

SUNDAY SCHOOL

H

A. P. 06-24-2018

HIGHLIGHT: Jeremiah 2:1-19

The word of the Lord came to me: "Go and announce directly to Jerusalem that this is what the Lord says:

I remember the loyalty of your youth,
your love as a bride—
how you followed Me in the wilderness,
in a land not sown.
Israel was holy to the Lord,
the firstfruits of His harvest.
All who ate of it found themselves guilty;
disaster came on them."
This is the Lord's declaration.

Hear the word of the Lord, house of Jacob
and all families of the house of Israel.
This is what the Lord says:
What fault did your fathers find in Me
that they went so far from Me,
followed worthless idols,
and became worthless themselves?
They stopped asking, "Where is the Lord
who brought us from the land of Egypt,
who led us through the wilderness,
through a land of deserts and ravines,
through a land of drought and darkness,
a land no one traveled through
and where no one lived?"
I brought you to a fertile land
to eat its fruit and bounty,
but after you entered, you defiled My land;
you made My inheritance detestable.
The priests quit asking, "Where is the Lord?"
The experts in the law no longer knew Me,
and the rulers rebelled against Me.
The prophets prophesied by Baal
and followed useless idols.

Therefore, I will bring a case against you
again.
This is the Lord's declaration.
I will bring a case against your children's
children.

Cross over to Cyprus and take a look.
Send someone to Kedar and consider
carefully;
see if there has ever been anything like this:
Has a nation ever exchanged its gods?
(But they were not gods!)
Yet My people have exchanged their Glory
for useless idols.
Be horrified at this, heavens;
be shocked and utterly appalled.
This is the Lord's declaration.

For My people have committed a double evil:
They have abandoned Me,
the fountain of living water,
and dug cisterns for themselves,
cracked cisterns that cannot hold water.
Is Israel a slave?
Was he born into slavery?
Why else has he become a prey?
The young lions have roared at him;
they have roared loudly.
They have laid waste his land.
His cities are in ruins, without inhabitants.
The men of Memphis and Tahpanhes
have also broken your skull.
Have you not brought this on yourself
by abandoning the Lord your God
while He was leading you along the way?
Now what will you gain
by traveling along the way to Egypt
to drink the waters of the Nile?
What will you gain
by traveling along the way to Assyria
to drink the waters of the Euphrates?
Your own evil will discipline you;
your own apostasies will reprimand you.
Think it over and see how evil and bitter it is
for you to abandon the Lord your God
and to have no fear of Me.
This is the declaration
of the Lord God of Hosts.



EXPLAIN

Jeremiah, the “Weeping Prophet,” prophesied in Israel for forty years without seeing a single convert. From the time he was about seventeen, when he was called to be a prophet, he devoted his life to speaking the Word of the Lord, even if it was hard or brought him trouble. Regardless of how they responded, Israel needed to hear it, especially when the message was as heavy as it is in today’s passage: Israel had turned her back on the Lord and would never find fulfillment until she turned back to Him.

- vv.2-3 There is no option in God’s command to “Go and announce.” There are no questions from Jeremiah and there are no answers given by the Lord; Jeremiah simply obeys and delivers the Word he was instructed to give.

One of the first metaphors to demonstrate God’s relationship with His people is that of a wedding ceremony. In v.3, the wedding imagery shifts to a picture of agriculture. Interestingly, Jesus refers to both weddings and agriculture on His last night with His disciples. In John 14, He compares what He is doing to what a groom does when preparing a place for his bride (going and building rooms off of His Father’s house); and in John 15, He tells how He is the *true* vine (as opposed to the vine that went astray—Israel).
- v. 4 By addressing the house of Jacob and the house of Israel, Jeremiah leaves no aspect of God’s people untouched. At the time of this prophecy, they were a divided Kingdom; the Word Jeremiah has is for both of them. Jeremiah was speaking from Jerusalem, where both Northern and Southern Israelites were represented. So his calls for Israel and Judah to “remember” would have come across like, “Remember your calling in the past? Look at how far you’ve strayed from it.” To how many believers could this apply today?
- v.5 “What fault did your fathers find in Me” uses language from Mosaic divorce proceedings (Deut. 24:1). God continually tells His people that they have divorced Him to pursue other worthless things and had joined themselves to them, becoming worthless themselves. What humility that the Creator of the Universe would speak like this to such a rebellious nation!
- v.13 The sin Israel was guilty of is one sin with two parts, for turning away from something implies turning toward something else. They have turned from the living, flowing water provided by God toward the stagnant water of poorly dug cisterns. They’ve abandoned the endless, clean refreshment that comes solely from the Word of God for the festering, always-draining efforts that came from their own hands. How often do we turn from God toward our inferior, man-made replacements for what only He can provide?



A**APPLY**

1. What stuck out to you or challenged you in what you read in the text?
2. Jeremiah uses a lot of poetic imagery in this chapter to describe different aspects of Israel's walk with the Lord. He refers to newlyweds (v.2), flowing water and broken cisterns (v.13), and slaves (v.14), for instance. How does thinking of God with imagery help us understand Him? Which one of these metaphors resonates the most with you, and why?
3. If you could describe your relationship with God with an image or metaphor, what would it be? How would God describe His relationship with you?
4. Verse 19 says that Israel's own evil would discipline her. How have you seen someone's own sin be punishment enough before?
5. God remains faithful even though we so often are not. How have you felt God's patience with you in the past? Tell about a time when you repented and turned back to the Lord.

R**RESPOND**

6. Take a moment to consider how you are most prone to wander from the Lord. What are steps you can take to continually turn from that and focus on Him?

