

Messages From the Gates of Jerusalem
#5 - Old Gate - Part II - "Ask For The Old Path"

Old Gate - Jeshanah Gate > Stands for Truth

- a. "Jeshanah," meaning "old", represents the eldership of the city (leaders of the Body) and their guidance in the "ancient paths" of God (Jer. 6:16) in spiritual growth.
- b. This gate represents our coming into the truths of the Logos - the written Word of God.
 1. We must enter into the eternal, ancient truths of God's written Word that never change. Be rooted and grounded > Study the Word diligently > involved in Bible studies.

Note: NO Building; Repair - had locks and bars

Neh. 3:6 "The Jeshanah Gate was repaired by Joiada son of Paseah and Meshullam son of Besodeiah. They laid its beams and put its doors and bolts and bars in place.

The meaning of the names of those directly involved in the rebuilding of this gate are significant and reveal the aspects of God's 'logos' Word.

Joiada = 'Jehovah known' > God's Word is His intention; His knowledge that we can know.

Paseah = 'to leap and skip for joy;" great joy in knowing and living in God's general Word

Meshullam = 'allied' or 'friend' showing our relationship with God as we keep His Word.

Besodeiah = 'counsel of Jehovah' > God's Word gives His perfect counsel and guidance

Rom. 15:4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

Acts 17:21 For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.

Divine judgment was on course for the nation of Judah because of the sins of King Manasseh. God called Jeremiah to be His prophet to Judah during the 13th year of King Josiah. His very difficult message: Repent and turn to the LORD God whose wrath is coming due to your sin of idolatry. You have forsaken the true God by worshiping idols and pagan gods. In your hypocrisy, you have maintained temple worship, but you give only lip service to God.

Conditions: Judah is languishing under the threat of impending punishment.

Repentance is their only hope.

Problem: They have found a "new way," a religion of convenience which turned the people away from Jehovah God. Their false prophets are flourishing in a ministry that is shallow and popular because they promise peace when there is none. They have never called for repentance. The evil rulers and judges go to the temple faithfully and pretend to be devoted to Jehovah. The priests are ruling with a strong and merciless hand and committing vile abominations with female worshipers. NOT ASHAMED!

Disaster: My people love it this way; it is so easy to be a Jew now.

There are no demands; no care for the poor; no requirements for holiness.

Even the prophets and priests live as they please.

Results: The "new way" has led to false worship, loss of fear of God and love for God, direct rebellion against God's commands, and a polluted priesthood.

Spiritual Cancer > Destroying the people - They cover their sins with religious activity. Trust in > the ark, the temple, religious rituals, the covenant

Jeremiah's Message: 13x > Backsliding; 53x > committed sin, iniquity or trespass;

47x > Return to the LORD; 14x > You will be scattered; 51x > Taken captive by Babylon

Warning: You have drifted away from the LORD God > on a wrong path.

Warning to Us today: You CANNOT go anywhere you want, think anything you want, say anything you want, watch anything you want, listen to anything you want and still be holy! There is a price to pay.

Jeremiah to Israel: Do you want to avoid catastrophe? Here is the solution:

Jer. 6:16 Thus says the LORD: "Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old (ancient) paths (almost 900 years old), where the good way *is*, and walk in it;

Then you will find rest for your souls.

1. Be responsible: know the TRUTH. Do not be deceived. You CANNOT modify God's Word.

2. Ancient Paths > Law of Moses > Way of Life; Worship of God; Attitude to God;

Moral requirements

3. Ancient > Hebrew > OLAM = old, concealed, hidden, perpetual, eternal, timeless, from eternity

4. Good way > Hebrew > TOV = pleasant, agreeable, happy, well-off, prosperous, excellent, cheerful, merry - These characteristics result from walking in God's ancient paths.

Jeremiah's Exhortation to Repent:

1. STAND > Take time to think when you come to a crossroad.

2. SEE > Spend time observing > Assess where you are before you blindly follow the crowd.

3. ASK > Old Paths; the Good Way

Landmarks along the ancient path that you should see. Stand and observe: See chart

4. WALK > in the old or good way > Do not Digress

Jer. 7:23 But this is what I commanded them, saying, 'Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you that it may be well with you.'

Isa. 30:21 Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This *is* the way, walk in it,"

Whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left.

5. FIND > Rest for your soul - God's peace is found only on the ancient path.

The most important news headline is not, "Me, and How I Feel." Jeremiah reminds us we are not to look for "change," but we are to seek the path that will give rest for our souls.

Walking in the "good way" will yield abundant recompense (pay or reward) at the journey's end. In a world that is prescribing more medication for anxiety than at any other time in history, it is time to do the "counter-cultural" thing and "ask for the ancient paths."

Jeremiah's plea offers several points to convince the erring people to STAND FOR TRUTH:

1. "Old or ancient paths" is an appeal to history.

Prophets had repeatedly urged the Jews to "remember" the past.

Deut. 16:3 that you may remember the day in which you came out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life.

Deut. 24:9 Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam on the way when you came out of Egypt!

Deut. 32:7 Remember the days of old, Consider the years of many generations.

Ps. 105:5 Remember His marvelous works which He has done, His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth.

The NT also teaches this principle of motivation.

Luke 17:32 Remember the disobedience of Lot's wife.

Heb. 10:32 Paul admonished the Jewish Christians to remember their "former days."

II Peter 1:9 Peter declares that some Christians never develop because they have not remembered their history, > the cleansing of their sins.

2. Consequences if you do not walk in the old paths > Turns from the past to the future
Jer. 6:19 Hear, O earth! Behold, I will certainly bring calamity (impending captivity) on this people— The fruit of their thoughts, Because they have not heeded My words nor My law, but rejected it. (If you don't reflect upon the lessons of the past, you can, in the future, reap the reward of trusting your own thoughts.)

A horrible future awaits those who ignore the instructions to walk in God's ways is also addressed in the NT. Peter reminds us of the great Flood of the distant past, and of the coming destruction of this world. II Peter 3:14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless;

3. A final motivation to return to the ancient way:

It is the ONLY way to the rest that is sought by the weary.

Jer. 6:16b Then you will find rest for your souls.

Matt. 11:28-29 Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Truth: There is no genuine rest when one wallows in the muck of rebellion.

Their response in Jer. 6:16b: WE WILL NOT WALK IN IT.

They will not heed the message, yet they continue to bring their hypocritical worship. They have risen above many of the surrounding nations, have an enriched economy and culture, are advanced in RELIGION and have "shaken off" the primitive beliefs of their forefathers.

You want us to repent? To ask for the OLD paths?! NO! You are behind the times. It is very easy to "get caught up" in a "gospel" of convenience and comfort; one with no cross that allows you to think, say or do anything you want. This "gospel" denied the grace of God and exalted self to a status of "godhead," so that anything self chooses is considered right.

Gal. 1:8 Paul said though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed

Prov. 14:12 There is a way *that seems* right to a man, but its end *is* the way of death.

Tragedy: The destruction and captivity could have been avoided.

Hosea 4:6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. ...you rejected knowledge.

Failure:

1. Spiritual Complacency

a. Moses warned them: Deut. 28:1, 13 Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth.

b. The words "fully obey," "carefully follow ALL" and "pay attention" had long ago escaped their consideration of importance. Otherwise, they would have never allowed their knowledge to wane. This led them to heed only the messages that "tickled their ears"; comfortable No desire to fully obey Him and carefully follow His commands; No desire to pay attention

2. Complacency in Knowledge Growth - Amos 6:1 Woe to you who are at ease in Zion.

A seemingly harmless sin of omission sealed their fate brought on by the sin of lukewarmness > no zeal and uncommitted. They traveled a wrong path because they did not fully seek the LORD their God and His FULL will for them > The One they were CERTAIN would deliver them. Walking in complacency is NOT walking in God's ancient path.

Rom. 12:11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;

A second meaning of Jeshanah in Hebrew is "storage." Study the Word of God and "store away as much as you can" in the early, joyful, hungry stage of your Christian life!

a. Be active and continual in your knowledge growth = Old Path = The Good Way

b. The Bible is clear about the importance of Biblical knowledge growth.

Peter's last Biblical words to humanity were these:

II Pet. 3:18...grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

I Pet. 2:2 *Like newborn babies, desire the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow.*

Preacher: *"I've never been able to successfully teach someone who didn't want to learn."*

In fact, our knowledge growth must reach the point where each of us can accurately teach others even the "more complex" aspects of God's word:

Heb. 5:12-14...though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

3. Systemic knowledge failure leads to "religion evolution."

It was their lack of will to learn, undoubtedly driven by the false belief that their current knowledge was acceptable. Israel's "religion" had evolved, just as with many churches today. There is an inversely proportional relationship between "accurate, honest Biblical knowledge: and "one's sense of spiritual 'maturity' and tolerance to sin." As your knowledge of God's will diminishes, a false sense of "spiritual maturity" often increases.

Growing in the grace and the knowledge of God had the opposite effect on the Apostle Paul. I Cor. 15:9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. (18 years after conversion)

Eph. 3:8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, (24 years)

I Tim. 1:15 Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. (29 years)

Truth: MAN IS BORN A SINNER. Mankind rejects this truth.

Call me sick, but not a sinner. Call me behaviorally challenged, but not a sinner.

The humanist and evolutionist say, we're not sinners; just underdeveloped.

The geneticist says, we're not sinful; we just have bad genes.

The sociologist says, we're not sinful; just products of our environment.

The educator says we're not sinful; we just ignorant. We just need to be educated.

Truth: If you don't have a heart change, nothing you do to the head matters.

Truth: The heart of the problem of sin is the problem of the human heart. Don't tell people that they need a "boost" to their self-esteem; they need a birth from above.

People don't want to teach that the sin problem lies with man's heart; that is cruel.

We need to "softsoap" it. Is it cruel to arouse sleeping people if their house is on fire?

Is it cruel to jerk a blind man away from a rattlesnake? Is it cruel to declare unto

people the deadliness of their disease and instruct them in measures to take?

Don't Twist, Sanitize, Soften or Water Down the Gospel. We are to praise Him, humble ourselves, and preach the Whole Counsel of God in and out of season.

Man continually searches for a new and better way; something different from God's way that will still fill the void in their soul. Irony > God has already provided the BEST and ONLY way for man to find rest for his soul and fill the void. IT WORKS!

There is not a vast crowd traveling the old paths.
Many have departed from and despised the old paths.
Many have traded His presence for His presents.
Many have chosen gold over glory and chosen the praise of men over the praise of God.

The ancient paths are not hard to find. Man simply refuses to walk in them. Very few take His ancient path for it is the path of difficulty. Man wants to be rewarded now for taking the path. These ancient paths of God war upon the flesh of men; they are not flesh friendly. Jesus said, "whosoever will lose his life for My sake will find it." We must lose ourselves now so the fullness of Jesus Christ can be manifested in us as a witness to those around us. Humble yourself to the love and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Lose yourself in His infinite love for you. Unless you are willing to humble yourself and be a living sacrifice before God, it is beyond difficult to travel this path. God's rest will be an elusive goal.

- A. The prideful will not take it because they will not be recognized.
- B. The slothful will not long endure upon it because there is little rest from it.
- C. The glutton will not take it because this "spiritual food" is not palatable to the flesh of man.
- D. The lustful will not take it because it will deny them of what they desire most.
- E. The greedy and envious will not because the path requires all you have be handed over to God. You will be in control of NOTHING.

The OLD GATE was the entrance to the new section of Jerusalem. The OLD GATE reminds us that the path to a right relationship with God NEVER changes. God does not change His mind and make a new path available for a new generation. "There is NOTHING new under the sun." Every generation and every "new" method MUST enter through the gate of God's ancient path and its foundational truths. We may use a "new method" to reach people, but the MESSAGE we give them can NEVER change.

Isa. 55:8-9 For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, Nor *are* your ways My ways," says the LORD. ⁹ "For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.

Psalms 18:30 *As for* God, His way *is* perfect; The word of the LORD is proven;
He *is* a shield to all who trust in Him.

Ps. 128:1 Blessed *is* everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in His ways.

Psalms 37:4 Wait on the LORD, and keep His way, and He shall exalt you to inherit the land;
When the wicked are cut off, you shall see *it*.

Psalms 25:4-5 Show me Your ways, O LORD; Teach me Your paths. ⁵ Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You *are* the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day.

Jer. 6:15 "Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old (ancient) paths, where the good way *is*, and walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls.