

## JEREMIAH'S FIRST MESSAGE

### **TEXT: JEREMIAH 2:1--3:5**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. We saw that Jeremiah chapter 1 deals with Jeremiah's call (1:4, 5).
2. Jeremiah felt he was merely a "child" and not qualified to do the work of the prophet (1:6), but the LORD assured him that He would be with Jeremiah (1:7-10).
3. Tonight we will look at Jeremiah first message (2:1--3:5). The LORD told Jeremiah, "Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD..." (2:2).
4. This was probably the first message Jeremiah preached. However, it is not an ordinary sermon because the LORD told Jeremiah in 1:9, "Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth."
5. H.A. Ironside said, "It would be difficult to find any portion of Scripture that would surpass it in genuine pathos and tenderness, not to speak of eloquence" (*Jeremiah*).

#### **I. THEY NEEDED TO REMEMBER WHAT GOD DID FOR THEM**

1. The LORD commanded the prophet Jeremiah to go and carry a message from the LORD to the inhabitants of Jerusalem (2:1, 2).
2. The *Scofield Study Bible* says that in the first seven verses of chapter 2 the LORD "reminds Israel of the days of blessing and deliverance."
3. Verse 4 says, "Hear ye the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel." Verses 3, 14, 26, and 31 also refer to Israel.
4. By this time, the northern kingdom of Israel had already been taken captive by the Assyrians, so the term "Israel" is used to refer to all of the children of Israel, from both the north and south. Jeremiah refers to Judah more than Israel but he does use the terms interchangeably.
5. Jeremiah's message was preached to the people in the southern kingdom of Judah, specifically Jerusalem, the capitol city (2:2), but the whole nation of Israel was guilty of the sin of ingratitude, for forsaking God who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, and had been so good to them (2:3-6).
6. There is an application for Christians today. To the church of Ephesus, our Lord said, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" (Rev. 2:4, 5).

7. The LORD brought the Israelites up out of Egypt and into the Promised Land, but when they entered they "defiled" the land (2:6, 7).
8. We cannot help but apply this to the USA. The Lord has blessed this country like no other country on the face of the earth, but the people of this country have "defiled" it with drunkenness, drugs, gambling, pornography, abortion, homosexuality and other wicked sins.
9. Our country is controlled today by godless men and women who do not know (and who do not care to know) our Christian heritage.
10. May God help America!
11. There are many inquiries in this sermon. They are intended to make the listeners consider their backsliding. Here are just a few:
  - "Thus saith the LORD, What iniquity have your fathers found in me..." (2:5)
  - "Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods?" (2:11)
  - "Is Israel a servant? is he a homeborn slave? why is he spoiled?" (2:14)

## **II. THEY NEEDED TO RETURN FROM THEIR BACKSLIDING**

1. This is the main emphasis in Jeremiah's preaching (2:13; cf. 2:19; 3:6, 8-14, 22, etc.).
2. The words "backsliding" and "backslidings" are used sixteen times in Scripture; thirteen times in the book of Jeremiah (three times in Hosea). The word "backslider" is used only once -- in Proverbs 14:14.
3. Jeremiah 8:5 refers to their "perpetual backsliding."
4. The priests, pastors, and prophets were all backslidden. Therefore the people were backslidden (2:8-13). Today we have a similar problem. Many pastors are backslidden, so consequently their church members are too.
5. J. Vernon McGee said, "God puts the responsibility on the spiritual leaders. And I believe that the problems in my country began in the church. No nation falls until it falls first spiritually. There is first of all a spiritual apostasy, then a moral awfulness, and finally a political anarchy. That is the way every nation makes its exit as a great nation" (*Thru the Bible*).
6. In verse 9, the LORD says, "Wherefore I will yet plead with you." Matthew Henry says, "Before God punishes sinners he pleads with them, to bring them to repentance."
7. Jeremiah 2:13 shows a vivid contrast: "the fountain of living waters," or "broken cisterns, that can hold no water."
8. Alexander MacLaren says, "They are 'broken cisterns,' and all have in them some flaw or crack out of which the water runs. That is a vivid metaphor for the fragmentary satisfaction which all earthly good gives, leaving a deep

yearning unstilled. And it is temporary as well as partial. 'He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again'—nay, even as with those who indulge in intoxicating drinks, the appetite increases while the power of the draught to satisfy it diminishes. But the crack in the cistern points further to the uncertain tenure of all earthly goods and the certain leaving of them all."

9. Backsliders do not think their backsliding is such a bad thing, but God calls it "wickedness" and "an evil thing and bitter" (2:19).
10. Backsliders have "forsaken the LORD" (2:19). The reason they continue to backside is they have lost the fear of God. Verse 19 says, "My fear is not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts."
11. When people lose the fear of God they are capable of doing anything, even the most wicked of sins.
12. Proverbs 14:14 says, "The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways." That is how backsliders slowly become enslaved to sin (Jer. 2:14), and wander from one calamity to another (2:15-19).
13. Egypt represents the world with all its sinful enticements (2:16-18). Assyria represents the world with its fierce antagonism toward the people of God (2:18).
14. We are often amazed at how deep into sin certain backsliders sink, but the Bible often warns of it (2:19). The apostle Paul said, "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world" (II Tim. 4:10).
15. H.A. Ironside said, "It has often been said that a child of God out of communion with the Father will stoop to evil reprobated even by the world - - and this is doubtless true -- until the very depths of the depravity is used of God to correct and reprove."
16. You will recall what the apostle Paul said about the backslidden church member in Corinth -- "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife... To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Cor. 5:1, 5).

### **III. THEY WERE GUILTY OF SPIRITUAL ADULTERY**

1. Jeremiah uses different illustrations to describe the wickedness of backsliding -- slaves to sin (2:14), a degenerate plant of a strange vine (2:21), stubborn animals (2:23, 24), an ashamed thief (2:26) -- but the one he refers to the most is the one used by many of the prophets -- Israel was like an adulterous harlot (2:20, 25; 3:1-3, 8, etc.).

2. Idolatry is spiritual adultery (2:27, 28; 3:2, 9). Of course, the number one idol in America today is the almighty dollar. Colossians 3:5 says covetousness is idolatry.
3. This imagery of spiritual adultery is also used in the New Testament. James 4:4 says, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."
4. The *Jameson, Fausset, and Brown* commentary says "trimmest" in Jeremiah 2:33 "best suits the image of one *decking* herself as a harlot."

### **CONCLUSION:**

I will conclude with a quote from F.B. Meyer.

"They have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jer. 2:13).

"If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink" (John 7:37).

What an infinite mistake to miss the fountain freely flowing to quench our thirst, and to hew out broken cisterns, in which is disappointment and despair. Many such may read these words---each with soul-thirst craving satisfaction; each within reach of God, whose nature is as rock-water for those that are athirst, but they are attempting the impossible task of satisfying the craving for the infinite and Divine, with men and the things of sense.

There is the cistern of Pleasure, engraved with fruits and flowers, wrought at the cost of health and peace; the cistern of Wealth, gilded and inlaid with costly gems; the cistern of Human love, which, however fair and beautiful, can never satisfy the soul that rests in it alone---all these, erected at infinite cost of time and strength, are treacherous and disappointing.

At our feet the fountain of God's love is flowing through the channel of Jesus Christ, the Divine Man. He says to each of us: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." We must descend to the level of the stream, if its waters are to flow over our parched lips to slake our thirst. We must come back to Calvary, take our stand at the foot of the Cross, hear again the words of Him who died there for us, saying "I thirst," that He might be able to give the Water of Life freely to all who come to Him.

You who are weary of your toil, drop your tools, and come back to God. Forsake the alliances, the friendships, the idolatries, the sins which have alienated you from your best Friend. Open your heart, that He may create in you the fountain of living water, leaping up to eternal life. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come! And let him

that heareth say, Come! And let him that is athirst, Come! And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

"I came to Jesus, and I drank  
Of that Life-giving stream;  
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,  
And now I live in Him."