

## **"And My People Love To Have It So"**

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by Bill Crews

**"A wonderful (causing "wonder" or "astonishment") and horrible (causing "horror"-bc) thing is come to pass in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?"** (Jeremiah 5:30-31)

In Jeremiah's day there was something going on among God's people in Judah which occasioned astonishment and horror in God. The prophets prophesied falsely. They did not speak the words of God, but their own words. They did not speak what the people needed to hear, but rather what they wanted to hear. They strengthened the hands of the people in their sinful ways and removed them far from the wrath of God and their impending fate. Bolstered by the false and lulling predictions of the false prophets, the ungodly priests bore rule over the people in a way that made a mockery of religion.

And how did the people respond to all of this? Their God said, "And my people love to have it so." They liked it! It gave them an easy religion, a do-as-you-please life, and a clear conscience -- in short, it helped them to feel comfortable with sin and to be oblivious to their looming fate. Human nature has not changed. People today are no different than people in Jeremiah's time.

In our day there are churches that profess to be churches of God and preachers that profess to be men of God, but the preachers are speaking what the members want to hear, and the churches are providing what the members want them to provide. The preachers have abandoned their role as teachers of God's revealed word, speaking what men need to hear, and churches have abandoned their role to minister to the spiritual and eternal needs of men, giving them what they need most. And most of the members love to have it so!

Today we have the new gospel of health and wealth which seems to be saying that God is primarily concerned about His people having sound physical health (and feeling good) and prospering materially (and living in affluence). The gospel of salvation from sin and eternal life hereafter, with its cost here of penitence, commitment, obedience, service, sacrifice and suffering, has gone out the window. Today we have the social gospel that has spawned the "family life" centers that minister to the "whole man" (mentally, physically, socially and spiritually, with the spiritual emphasis coming in dead last). A large church in Dallas, Texas polled its members and others in the community to see what they expected and wanted of that church; then they proceeded to provide it for them. Their numbers increased even more, but growth in numbers does not prove that a work is of God. God never did anything that way, and man is not benefitted by any such procedures.

God rather makes it abundantly clear in His word that our thoughts and ways are not His and His are above ours as the heavens are above the earth (Is. 55:8-9), that the way of man is not in himself and that thus it is not in man to direct his way (Jer. 10:23), and that man has always gotten into trouble as a result of pursuing his own thoughts and ways (Is. 65:2; Ps. 81:11-12; Prov. 14:12). We must humble ourselves before God, turn from our own ways, and walk willingly in the way of God. We must recognize the sovereignty and wisdom of God and accept His word as our only and all-sufficient guide.

Let us not be like those described in Isaiah 30:8-9: "Now go, write it before them on a tablet, and inscribe it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever. For it is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of Jehovah; that say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits, get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." May our desires be nothing more and nothing less that what God has revealed for us in His Word.

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