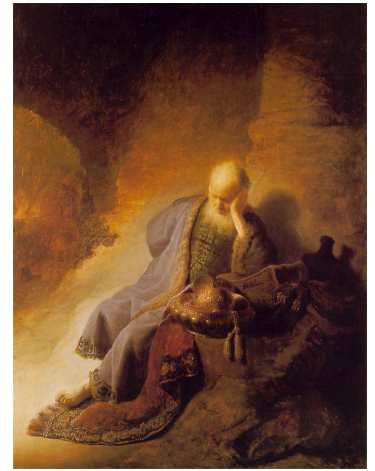


St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church-WELS
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz
Last Judgment November 7, 2010 Jeremiah 26:1-6



¹ In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came from the LORD: ²"Thus says the LORD: Stand in the court of the LORD's house, and speak to all the cities of Judah that come to worship in the house of the LORD all the words that I command you to speak to them; do not hold back a word. ³ It may be they will listen, and every one turn from his evil way, that I may relent of the disaster that I intend to do to them because of their evil deeds. ⁴You shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD: If you will not listen to me, to walk in my law that I have set before you, ⁵ and to listen to the words of my servants the prophets whom I send to you urgently, though you have not listened, ⁶then I will make this house like Shiloh, and I will make this city a curse for all the nations of the earth.'" (ESV)

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

When will your judgment day be? Declan was just 20 years old. He will never be 21. Declan was videotaping football practice when it was really windy. He was on a scissors lift that can lift you five stories high. The wind was somewhere between 50 and 60 miles an hour at ground level – with all the friction the ground causes. It was a judgment call – should Declan go up and film practice. The coach decided he should. Declan decided he would do what he was told to do. It cost him his life! When will your judgment day be? Olympic National Park is in Washington State. Bob and his wife and children decided to go hiking there. It's not the best time to go hiking. October through December the mountain goats are thinking about "hugs and kisses". There are about 300 goats in the park. Jesus didn't put the goats in the park – people moved them there. And the goats did very well in the rocky mountains. A male mountain goat can be just 3 feet high at the shoulder and weigh as much as 300 pounds. They have these really sharp black horns. One of the goats went after Bob – poking a hole in Bob's leg – then stood over him – so nobody could help him until it was too late! Who knew that walk would end in death! Lucas was 19 years old. He will never be 20. Lucas was surfing on a boogie board at 9 in the morning off of Santa Barbara when he was attacked most likely by a great white shark – some 15 maybe 20 feet long. That's a shark about the size of a church pew! The shark took one bite – and there was no one anywhere near – that could save Lucas' life. Who knew – swimming out – looking for a wave – would be the end? What are the odds that something could go so horribly wrong today – that it could cost us our life? The ultimate judgment will be made by the Lord Jesus on Judgment Day. If you think about it – that's the only judgment that really matters. That judgment will be made on the basis of God's amazing grace. God's Word this Last Judgment Sunday encourages us:

Repent! Repent!

- 1. Our sins deserve blistering judgment**
- 2. Pray that the LORD would have mercy!**

The part of God's Word we are concentrating on—is part of the scroll of the Prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah—filled with the Holy Spirit—preached law and gospel around 640 years

before the Christ child was born. The scroll of the prophet Jeremiah is 52 chapters long—one of the longest books in all of God’s Word. The LORD made Jeremiah strong to hammer the people with prophecy after prophecy—again and again warning them of God’s blistering judgment. Of the 52 chapters of Jeremiah almost all of them are pure rebuke. The painful frustration and even despair that hounded Jeremiah are painful to see. And yet—like a bright beam of light—shining through the thick darkness—is what’s aptly called the book of comfort—chapters 30 through 33. Here are some of the sweetest promises of grace and mercy in all of Scripture! **4 Again I will build you, and you shall be built, O virgin Israel! Again you shall adorn yourself with tambourines and shall go forth in the dance of the merry-makers.**⁵ Again you shall plant vineyards on the mountains of Samaria; the planters shall plant and shall enjoy the fruit.⁶ For there shall be a day when watchmen will call in the hill country of Ephraim: 'Arise, and let us go up to Zion, to the LORD our God.'" ⁷For thus says the LORD: "Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, 'O LORD, save your people, the remnant of Israel.'" Jeremiah 31:4-7

¹ In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came from the LORD: It takes a little homework – to understand this historical context. You need to read 2 Kings chapter 22. **Josiah was 8 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned 31 years in Jerusalem...** *(Just imagine if we had the same President for 31 years!)* **He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and walked in all the way of David his father, and he did not turn aside to the right or to the left.** Ten years into his reign – Josiah ordered that the Temple be restored – carpenters, builders and masons – to refurbish the house of the LORD. The High Priest named Hilkiah – found the Book of the Law. Shaphan – the secretary read it to the King. **When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes.** Here was grief and repentance and sadness! Josiah led his people to read God’s Word – and to observe the Passover – which because they were ignorant of God’s Word – nobody was observing. Then like today – there were forever wars and rumors of war. The army of Pharaoh Neco was on its way through Israel on its way north to fight the Assyrians. Good King Josiah went to meet Pharaoh Neco at a place called Megiddo – by the Carmel Ridge. **Pharaoh Neco killed him at Megiddo, as soon as he saw him. And his servants carried him dead in a chariot from Megiddo and brought him to Jerusalem and buried him in his own tomb. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah and anointed him king in his father’s place.** Jehoahaz was king for only 3 months! Pharaoh Neco put Jehoahaz in bonds at a place called Riblah and took him down to Egypt and he died there. Pharaoh Neco made Jehoiakim – 25 years old – the new King of Judah and he was king for 11 years. God’s Word says **He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.** How sad is that? Whenever leaders – people in positions of great public trust are wicked – the whole nation suffers! God’s people need to pray for their leaders – that God would give them the discerning heart – literally a heart with ears – that wise King Solomon prayed for!

¹ In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came from the LORD: ²"Thus says the LORD: Stand in the court of the LORD’s house, and speak to all the cities of Judah that come to worship in the house of the LORD all the words that I command you to speak to them; do not hold back a word. Jeremiah was supposed to preach God’s Word to God’s people – from all over Judah. People came to the Temple to sacrifice to the LORD. Lambs and sheep, goats and turtle doves, bulls – massive slabs of roasts and steaks and prime rib – the finest grain and bread – the sweetest wine and the purest oil – up in flames. The smoke from these sacrifices was supposed to be a sweet fragrance before the LORD – a sacrifice – from a heart of faith – the first fruits – brought to their Heavenly

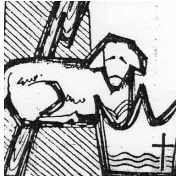
Father! It was in the courtyard of the LORD's House—that Jeremiah preached a stinging Law! Remember 52 chapters—of rebuke and admonition—with just 4 that were the light of the Gospel in the dark cave of frustration and remorse and guilt! The light of the promise that Jesus would come to save us!

“If you will not listen to me, to walk in my law that I have set before you,⁵ and to listen to the words of my servants the prophets whom I send to you urgently, though you have not listened, then I will make this house like Shiloh, and I will make this city a curse for all the nations of the earth.” I will make this house like Shiloh! People in Jeremiah's day knew exactly what this meant. Shiloh was the place where the Tabernacle—the tent temple—the Temple before Solomon built the Temple—the place where people came to sacrifice to the great I AM. Once upon a time Shiloh was more important than any city in the whole wide world. This was the place where like no other—you could draw near to the LORD. Here was the Ark of the Covenant—the most holy place—the place where the blood of the lamb was sprinkled on the great Day of Atonement! Now—Shiloh was nothing! What does Shiloh mean to you? I dare say not much—*not much!* **I will make this city a curse.** The Babylonians were coming. Nebuchadnezzar and his army were coming! It's perhaps difficult for us to appreciate—this was an army of rape, pillage and plunder—literally—*rape, pillage and plunder*. These were the days of hand to hand combat—swords and spears and arrows. It would be horrible as not only soldiers—but women and children and old men—ladies with babies in their tummies were all treated without mercy! This would be bad enough. The Babylonian army would lay siege to the city of Jerusalem. Again—I think it's very difficult to appreciate how horrible this would be. Oh, at first you would have to ration your food—eat very small measured amounts—to make it last as long as possible. But the day would come—when even though you stretched it as far as possible—maybe only a bite or two—for a whole meal—you would run out! There was painful hunger everywhere! I will never forget seeing a man in Africa eating soil and tree bark. It wasn't food. It was not nourishing. But, he said, for a few minutes it made his stomach think it had something to eat! Unspeakable things happen—when people are literally starving to death. God's fierce Judgment wasn't through yet. Those who survived the war and the siege would see their city and their “Church”—the Temple smashed to rubble. Then they were forced to walk to Babylon—a thousand miles—like walking from here to Nashville. Stumble and fall on the way from exhaustion and they would leave you for dead. 70 years would pass before anyone could return to Jerusalem. People would say—what a cursed people—their only city and their own Temple destroyed by their own God? How painfully tragic is that? There is a lesson to be learned by God's people—here and now! Repent! Repent of your sins! Confess them. Admit them. Know that the Lamb of God died to wash them all away—every single one!

Repent! Repent! When is our Judgment Day coming? A man named Evershed was on holiday—seeing wildlife in Zimbabwe. It was near sunset—and he was the last one to take a shower—when he cried out for help. 5 lions attacked him. By the time one of the guides came with a truck and fired rifle shots into the air—it was too late! Mr. Evershed was one year older than I am. He will not see his next birthday! Do you know where Mt. Merapi is? It's in Indonesia. It's a volcano. It rains down rocks, ash, incinerating heat and poisonous gas. They are moving people farther away than Johnson Creek is from Watertown—and still they are afraid they are in danger! 44 people have died already—and still people are refusing to move. Soldiers have been forcibly moving people—in order to save their lives! Andy died. He was just 32 years old. They don't know for sure why he died. Andy was a professional athlete—a surfer—three times the best surfer in the whole wide world! Andy had dengue fever. I used to get shots for

that—before going to Nigeria. If you get dengue fever and get treatment right away most people get better. If you don't get diagnosed and treated right away about half of people suffer incredible pain. They get *dengue hemorrhagic fever*—go into shock and die. Andy didn't wake up this day. His first born baby is supposed to be born next month. How sad is that? When is our Judgment Day coming? When might we die? It could be today? It could be this morning. I remember when I was just a child in church—a little grandpa had a heart attack right in Church. I will never forget his wife holding his head in her lap—gentle rubbing his soft white hair. We prayed—we prayed earnestly for him. Then we all went home—while the ambulance took the little grandpa to the hospital. Not too bad—to go from Church to Heaven—don't you think. Not too bad to come and hear God's Word—then to see angels who carry you home to heaven. Not too bad—to hear the Gospel promises of God—then to see your Savior face to face. God grant us repentant hearts in the meantime. Amen!

To God alone all glory!



Rev. Anthony E. Schwartz