

“Amen! May the LORD Do so!”

Hespeler, June 28, 2026 © Scott McAndless – Fifth Sunday after Pentecost
Jeremiah 28:1-9, Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18, Romans 6:12-23, Matthew 10:40-42

How many times over the last few years have you been exactly where the Prophet Jeremiah is in our reading this morning from the book that bears his name? **“Amen! May the LORD do so!”** Jeremiah cries out to another prophet named Hananiah.

He says this because Hananiah has just prophesied that God is about to undo all of the awful things that have happened recently. The nation has been defeated, the king and many leading citizens have been taken away into exile, and the holy temple of the LORD has been plundered of all of its sacred objects. This is disaster piled upon disaster.

Hananiah’s Promise

But it is okay, Hananiah says, because all of it is about to be undone. All of the treasures and all of the people will be returned. The terrible tyrant, Nebuchadnezzar, the cause of all this misery, will lose his power. And it will all happen within two years, which is incredibly fast for the ancient world, more like two weeks for our modern fast-paced world.

And Jeremiah hears this incredible prophecy, and he cries out, **“Amen! May the LORD do so!”** Because who wouldn’t want that? When it seems as if everything in our world has completely fallen apart, when everything is topsy-turvy, the one thing we long for is for everything to go back to how it used to be.

We recognize, I think, that everything wasn’t perfect before. There were all kinds of failures, problems and injustices. But when the massive changes come upon us, they overwhelm us so completely that any promise of a return to normalcy can make us cry out, **“Amen! May the LORD do so!”**

I seem to have been doing that a lot lately. Especially – I don’t really know why – for the last year and a half or so. And I know that I’m not alone.

Economic Turmoil

About a year and a half ago, for some strange and inexplicable reason, our Canadian economy was thrown into turmoil. Our trade relations were suddenly in uncharted territory. And it was scary and disturbing. And what happened?

Well, it turned out that our country was heading into an election. And so, prophets showed up on the scene. They showed up in the form of politicians. And what did those prophets promise? A return to normalcy. They promised that, within a certain number of months, they would restore our trade relations to normal.

It wasn’t just one politician, mind you. They all promised to repair the relationship with our trading partner and to make everything go back to the way it was. They may have had different plans to get there, but they were all heading to the same place.



Canadian Response

And how did we Canadians respond? **“Amen!”** we cried, **“May the LORD do so!”** And I know that Canadians most certainly did not all vote the same, but they all seem to have voted with the same motivation for the candidates that each thought had the best way to get there.

And ever since, I assume, everything has been fine because I kind of stopped paying attention. No? Everything is not fine yet? Hmm, that is too bad.

Hormuz Troubles

More recently, it has happened again. All of a sudden, four months ago, shipping traffic through the Strait of Hormuz was shut down. Again, I’ve not been paying attention, but I’m sure that whoever started whatever led to that must have had good reasons which they thoroughly explained.

But it turned out that shipping traffic in that part of the world was really important. Who knew? And the shutdown caused some really big problems all over the world, so much so that everyone was very quickly longing for the Strait to just be open and for things to just go back to normal.

Two Week Prophecy

Many prophets, in our time, particularly seem to hang out on social media where they can speak to the whole people just like the ancient prophets did. And one particular prophet went on a social media platform that he owned to prophesy that everything would be fixed very quickly.

It would all be over, he promised, in a matter of two weeks, tops. Well, maybe four or certainly no more than six weeks, but that everything would very quickly go back to how it used to be. And of course, how did we all respond? **“Amen!”** we cried, **“May the LORD do so!”**

Multiple Extensions

And when those two or four or six weeks went by without everything being fixed, we were quickly reassured by updated prophecies. It would just be a couple more weeks. **“Amen! May the LORD do so!”** We just had to threaten total annihilation and really mean it this time. **“Amen! May the LORD do so!”** A little inexpensive naval blockade would quickly do the trick. **“Amen! May the LORD do so!”**

And, well, here we are about exactly four months later. Nothing really seems to have bounced back to the way it was before all of this began. (And it is not as if everything was great before it began but at least the Strait was open, which has become the only thing that matters). But don’t worry, the latest Memorandum of Understanding and the ongoing two months of negotiations enforced by renewed threats is going to fix everything real soon. **“Amen! May the LORD do so!”**

When Jeremiah cried out, **“Amen! May the LORD do so!”** I believe that he meant it. He was human. He was just as troubled by what had gone wrong over the last few years as anybody else. He would have been happy to see the exiles released and all the stolen items returned.

Jeremiah's Addition

But he also added something else. **“As for the prophet who prophesies peace,”** he said, **“when the word of that prophet comes true, then it will be known that the LORD has truly sent the prophet.”**

Now, what did he mean by that? He was truly uttering great wisdom that we need to take to heart. He was saying that, when people come along and promise that everything's going to go back to the way it used to be, we need to receive such a promise with a great deal of skepticism.

Prophetic Agendas

We need to practice skepticism first of all because anyone who says that probably has their own agenda. They want you to feel and react in a certain way and, most often, what they want you to be is complacent so that they can continue to do whatever they want.

They understand that there will always be something soothing and comforting about the promise to take everything back to the *status quo*. People crave a familiar situation, especially when it seems as if everything has been thrown into chaos. So always be aware that such promises are being made to manipulate you.

God's Agenda

But there is another, more important reason why Jeremiah counsels skepticism. Jeremiah, himself a prophet who had given more than his fair share of very negative prophecies, has a sense of how God actually works. And, while we may crave what is familiar and comfortable, God has a different priority. God craves what is right and what is just.

Remember what I said before about how, when things get chaotic, we tend to forget the very real problems that existed before the chaos began? Well, we might forget, but God never does. And God knows that the crisis that we are living through today may be a step towards the world that we need to be living in tomorrow. And so, when we are so desperate to go back to how things used to be, God wants us to go through to where we need to be.

A Reckoning

And so I am going to be a bit of a Jeremiah today. “The Strait of Hormuz is about to open wide, you say?” **“Amen! May the LORD do so!”** say I, but...

And all of Canada's trade relations will soon be restored, you say? **“Amen! May the LORD do so!”** say I, but...

But maybe a reckoning on how everything was working before all of this began is needed. And maybe until we can build an economy in which most of the benefits don't just flow right to the very top and we learn to prioritize sustainability over profitability and environmental concerns over spending on weapons of war, this kind of chaos will continue to appear. We can't just go back; we have to find a way through.

I am no expert on global affairs and certainly not on economics, so you can certainly write me off as a false prophet just like Hananiah wrote off Jeremiah. But I would caution you to practice the

same skepticism towards those prophets who are telling you what you want to hear as Jeremiah did.

Application to the Church

But I guess we are not going to solve the world's problems here and now, so maybe I ought to take this wisdom of Jeremiah and also apply it a little bit closer to home.

I think that Jeremiah's word is one that the church needs to hear these days. There is no question that the church is presently living through fast-paced and disorienting change. And what do we often hear as a result? I hear a lot of church people talking about and dwelling on how things used to be.

"Oh, if only we could go back to the days when everyone felt obligated to be in church on Sunday, and there was nothing else to do anyway. Why doesn't God make things like that again?"

And to that I say, **"Amen! May the LORD do so!"** But what if God has something for us to learn from where we are now? What if how things used to be was not as perfect as we remember, and God wants us to be a better and more resilient church? What if the church needs to go through, not just to go back? If we just put all our energy into trying to get back to how things used to be, we might miss that opportunity.

Personal Application

But perhaps the hardest place to apply Jeremiah's wisdom is in your own personal life. I have no doubt that many of you are dealing with something in your life right now that has thrown your lives into chaos. If you're not there now, you have been there before and, chances are, you will be there again sooner or later. That is just a part of living in this world.

And because of that, I'm sure that you have uttered that prayer of the heart. You have cried out in your soul for God to put things back to how they used to be. And I join my prayer to you, and in my soul I do cry out, **"Amen! May the LORD do so!"**

I am not the only one who understands the cry of your heart. Your God understands it too. God never wants to subject any of God's people to such hardships and struggles, and yet they are practically inevitable when you are living in this broken world. So, yes, God totally understands your desire for things to go back.

Going Back or Going Through?

But, at the same time, I want you to consider that there may be no going back to how things used to be and that what God is ready to do is to be with you as you go through your chaos. Consider the possibility that, as you embrace the difficulties that you face, God may meet you to offer strength and wisdom and guide you through to the place where you will be able to find not only consolation but hope.

I understand, of course, all those who long for things to go back to how they used to be. The cry of my heart is **"Amen! May the LORD do so!"** But I also know that we have a God who calls us to hope. And hope is about much more than just putting things back how they used to be. It is about moving forward with courage and wisdom to meet the challenge of a new day.

Amen! And may the LORD give us such an enduring hope.