

LIVING WATERS OR BROKEN CISTERNS?

BIBLE TEXT : Jeremiah 2:1-30

LESSON 393 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "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" (Revelation 22:17).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Jeremiah 2:1-30

1 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

2 Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land *that was* not sown.

3 Israel *was* holiness unto the LORD, *and* the firstfruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the LORD.

4 Hear ye the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel:

5 Thus saith the LORD, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?

6 Neither said they, Where *is* the LORD that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt?

7 And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination.

8 The priests said not, Where *is* the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and

Bible References:

I The True Espousal -- God and Israel

1. Israel's covenant was made by their free choice, Jeremiah 2:1, 2;

Exodus 24:7

7 And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient.

Joshua 24:24

24 And the people said unto Joshua, The LORD our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.

2 Kings 11:17

17 And Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and the people, that they should be the LORD'S people; between the king also and the people.

2 Kings 23:3

3 And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all *their* heart and all *their* soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant.

2 Chronicles 15:12

12 And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul;

2. God's covenant was made with Abraham and his seed, Jeremiah 2:3;

Genesis 17:2-8

2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

4 As for me, behold, my covenant *is* with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

Isaiah 54:5

5 For thy Maker *is* thine husband; the LORD of hosts *is* his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

Jeremiah 3:14

14 Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:

Hebrews 8:10

10 For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after *things that do not profit*.

9 Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the LORD, and with your children's children will I plead.

10 For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing.

11 Hath a nation changed *their* gods, which *are* yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for *that which* doth not profit.

12 Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD.

13 For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, *and* hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

14 *Is* Israel a servant? *is* he a homeborn *slave*? why is he spoiled?

15 The young lions roared upon him, *and* yelled, and they made his land waste: his cities are burned without inhabitant.

16 Also the children of Noph and Tahapanes have broken the crown of thy head.

17 Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, when he led thee by the way?

18 And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river?

19 Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that *it is* an evil *thing* and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear *is* not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

20 For of old time I have broken

II The Broken Espousal

1. God keeps His covenant, Jeremiah 2;4-7.
2. The Jews break their covenant, Jeremiah 2:7, 8, 20.
3. God pleads for repentance, Jeremiah 2:9-12.

III Two Great Evils

1. Judah forsakes the Fountain of Living Waters, Jeremiah 2:13;

Psalm 63:1

1 O God, thou *art* my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;

Revelation 22:17

17 And 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.

2. Judah substitutes broken cisterns that could not hold water, Jeremiah 2:13;

Isaiah 45:20

20 Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye *that are* escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god *that* cannot save.

IV The Results of Sin and Backsliding

1. Their slavery, wasted lands, burned cities and desolations are the results of forsaking God, Jeremiah 2:14-21.

2. No washing "with nitre" or "much soap" can remove their guilt, Jeremiah 2:22-24;

Jeremiah 13:23

23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? *then* may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.

Proverbs 28:13

13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh *them* shall have mercy.

3. Their free will is exercised for evil, Jeremiah 2:25;

Deuteronomy 30:19

19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

Joshua 24:15

15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

4. All hope is abandoned because of their evil choice, Jeremiah 2:26-30;

Psalm 106:19-21

19 They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image.

20 Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.

21 They forgat God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt;

Notes:

A Prophet Called of God

Jeremiah was born of the priestly line, but he was chosen of God to be a prophet instead of a priest. God Himself gave Jeremiah the message that he was to bring to Judah. It was not a pleasant message, for it foretold captivity for the people and destruction for their homeland.

Jeremiah's position in Jewish history was the exact opposite of

thy yoke, *and* burst thy bands;
and thou saidst, I will not
transgress; when upon every high
hill and under every green tree
thou wanderest, playing the
harlot.

21 Yet I had planted thee a noble
vine, wholly a right seed: how
then art thou turned into the
degenerate plant of a strange vine
unto me?

22 For though thou wash thee
with nitre, and take thee much
soap, *yet* thine iniquity is marked
before me, saith the Lord GOD.

23 How canst thou say, I am not
polluted, I have not gone after
Baalim? see thy way in the valley,
know what thou hast done: *thou*
art a swift dromedary traversing
her ways;

24 A wild ass used to the
wilderness, *that* snuffeth up the
wind at her pleasure; in her
occasion who can turn her away?
all they that seek her will not
weary themselves; in her month
they shall find her.

25 Withhold thy foot from being
unshod, and thy throat from thirst:
but thou saidst, There is no hope:
no; for I have loved strangers, and
after them will I go.

26 As the thief is ashamed when
he is found, so is the house of
Israel ashamed; they, their kings,
their princes, and their priests, and
their prophets,

27 Saying to a stock, Thou *art* my
father; and to a stone, Thou hast
brought me forth: for they have
turned *their* back unto me, and
not *their* face: but in the time of
their trouble they will say, Arise,
and save us.

28 But where *are* thy gods that
thou hast made thee? let them
arise, if they can save thee in the
time of thy trouble: for *according*
to the number of thy cities are thy
gods, O Judah.

29 Wherefore will ye plead with

that of Moses. The one stands in the glory of the sunrise, the other in the sombre hour of evening twilight amidst the lengthening shadows of the swiftly coming night. The one brought to his people liberty, and became himself the deliverer and leader out of dark and bitter slavery. The other spoke words heavily laden with doom, and he realised in his own experience the fearfulness of the calamities which he foretold. Moses was called to the difficult work of laying the foundation of an independent national existence. Jeremiah saw the splendid structure shattered and deserted. The nation of Israel had grown to its peak in the time of King David and King Solomon when it extended from the Euphrates to the Red Sea; but now it had diminished to a mere patch of land scarcely 50 miles square, and Jeremiah was to see even this disappear.

Jeremiah loved his people and did not want to see them suffer or go into captivity, so he tried faithfully to warn them and spare them the suffering that was ahead. The Lord had forewarned Jeremiah that they would not receive his words. Rather, they would fight against him; but the Lord had promised that they would not be able to prevail against him, for He said, "I am with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee."

The Lord's First Message by Jeremiah

The first message Jeremiah brought to his people began with the remembrance of better days in Israel. The Lord remembered when Israel had said, "All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient" (Exodus 24:7).

God in turn gave wonderful promises to Israel, and these promises or covenants the Lord likened to an espousal. The bond of marriage with its vows is the most sacred and blessed covenant known to man in his earthly affairs. If a marriage is founded upon the principles of the Word of God and God's smile of approval is upon the lives of both persons and upon their union, marriage becomes a great source of blessing and strength.

God uses this sacred and profound bond to exemplify the even closer bond that exists between Himself and His people. (**Ephesians 5:25-32** 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.) God said of Israel, "I am married unto you" (Jeremiah 3:14), and Israel in turn had been "holiness unto the LORD." This kind of spiritual prosperity was exactly what the Lord had planned for His people; but they had departed from it and broken their sacred vows.

The Lord asked what they had found in Him that had caused them to leave Him and walk after vanity and become idolatrous. They had forgotten that it was the Lord who had brought them out of Egypt and through the wilderness and brought them into a land of plenty. And after having secured that land of plenty, they had defiled it with their sins and abominations. Even the priests and the pastors had forsaken God and had brought in the abominable idolatry of Baal worship; but still the Lord remembered that they had been a spiritual people, and asked. "What iniquity have your fathers found in me?"

me? ye all have transgressed against me, saith the LORD.
30 In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correction: your own sword hath devoured your prophets, like a destroying lion.

The Indictment of Two Great Sins

Judah's sins were not hid from the Lord. In fact they were so terrible in His sight that even the heavens were astonished and afraid. The people had forsaken the true God who was the fountain of living waters, and then had hewed themselves cisterns, broken cisterns at that, which could not hold water. Anybody should know that a cool spring of mountain water would be far better than stale, stagnant cistern water, but in this case the cisterns did not even hold water because they were broken cisterns.

The meaning of this message is evident: God had done a wonderful and miraculous thing for these people, but they had forsaken this source of blessing, had gone back on their covenanted vows and left the Lord completely. This, in itself, would have been bad enough, but they then searched out a substitute god in the form of an idol. Can you imagine anything more abominable or degenerating than turning away from God who had been revealed to them as the true God, the only God, and the Creator of all, and substituting this imitation? This was truly "broken cisterns" that could hold no water.

The Inevitable Results

Unfaithfulness in maintaining marriage vows always brings tragic results. Only those who have had this sad experience know of the unfathomable depths of sorrow and suffering they go through. Broken homes, scattered, parentless children, even murder and suicide are the results. And for Judah the picture was just as dark. The people were to go into slavery, their lands wasted, their cities burned and without inhabitants; all this they had procured for themselves because they had forsaken the Lord their God.

Though God had planted them a noble vine, wholly a right seed, they had turned into a degenerate plant or a strange vine. To do this they had exercised their own will as a free moral agent and said, "For I have loved strangers, and after them will I go." In spite of all that God had done to plead with them, to try to awaken them to their true condition by smiting their children, they persisted in their choice of sin. Prophets were sent to them, but these were not heeded; instead, the prophets were tortured and killed. Jeremiah as a prophet experienced much suffering because of his faithfulness in trying to warn the people. One time he was thrown into a prison and almost died from starvation and sinking into the mire at the bottom of the dungeon.

Our Day Parallel to Jeremiah's Day

When the Lord looks down upon our country of Nigeria, a country that has religious freedom and the principles of the Word of God, a country that God has so bountifully blessed, we wonder if our time of judgment is not as near as Judah's was when Jeremiah spoke God's message. We still see men and women making so much of graven images today and falling down and worshiping them, so, we are living in an idolatrous nation. Other idols of today are the material things that people are amassing around them; the pleasure seeking, and the self-indulgences that crowd out the true worship of God. Can it not be said that these are the perilous times, the last days, that Paul told Timothy about in the 3rd chapter of II Timothy?

**"For men shall be lovers of their own selves,
covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers,
disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy.**

**"Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false
accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of
those that are good,**

Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures

more than lovers of God;

"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."

The tide of sin, corruption, moral degradation, is rising in our beloved country. This points forward to a time of judgment, and we believe the judgment is even at hand.

The true preachers of today must preach the same message that Jeremiah preached: Judgment is coming; prepare to meet thy God. Still God is a God of mercy, and that Fountain of Living Waters is still open. The last chapter of the Bible, the 17th verse, says:

"And 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."

And then the 20th verse:

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

QUESTIONS

1. Why did Jeremiah follow the vocation of a prophet?
2. To what office was he entitled by birth?
3. State the two parts of the first message that the Lord told Jeremiah to give.
4. Explain the difference between water from a spring and water from a cistern.
5. Tell the spiritual message in forsaking the Fountain of Living Waters and hewing out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.
6. State at least three results that inevitably followed Judah's forsaking of God.
7. Why could this whole calamity be blamed on the people and not on God?
8. In what way is the day in which we live very similar to the day in which Jeremiah lived?

9. State the only way of escape for us from the judgment that are prophesied in God's Word