

Message #7**Jeremiah 3:1-25**

In chapter 2, Jeremiah laid out a strong case as to why God had turned away from His people. They were rotten to the core. They moved away from Him and they got involved in every evil thing imaginable. They stopped worshipping Him and they stopped honoring Him. They forgot about Him and did not care about His word. God was fed up with His own people. **But in this amazing chapter, He gives His own rotten people an invitation to return to Him.**

Jeremiah 3 features two key words that really set the stage for the thesis of this chapter. The first word is “return” (3:1, 7, 12, 22) and the second word is “faithless” (3:6, 8, 11, 14, 22).

The primary point is not too difficult to see:

GOD GRACIOUSLY GIVES HIS FAITHLESS AND GODLESS PEOPLE AN INVITATION TO RETURN TO HIM.

This is an amazing chapter of grace. God invites His people, who have wandered far away from Him and His word, to return to Him. His people do not merit this or deserve this. They cannot earn this. In fact, it is obvious from this chapter that most people do not realize how far they have drifted from God and His word.

MESSAGE #1 – Judah is like a divorced wife to God and God wants to take her back. **3:1-5**

Now God brings up the subject of the law of divorce which is found in Deuteronomy 24:1-4. According to God’s law, if a husband divorced his wife and she went and married another man, she then is divorced from that man or if that second husband died, it was against God’s word and law for her to go back to her first husband and remarry him because that would be an abomination to God.

God says to His own people at the end of **verse 1** that you are worse than that. You have left Me and I have divorced Myself from you and you have gone and been involved with all sorts of harlot religions and lovers. Israel worshipped the gods of the Egyptians, Syrians, Babylonians and Arabs. They turned away from God and followed any man-made religion.

God says, you have married yourself to every evil thing possible and then you expect to come back to Me and have Me take you back. **This would take amazing grace for God to do this when His law forbids it.**

This is what is happened and this is what is going to happen (**3:18**; 31:31-33). God is right now divorced from Israel and has married a new bride called the Church. After He takes His bride to be with Him, He will reconnect and renew His covenant relationship with unfaithful Israel and give her all of His love and blessings.

In **verses 2-5**, God uses three illustrations to prove that Israel is far removed from Him and His word and blessings:

Illustration #1 - The illustration of the polluted and unproductive land. **3:2**

All of the idolatrous things in the land and all of the unproductive land in Israel proves Israel is not right with God. The land is like an Arab desert. They have been involved in wickedness and idolatry and God is not blessing that land. Why do you think that God-mocking “dome of the rock” sits on the very spot where the Temple of God is supposed to sit?

Illustration #2 - The illustration of the lack of rain. **3:3**

God says that His people have been so unfaithful that He has withheld rain. He did not send spring rain and yet they would still not turn to Him. God said I sent a drought to get you to return to Me, but you don't. You aren't even ashamed of your sin.

Illustration #3 - The illustration of their delusional view of a relationship. **3:4-5**

God's people have emphasized unconditional love and grace. These people were not even ashamed of their sin. They said God is our friend, it doesn't matter what we do. We can live life our way and we can do evil things and when we need some help we can cry out to Him.

According to **verses 4-5**, God's people would cry out to God for help, but they had no interest in turning to His will and ways. They continued to do evil and they delusionally assume God was their friend.

We have those in government who want to put a godless, idolatrous teaching of Muslim religion in our school and they do not want the Bible taught in our schools. Do you realize the ramifications of this? God will not bless a nation who mocks Him and His word and promotes false religion. Those who are Muslims and those who promote the Muslim religion; those who are Mormon and promote the Mormon religion should never be in positions of power in this country because they will never lead this nation in a way that brings the blessings of God.

MESSAGE #2 – Judah watched what God did to faithless Israel. **3:6-10**

Jeremiah specifically addresses Josiah and told him that he had seen what faithless Israel had done and he had seen what God did to faithless Israel.

Israel got involved in all kinds of idolatry and never did turn back to Him. That is possible. It is possible to drift away from God and never come back to Him. God thought at some point she would get sick of her sin and turn back to Him, but she never did and, as a result, God punished her. She never did return to God with all her heart.

Verse 8 says that God divorced Himself from Israel and you would think that Judah would have seen that and turned back to God.

Judah saw that and should have learned from that but she didn't. She saw all the horrible things God did to Israel but it didn't faze her. Frankly, it never does faze most people.

MESSAGE #3 – Judah is more faithless and less righteous than Israel. **3:11**

God says Judah is worse than Israel. She learned nothing from the evil sin of Israel. The reason Judah is worse than Israel is because Judah watched what Israel did and what God did to Israel, and she would not change. Israel had no example of what God would do to her if she rebelled, but Judah had watched all that God did to Israel and she still would not repent.

What a serious statement God makes here. God analyzes all of the evil that Israel did and He says Israel was still more righteous than Judah.

MESSAGE #4 – God gives a gracious invitation for His faithless people to return to Him.
3:12-13

Now God addresses the north. The implication is that even any remnant left in Israel can return to God and experience His grace. There are seven amazing gracious statements that God makes to His rebellious people. This is a pure grace invitation:

Gracious Statement #1 - God invites His faithless people to return to Him. **3:12a**

The idea behind the verb “return” is that you were once in a wonderful relationship with Me and you may return to that. Notice the adjective “faithless.” These people don't deserve this invitation for they have drifted from trusting God and His word.

Gracious Statement #2 - God will not look on Israel in anger. **3:12b**

If God's rebellious people will return to Him, He will stop frowning on His people and He will stop being angry with them. Don't you want God to smile at you? Do you want God to be pleased with you? Return to Him.

Gracious Statement #3 - God will be gracious to Israel. **3:12c**

God is a gracious and compassionate God, ready to forgive sinners who return to Him.

Gracious Statement #4 - God invites His people to acknowledge their iniquity. **3:13a**

This is a requirement for experiencing God's grace. One must admit the truth about his own sin.

Gracious Statement #5 - God invites His people to admit they have transgressed. **3:13b**

One must admit he has walked off the path of God. One must acknowledge that one has transgressed against “the LORD your God.”

Gracious Statement #6 - God invites them to return after they have gone after strangers. **3:13c**

The language here indicates these people got involved in horrible idolatry and immorality.

F. B. Huey, in his exegetical commentary on Jeremiah, said, “The first indispensable requirement for repentance and reconciliation with God is the admission of sin” (*Jeremiah/Lamentations*, p. 75).

Gracious Statement #7 - God invites them to return after disobeying His word. **3:13d**

God tells His people that He stands ready to forgive them even when they have completely disobeyed His word if they will return to Him.

MESSAGE #5 – God will give great blessings if His people return to Him. **3:14-19**

The blessings promised here are aimed at both Israel and Judah. They were both “faithless sons” and “faithless children.” Actually, the word “faithless” literally reads “backsliding sons” and the verb “turn” and the adjective “backsliding” have the same root. They both mean to turn to or turn back or return to the LORD having backslidden far away from Him.

Blessing #1 - Return to the LORD and He will bring those who do to His land. **3:14**

God promises to bring those exiled back to Him. Wouldn’t you like to be back in the good graces of God?

Blessing #2 - Return to the LORD and He will give you shepherds who will feed you. **3:15**

These shepherds will be after God’s own heart and they will feed you with His word and give you knowledge and understanding of His word.

This has been a critical problem with the people of God. They have not been fed true knowledge.

Years ago, when I was in school in exegetical studies and in doctrine and theology studies, I remember saying, why aren’t these things taught in the church. People in the church need to know these things.

Blessing #3 - Return to the LORD and God will give increase and prosperity. **3:16**

Numbers will increase as a blessing of God when people are right with Him.

Blessing #4 - Return to the LORD and they will no longer think about or miss the Ark of Covenant. **3:16b**

To O.T. Israel, the ark of the covenant represented the sacred word of God and the sacred presence of God. **Ever since 586 BC, when the temple was burned by the Babylonians, no one has really known for sure what happened to the ark of the covenant.** It has been the topic of discussion for years in Israel. Some have suggested that the Babylonians took it and others have suggested it was hidden so they could not get it. One of the more popular views is that it was smuggled to Ethiopia and hidden there.

When God's people turn back to Him, they won't need the ark because God Himself will put His law within them and will be with them in Person (Jer. 31:31-33).

Blessing #5 - Return to the LORD and all nations of the world will gather in Jerusalem. **3:17a**

The Throne of God will actually be in Jerusalem. All nations of the world will esteem Israel and desire to worship in Israel.

Blessing #6 - Return to the LORD and you will never walk with an evil heart again. **3:17b**

Blessing #7 - Return to the LORD and all of God's people will be united in the land. **3:18**

Israel and Judah will be reunited together in the land.

Blessing #8 - Return to the LORD and you will be My children with a beautiful inheritance. **3:19**

God longs to bless His people. But His people need to return to Him to get those blessings.

MESSAGE #6 – God's people have forgotten God. **3:20-21**

God's people had been a real disappointment. God gives a description of what they had done:

Description #1 - God's people treacherously departed from Him. **3:20**

Description #2 - God's people have spent much time weeping because of their perverted way. **3:21a**

Description #3 - God's people have spent much time weeping because they have forgotten God. **3:21b**

MESSAGE #7 – God’s people should return to the Lord to experience His salvific blessings.
3:22-23

Again this is an amazing invitation God gives to His people who have forgotten Him.

Promise #1 - If they return to Him, He will heal their faithlessness. **3:22**

They will actually see God come to them and do great things for them.

Promise #2 - If they return to Him they will see the salvation of God. **3:23**

If God’s people, who have horribly sinned, come back to God, He will come back to them.

MESSAGE #8 – God’s people must admit they have done shameful things. **3:24-25**

If God’s people are going to return to God, they must admit the truth about their own sin. There can be no coloring it or watering it down.

God’s people must humbly and honestly face their sin if they are going to return to the LORD. There must be a genuine sorrow over the sin if God’s people are to experience the great blessings of God.