

Message #17**Jeremiah 13:1-27**

Three ways God revealed things via a prophet—speaking directly; visions; dreams; odd sign actions. A prophet would write most of this down. During the days of the prophets, God would sometimes ask a prophet to do some odd things in order to send a prophetic message to His people.

For example, God told Ezekiel to tie himself up and lie down from time to time. He was to lie on his left side for 390 days and on his right side for 40 days (Ez. 4:4-8). The point of that was to show Israel to the north and Judah to the south that both were in sin, which is why God allowed them to be in captivity punishment for a total of 430 years in Egypt (Ex. 12:40-41).

Then there was that odd assignment God gave Isaiah. God told Isaiah that he was to go naked for three years as an illustration that everything His people trusted in would be stripped bare and they would be judged because they would not trust in Him (Is. 20:3-4).

There are no prophets today, who get these assignments, but Jeremiah was a prophet and he did get a few odd assignments. This was one of those times when God wanted Jeremiah to do something unusual in order to communicate a point.

GOD’S OWN PEOPLE HAD BECOME SO DIRTY AND WORTHLESS THAT THE ONLY THING THEY WOULD EXPERIENCE WOULD BE GOD’S COMPLETE, DARK JUDGMENT AND GOD WANTED JEREMIAH TO VERY CLEARLY ILLUSTRATE AND EXPLAIN THIS TO HIS PEOPLE.

If God’s people do not listen to God’s word and make changes, it will not go well with them. In this chapter there are six prophetic messages God wants His people to clearly see and He uses visual illustrations to let them clearly see it.

There are about six different prophetic units in this chapter:

PROPHETIC UNIT #1 – Buy a linen waistband. 13:1-2

In **verse 1**, God told Jeremiah that He wanted him to go buy a linen waistband and put it around his waist, but don’t put it in water. The Hebrew word “waistband” (ezor) is translated linen belt, girdle, waistcloth, loincloth and waistband.

Now a linen waistband was a priestly undergarment that was worn next to the skin. It was a thigh length undergarment. It was like a loin cloth or girdle. Like a linen belt. Now typically a linen garment was a priestly undergarment and it was to be put on in connection with bathing in water (Lev. 16:4). But here God wants to make certain that this linen garment not be put in water.

The garment was brand new so it certainly did not need to be cleaned in water. Just as when one believes in Christ and becomes a new clean creation so this garment starts new and clean.

According to **verse 2**, Jeremiah did what God told him to do. He bought a linen waistband and put it on his waist.

Now at this point, Jeremiah is not told what this is all about.

PROPHETIC UNIT #2 – Bury the linen waistband. 13:3-5

Again the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah and told Jeremiah to take the new clean waistband that he bought, which was around his waist, to the Euphrates and hide it in a rock crevice.

So he was to take a brand new clean linen loin cloth to the banks of the Euphrates River and put it in some dirty crevice under some rock. He was not to get any clean water on it, but bury it in the filth and dirt of a rock crevice.

The specific word translated “Euphrates” is a word that uses the same radicals (consonants) (Perath) as a spring area located about four miles NE of Anathoth. This has prompted some commentators to suggest that this is where he was to go. We do not think that is the case. We believe God is actually having Jeremiah travel to the Euphrates because this is where He was going to send His dirty, filthy nation. He was going to send His dirty nation to Babylon (Iraq), located on the Euphrates River.

Jeremiah would have told the people that God had told him to take a priestly linen garment all the way to the Euphrates River to bury it. That certainly would have created some interest in what he was doing.

The Euphrates river was about 350 miles from the Jerusalem area. So to go there and back twice is about a total trip for Jeremiah of about 1,400 miles. When Ezra made this trip, it took him four months to travel from Babylon to Jerusalem (Ezra 7:8-9).

I am not sure how long it took Jeremiah, but this was no light or quick assignment. The people would have had plenty of time to think about this and repent.

However, according to **verse 5**, Jeremiah did what God told him to do.

PROPHETIC UNIT #3 – Unbury the linen waistband. 13:6-7

After many days had passed, God came to Jeremiah and told him to go get the waistband that he had hidden near the Euphrates. Again notice “after many days,” which means the people had plenty of time to repent and didn’t.

But what this meant is that Jeremiah was again to make the 350 mile trip to the Euphrates to dig up the priestly linen garment he had previously buried.

So in **verse 7**, Jeremiah did what he was told and when he dug up and when he looked at the beautiful new waistband he had buried, it was totally ruined and totally worthless. This is exactly the picture of God's people. God's people were supposed to be a priestly people who reflected the righteousness of God. Instead they had become dirty and worthless, which is why God was allowing them to be punished by foreign powers.

PROPHETIC UNIT #4 – Explain the linen waistband. 13:8-11

Now God explains to Jeremiah exactly what this means. His people were filthy dirty:

Meaning #1 - God will destroy Judah and Jerusalem just as this linen garment is destroyed. **13:9**

God would destroy their pride. Pride is the first step that leads to the judgment of God. Pride in God's people refuses to submit to God or His word. Pride always goes before destruction.

God would destroy them in their proud religion. He would destroy them in their arrogance because of their filth. He would destroy their Temple and city.

These trips Jeremiah made to the Euphrates were not random locations. God was going to use the Babylonians from this very location to strip them of their pride.

Meaning #2 - God's people have gone after other gods and they are as worthless as this dirty and filthy waistband. **13:10**

Their spiritual life was as rotten as this dirty, filthy, rotted waistband. God's own people had worshipped other gods.

Notice God's people refused to listen to His words and they walked according to their own hearts and served other gods. They were worthless.

Meaning #3 - God's people should have clung to Him like a waistband but they would not listen. **13:11**

This should have been a priestly nation of renown for the glory of God. God says these people should have clothed themselves with Me. This should be an esteemed nation of God, but instead they would not listen to God's word.

This is the key here; the key is to hear and listen to the word of God. Any believer who refuses to take the word of God seriously is useless and worthless in the sight of God.

PROPHETIC UNIT #5 – Explain a jug of wine metaphor. 13:12-14

In **verse 12**, God told Jeremiah to say to the people that every jug and every wineskin is to be filled with wine. Now Jeremiah is a prophet and if a prophet of God were saying this to you, you should be very interested to know the meaning.

Instead, these people were so arrogant that they said Jeremiah there is nothing unusual about this. That is what we do. They probably got a good laugh out of this. We know very well that you are supposed to fill wine jugs with wine.

According to **verse 13**, God told Jeremiah that he was to further tell them that God was about to do something to all the people of the land, the kings and political leaders, the priests, the prophets and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

They were the empty jars who were certainly not filled with the things of God so what God was going to do to them was to destroy them in judgment (**v. 14**). **He would fill them up with His chastising wrath**. They would be in a drunken stupor condition and not be able to escape.

God would smash them like jars and would not show any pity or compassion or be sorry for what He would do to them.

While the people were filling their wine jugs with wine preparing for what they thought would be a party, they were actually filling up wine jugs as illustrative of His wrath that He would fill to the brim.

PROPHETIC UNIT #6 – Warn My people. 13:15-16

Jeremiah gives an amazing, gracious invitation to God's people. He pleads with them to not be arrogant and proud but to listen to what God is going to do and to repent. According to **verse 15**, there was still time. They could still confess their sins and return to Him.

If you do not repent there will be four results:

Result #1 - You will stumble and fall into deep darkness of gloomy judgment. **13:16**

Things will become very dark for the people of God. God's people will walk deeper and deeper into the mountains hoping for some light, but everything would become darker. They will not find light. All God would send would be doom and gloom.

Result #2 - You will be a defenseless flock taken captive. **13:17-20**

If God's people did not listen to the warnings of God and repent, all Jeremiah could do was watch what was happening and weep and sob. It would not be a pretty picture.

God's heart breaks when He has to permit His family to experience His chastising judgment.

God's own flock would be taken captive. The mention of the "king" and "queen" (v. 18) would refer to Jehoiachin and his mother Nehusta, who were taken captive (II Kings 24:8-12).

Jeremiah called them to humble themselves before God because their corrupt crown was about to be taken off their heads.

According to **verse 19**, all would be taken captive and no one would help them. There would be no allies to rally around them. They would be taken into exile by the Babylonians as a judgment of God because they were so worthless.

In **verse 20**, Jeremiah said lift up your eyes and see the invasion has already begun.

Result #3 - You will be like a woman in the pain of childbirth. **13:21**

The pain they would experience would be as severe as a mother in labor. They may cry out, but the pain will not go away.

Result #4 - You will receive the judgment of an abominable prostitute. **13:22-27**

Verse 22 is so typical. People who refuse to submit to God and His word are quick to say "why"? Why are these bad things happening to me?

I don't want to seem crude here, but the image fits this text. If a woman dresses like a scantily clad harlot, why would you be shocked if something bad happens to her? When young ladies go out dressed like a street walker, why would anyone be shocked if something bad happens?

Jeremiah says the reason why God is causing horrible things to happen to His own people is because of your "iniquity" (v. 22). **Look at your own heart and see the magnitude of your iniquity and sin. There is your answer why.**

Most people don't think there will ever be any consequences for their sleazy behavior. God says your refusal to face and deal with your sin will cause Me to do bad things to My own people.

In **verse 23**, Jeremiah concluded there was really no hope for change for His own people. An Ethiopian cannot change his skin color and a leopard cannot remove their spots so God's own people could no longer do anything about their sin. This was the way it was for God's people. Their sin was so habitual that they became accustomed to only doing evil.

No one would repent so God said I will scatter My own people like chaff (v. 24).

The possibility of repentance was no longer possible.

In **verse 25**, God says all of the doom and gloom has come directly from Me because you have forgotten Me and My word and you have trusted in things that are false.

God's people had forgotten God and pursued godless things. They had pursued abominable things. God's own people would be totally and completely humiliated.

In **verse 26**, God says, "I Myself" have made you a shameful disgrace for all to see.

According to **verse 27**, God's own people had been given over to lustful, depraved things. God's people had been involved in abominable things.

So God says "woe" to you. How long will you remain unclean?

If you want to escape the chastising judgment of God and experience the wonderful blessings of God, you must face your sin, confront your sin, confess your sin, turn from your sin and return to the Lord.

If you do that God will bless you. If you don't your life will be nothing but doom and gloom.