

**“And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the Lord; Thus saith the Lord God; Woe unto the FOOLISH PROPHETS, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts.” Ezek. 13:1-4.**

The Targum says these were false prophets, not the Lord’s, for they were not sent by Him, nor did they have any messages from Him; and such were comparable to foxes, for their craftiness and cunning, and lying in wait to deceive – (i.e., *“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”* Eph. 4:14.) – as these SEDUCED the Lord’s people; to wit:

***“Because, even because they have SEDUCED my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar.”* (Ezek. 13:10)**

*John Trapp* says that *“the Jews forbid any to read in the beginning and ending of the Book of Ezekiel till he be thirty years of age, because it is so abstruse and mysterious. Nazianzen calls this prophet, The Beholder of Great Things, and The Interpreter of Visions and Mysteries. Jerome calls him The Hieroglyphical Prophet. A third (A. Lapide), calls him Jeremiah veiled, a hand shut up and you know not what is in it. He was indeed contemporary to Jeremiah, though in another country, and a great confirmer of what he had foretold, but could not be credited. To him, therefore, as to many others. Ezekiel became, according to the import of his name, ‘The Strength of God,’ who mightily enabled him, with a stout and undaunted spirit, to reprove both people and princes, and to threaten them more terribly and vehemently than Jeremiah had done before him. But, in the substance of their prophecies, there is no small conformity.”* Indeed, some have affirmed that Ezekiel had sometimes been Jeremiah’s servant, as Baruch was later, employed as a kind of shorthand-type secretary (i.e., an amanuensis, whose job was to record and transcribe all Jeremiah’s words with great accuracy); to wit:

***“And it came to pass in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that this word came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and AGAINST ALL THE NATIONS, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin. THEN JEREMIAH CALLED BARUCH the son of Neriah; and BARUCH WROTE FROM THE MOUTH OF JEREMIAH ALL THE WORDS OF THE LORD, WHICH HE HAD SPOKEN UNTO HIM, UPON A ROLL OF A BOOK. And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I AM SHUT UP; I CANNOT GO INTO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD.”* (Jer. 36:1-5)**

Now, Beloved, here is an amazing thing. Four years earlier, good king Josiah, Jeremiah’s bosom buddy in the Lord – so to speak – would naturally have given Jeremiah great freedom in preaching the truth of God throughout the kingdom. But now, at age 39, righteous king Josiah is dead at the hands of Pharaoh Necho in an ill-advised war, and Josiah’s evil son Jehoiakim king of Judah, who would like nothing better than the death of the prophet Jeremiah. This is important, when we search for Jeremiah’s meaning when he says to his amanuensis Baruch:

***"I AM SHUT UP; I CANNOT GO INTO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD; THEREFORE GO THOU, AND READ IN THE ROLL, WHICH THOU HAST WRITTEN FROM MY MOUTH, THE WORDS OF THE LORD IN THE EARS OF THE PEOPLE IN THE LORD'S HOUSE UPON THE FASTING DAY; AND ALSO THOU SHALT READ THEM IN THE EARS OF ALL JUDAH THAT COME OUT OF THEIR CITIES."* (Jer. 36:5,6)**

Gill: *"And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I am shut up, etc.] In prison, according to Jarchi. Grotius thinks he was obliged by the king's order to stay at home – a kind of house arrest; possibly he might be restrained by the Spirit of God, or had not freedom in his own mind to go abroad; there might be a restraint, an impulse upon his spirit, by the Spirit of God. Some think he was under some legal pollution, which made him unfit to go into the temple; for it follows: I cannot go into the house of the Lord; laboring either under some bodily infirmity, or ceremonial defilement, or was forbidden by the king. What was the true cause is not certain; but so it was, that either he was discharged, or disabled, or disqualified from going into the house of God."*

Trapp: *Or, I am detained, or restrained; haply by some legal pollution that he had contracted, as by touching a dead carcass, etc.; or by some bodily infirmity; or by the lying in wait of his enemies"* (e.g., Acts 23:11 - *"And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome. And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy. And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul. Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would enquire something more perfectly concerning him; and we, or ever we come near, are ready to kill him. And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul. Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain; for he hath a certain thing to tell him. So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee. Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked him, What is that thou hast to tell me? And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldst bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as though they would enquire somewhat of him more perfectly. But do not thou yield unto them; for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him; and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee. So the chief captain then let the young man depart, and charged him, See thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me. And he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Cesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night; and provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix, the governor."* Acts 23:11-24.)

And, what else might be Jeremiah's meaning when he tells Baruch to read the sermon which he has dictated to the masses at the temple and elsewhere, because he (Jeremiah) is *"shut up,"* and cannot go into the house of the Lord? There are a multitude of beautiful hints strewn throughout the Scriptures; e.g. *"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."* Prov. 3:5,6. And, *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable (rational, sane) service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."* Rom. 12:1,2."

To see how loving, wondrously-functioning churches of the New Testament, Primitive Baptist Faith and Order species, walked continually in God's will, we may consult a short passage in Acts, chapter 16; to wit:

***“And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily. Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, AND WERE FORBIDDEN OF THE HOLY GHOST TO PREACH THE WORD IN ASIA, After THEY were come to Mysia, THEY assayed to go into Bithynia; BUT THE SPIRIT SUFFERED THEM NOT. And THEY passing by Mysia came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. AND AFTER HE HAD SEEN THE VISION, immediately WE endeavored to go into Macedonia, ASSUREDLY GATHERING THAT THE LORD HAD CALLED US FOR TO PREACH THE GOSPEL UNTO THEM.”(Acts 16:4-10)***

(Note: Look carefully at this verse, i.e., Acts 16:10. For the first time, Dr. Luke, who has joined Paul and his group for their preaching trip into Macedonia – and who is author of the Holy Ghost-inspired books of Luke and Acts – I say, for the first time Luke here refers to their missionary group as “*WE*.” Therefore, Luke has referred to them in the third person plural – “*they*” and “*them*.” But now that Dr. Luke has joined the Macedonia trip – and to the end of the **Book of Acts** – Luke is a member of the Pauline Team, and therefore utilizes the first person plural – “*we*.” Acts 16:10. Beloved, how important is it that Dr. Luke joined Paul at Troas just in time for the Macedonian trip? Well, if the Holy Ghost had not forbidden them to preach the word in Asia, Paul would have missed meeting up with Dr. Luke; and, in fact Paul and his team would have been off somewhere in Asia and would have missed the glorious Macedonian adventure where Lydia, a Seller-of-Purple, and the Philippian Jailer and his house were early converts to Christ. But see how smoothly things go when the church is in a spiritual condition to hear and obey the Holy Ghost. And, what does it mean to be consciously forbidden to go and preach in such and such a place? Or, we were intending to go and preach here or there, “*but the Spirit suffered them not?*” Acts 16:6,7.

How, or by what means, does the Holy Ghost communicate such information to His obedient children? Put another way. Our Heavenly Father – and Jesus Christ, that Great Shepherd of the Sheep – knows exactly who and where His sheep – His Elect, – are located on the Earth. They are His priceless jewels scattered about over the Earth like rare and hidden diamonds in a mountainous dunghill. See how God moves, inexorably, to search out and establish two of His Macedonian jewels from a Greek dunghill; to wit:

***“And after HE had seen the vision, immediately WE endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel unto them. Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis; And from thence to PHILIPPI, WHICH IS THE CHIEF CITY OF THAT PART OF MACEDONIA, AND A COLONY; And we were in that city abiding certain days. And on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended upon the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.”(Acts 16:10-15)***

Lydia was a Jewess, or at least a Jewish proselytess, and had what amounted to a highly lucrative franchise for the marketing of a valuable purple dye and very costly fabrics dyed purple with said dye. To say that Lydia was a Seller of Purple was the substantial equivalent of today's seat on the New York Stock Exchange or the Chicago Trader in Futures. The purple dye was obtained exclusively from little shell-fishes called Chalson that live almost entirely in the far eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea, near Tyre.

The ancient Jews interpret **Deut. 33:19** as referring to Zebulun's treasure, when speaking of these little purple fishes; to wit: ***"for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas."*** At any rate, there is no doubt that Lydia was an extremely wise and wealthy woman, with a world-wide clientele among the Jews; for it was as religiously important from whom one bought his "Purple," as was the purity of the "Purple" itself. There is little doubt that Lydia may be God's exception to His general rule; to wit:

***"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that NOT MANY wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, NOT MANY NOBLE, ARE CALLED."***(1 Cor. 1:26)

Beloved, is there any wonder that the Holy Ghost should carefully steer Paul and his group, – time after time, – place after place, – unerringly – beginning in eternal ages past – all to keep a rendezvous with Lydia, Seller-of- Purple – down by the river side – in Philippi, capitol city of Macedonia?

Reference is made to the HOUSEHOLD of Lydia, as being baptized along with Lydia, and which said household is likely to have been huge in light of her Seller-of-Purple status. Reference is also made to the HOUSE of Lydia, which is likely to have been very large and spacious, to accommodate a thriving Seller-of-Purple business and world-wide enterprise – AND, from the looks of things, the House of Lydia was in a very short time bidding fair to become the headquarters and the clearing-house and the hospitality house and recuperating clinic for those injured in evangelistic labors by the primitive churches in the region; to wit:

***"And they (Paul and Silas) went out of the prison, and entered into the HOUSE OF LYDIA; And when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed."***  
**(Acts 16:40)**

And so, Jeremiah told Baruch to read his sermon to the masses, because he was ***"shut up."*** As a final offering to the possibilities of just exactly how or by what means Jeremiah was ***"shut up,"*** so that he could not do his own preaching, I have appended the experience of Paul and his group of evangelists, where it is plainly said they would try to go here and there, and that they were forbidden by the Holy Ghost to go there, or that the Spirit suffered them not – and whereupon a vision appeared to Paul in the night depicting a man pleading for them to come to Macedonia and preach the gospel there – resulting in the conversion of Lydia and the Philippian Jailer and their households. Beloved, one way or another, the Lord our God will make his will for us known in every situation; to wit:

***"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."***(Prov. 3:6)

***"The way of the wicked is as darkness; they know not at what they stumble."***  
**(Prov. 4:19)**

***"But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."***(Prov. 4:18)

I love you.

Amen.