The people were what they were because they had accepted the false teachings of the false prophets (Jer. 23:13-14; 32). These false prophets were false because they led the people astray with false doctrines (Jer. 5:31; 10:21; 13:25; 14:13-15). Instead of preaching truth that would lead to repentance, these shepherds taught false doctrines and *“strengthened the hands of evil-doers”* (i.e., made them feel comfortable and encouraged the people in their sins [Jer. 23:13-17]). Their gross error was found in what they were preaching. They preached and peddled their own ideas as though they were of divine origin (Jer. 23:16-17, 28) and thereby perverted the word of God (Jer. 23:36). Though they *“sincerely”* believed they were teaching the people truth, God termed their words *“lies”* (Jer. 27:10). Clearly one is false when he brings a false doctrine. **When one brings a false doctrine, his character is**

defined. No amount of sympathetic opining of “sincerity,” “integrity,” and “honesty” from other brethren will change the fact that the false teacher is teaching false doctrine.

When has truth perished in the hearts of brethren?

Truth has perished in the hearts of brethren today when strong preaching that exposes sin is no longer desired (II Tim. 4:3). Truth has perished when brethren no longer want to hear false doctrines and false teachers exposed (II Tim. 2:17-18). Truth has perished when brethren preach and peddle their own ideas as divine truth (II Cor. 2:17; II Jn. 9). Truth has perished when a brother tells us that a false teacher may not be called false unless his character is flawed (please examine Jer. 23:13-17 and understand that the content and consequences of one’s teaching determines whether he is true or false and whether or not his character is flawed). If I measure a man’s character without the doctrine of Christ and conclude that he is ‘honorable’ (in my opinion), I have proved myself to love the man more that God’s divine revelation! Truth is perished when erring brethren are protected and spared under the guise of “sincerity,” “honesty,” and “integrity” (II Cor. 1:12). Truth has perished when brethren fellowship those in error rather than expose their sins (Eph. 5:11; I Jn. 1:5-7; II Jn. 9-11). Truth has perished when brethren proclaim they are righteous when wickedness reigns in their lives (I Jn. 1:5-7). Has truth perished in your life dear reader?

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