



Jeremiah 2

Jeremiah CHAPTER 2

A phrase that we are going to be hearing or reading a lot in Jeremiah is the word of the LORD saying. God spoke to Jeremiah. Over and over the word of LORD came to Jeremiah directing him, guiding him, giving him the word of God to give to the people. Now Jeremiah is living in Anathoth up to this point.

Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying (2:1-2),

So he will move from Anathoth to Jerusalem where he will exercise his prophetic ministry. It is there in Jerusalem that most of the prophecies of Jeremiah are uttered. Usually they are uttered around the temple grounds. Jeremiah was not popular with the priests because many of the things that the LORD had to say were against the corrupted priesthood. Jeremiah was not at all popular with the religious people because again many of the things that he had to say were against the false prophets that were there in Jerusalem. The word of the LORD is directing Jeremiah to go to Jerusalem with the message for the people.

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 (2:2).

So God is calling to remembrance and calling the people to remembrance to their history; the beginnings of the nations when God had first delivered them out of the horrible conditions that they were experiencing in Egypt, the bondage of Egypt, and how they first experienced God's power and calling and deliverance. They were so excited and thrilled. Their whole lives were centered around God. The espousal was an engagement period when couples are so enthralled with each other. During this period of engagement they are committed to each other. They have made their promise and their commitment. They are usually in this period of time planning their wedding day and there is all of that excitement and that thrill of love; the anticipation of that glorious wedding day. God said, "I remember that." "The kindness of your youth," that is when you first came into existence as a nation. The love during that engagement period when you went out after Me, when you followed Me.

God declared,

Israel was holiness unto the LORD, and the firstfruits of his increase (2:3):

It tells us that actually through out the camp they had a good kind of graffiti, they had little signs on their horses and on their tents: Holiness unto the LORD. Sort of like our bumper stickers that we use to draw people's attention to God. They would write all over the place: Holiness unto the LORD. It was one of things to just remind people and to be a little prod to remember the fact that they existed because of God's work: Holiness unto the LORD. The firstfruits of His increase told how God was first in their lives. Their first thoughts were of God and the things of God. God was the One that occupied their minds and hearts.

Man is a threefold being: body, mind and spirit. Man is a spirit dwelling in a body possessing a consciousness. The consciousness of man is either absorbed by the body desires or by the spirit. The spirit in fellowship with God, a man who is living in fellowship with God, his mind is on the things of God and the is thus spiritually minded or has what the Bible refers to as the mind of the spirit. The Bible declares that it is life, it is peace, it is joy. If a man's life is ruled by his body appetites then he has the mind of the flesh and he is always thinking about things of the flesh.

Jesus talked about the heathen that all they ever thought about is what are we going to eat, drink, wear. The fashions of the world, the body needs were the things that constantly occupied their minds. It would be great if we could put some kind of a computer monitor on our brains that would time our thoughts and the thought segments so that we could really see just how much of our thought activity is absorbed with the

things of the body and the body needs and how much of it is absorbed with the things of the spirit and our spiritual needs. Whatever a man sows, the Bible says, that will he also reap. If you sow to the flesh, from the flesh you will reap corruption, if you sow to the spirit, of the spirit you are going to reap life. The mind of the spirit is life, joy and peace.

I think that it is so vital and important that you fill your mind as much as possible with good Christian music. If you fill your mind with the trashy music of the world then when your mind is unoccupied what's going to come into it is the trashy music of the world. If you fill your mind with Christian and worship music then when you are not thinking of it the music the lyrics are going through your mind. I have found that so many times that I am just lying there at night, maybe in jet lag, here through my mind is going one of the worship choruses. I am not even fully aware of it and then suddenly I become conscious of it that this is going over and over in my mind. When I become conscious of it I enjoy it all the more. I am glad that even in the semi-conscious state that because I have sown to the spirit there is that mind of the spirit that is there that is in control even in a sub-conscious state. That is why it is so important to surround yourself always with spiritual songs making melody in your heart to the Lord and just having that environment around the house. For your children, how important it is that when they come into the home that they are hearing on the radio music that edifies that will build up. Surely they are exposed enough to that music that corrupts. The music of the world today is very corrupting. I think we need to be careful what we see on TV, what we are planting. It is so easy to plant to the flesh and thus have the mind of the flesh, whatever you sow you will then reap.

all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the LORD. Hear ye the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel (2:3-4):

The Lord is talking to Israel. The firstfruits, their first thoughts, God was first in their lives. And God, because of that, took upon Himself to defend them. Those that would strike out against Israel were striking out against Israel's God. The Lord declared that evil will come upon them that come against Israel. God will defend them.

Here they are God's people, God was first in their lives and they were in love with God and God was watching over them. There was this beautiful relationship but something happened.

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? (2:5).

Basically, God is saying, "What did I do, that you should turn away, where did I offend, what iniquity, what did I do wrong that you should turn away from Me and go so far away from me?" Backsliding is a very imperceptible process. In fact in the book of Hebrews is said, "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time, we should let them slip." Drifting is a moving with the tide and it is an imperceptible condition. When you are drifting you are not aware of the fact that you are drifting because the tide is moving with you. You are not aware until suddenly you find yourself without any mores, far out at sea, you have drifted. That is the kind of an imperceptible process by which people many times get away from God. It is a slow drifting away, almost imperceptible at first because you seem to be doing the same things and you are in a habit or routine, but in your heart there is that slow drifting away from the LORD and the things of the LORD.

God said, "What did I do that your fathers should actually go so far from me." It is amazing how far a person can drift from God. When that first love begins to wane, that first love that really drove you to go to church every time the door is open, that love that drew you to the Word, that drew you to prayer and as time went on, well, "I am really tired tonight, I will not pray tonight, I will pray twice as long tomorrow night, or I will read two chapters tomorrow" and it is a slow kind of a process but pretty soon you can go a week or two without even cracking the Bible. That drifting away where a month and you have not been to church. You do not feel it yet in your heart, you still feel that yes I believe in the Lord and yes I serve the Lord but yet you have drifted from that relationship that you once had with Him.

That was the case of Israel but they had drifted a long way from God to where they were actually beginning to worship other gods. To me it is a very pitiful thing for God said, "What did I do wrong, where did I go wrong, what could I have done to have kept that love? So what iniquity did your fathers find in me, they have walked after vanity or emptiness. They have turned to the things of the world to satisfy that inner craving but they cannot." You cannot fill the void in your life with the things of the world for it a God shaped vacuum that is in you and only God can fill that vacuum and to try to fill it with the things of the world, the material things of the world will only lead to a greater emptiness. They have walked after vanity and they have become vain.

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? (2:6).

They did not think about the LORD. They did not call to remembrance that it was God that preserved them through that wilderness experience, brought them through that dessert area, brought them through the dangers, provided for them, cared for them, guided them and directed them.

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 (2:7).

So they forgot their roots and history. I think that here in the United States we are in the process of doing the same thing. In our school books our history is being re-written to leave God out. I make reference to the book *The Light And The Glory* that gives you a true history of America, a true perspective of our history, to see the place of God in our founding of our nation, to see these men who prayed and looked to God and sought God's guidance in the framing of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. How far we have drifted. In the Supreme Court on the wall they inscribed the Ten Commandments but the Supreme Court says that it is illegal to have it in the public schools. How far we have drifted, how we have misinterpreted our history.

God said, "I have brought you into a fruitful country, you ate the fruit of it." And Israel is a fruitful country, it is a beautiful land. You can go there in the spring time and you see the hillside covered with blossoming trees. You see the fields covered with fruit trees, avocado trees, kiwi trees and orange trees. It is just a very fruitful land. God said, "I brought you in that you might just have the goodness of it, but you defiled My land and you made my heritage an abomination."

The priests said not, Where is the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not (2:8):

That is those who were to deal with the Law of God, they did not even know God and yet they were to be the teachers of the Word of God and they did not even know God themselves. My heart aches when I see the Episcopal church, some of the leaders of the Episcopal church, bringing before their body of ministers or pastors a kind of a recommendation that they sanction or excoriate president Bush because he has taken a pro-life stance. Imagine your pastor coming up and rebuking you because you are pro-life. There is some guy here in Irvine, that every time the paper wants some kind of a liberal opinion of Rev. so-and-so advocating some homosexual cause they always call that guy because he will give them a good endorsement for the homosexual community. It is tragic that, as with Jeremiah, the priests were not seeking to turn people to the Lord, they were not saying, "Look, you need to seek God." Those who were teaching the Law of God didn't know God as there are so many men in the pulpits in America today that don't even know God. What a tragedy.

The pastors also transgressed against me (2:8),

Now you get a corrupted ministry, priesthood, pastors and you have a totally corrupted people. Jesus said, "If the light that is in thee be darkness then how great is that darkness." When those who are supposed

to be standing up for righteousness and righteous principles, when they become corrupted, then how great is the corruption.

and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit (2:8).

I don't think that there was intended to be a play on words because the Hebrew language is not have the same as our English. So that "the prophets had no prophets" is something that would come across in English but not in Hebrew and I don't think it was intended by Jeremiah.

Wherefore, God is speaking, because of this "wherefore" is always one of those words that points to the past and the things that were just said. Because the people have forsaken God, because they had defiled the good land that God had given, because the priests were not turning the people to the LORD, because the teachers of the Law did not even know God, because the pastors were failing in their duties:

Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the LORD, and with your children's children will I plead (2:9).

In spite of all of this God had not given up on them. God is still pleading with them. God is still extending His arms to invite them to come, that I might be your God, that I might again have that close intimate relationship with you, He is still pleading.

For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar [now, the one is in the east and the other is in the west, "look to the east and the west"] and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing (2:10).

Look around the world, the nations, see if this has ever happened before.

Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? (2:11).

Nations usually don't change their gods and yet the gods that they are worshipping are no gods at all. In India they still worship Buddha, Hinduism. They are not really gods but they don't change, they remain faithful and are very loyal. God says, "Look around, do nations really change their gods?" No they don't and yet they are not really gods.

but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit (2:11).

They turned from God and they turned to idols. What a paradox. Those that worship false gods, those nations will not change the worshipping of the false gods. But those who worship the true and the living God are so often prone to change their God and to get caught up in idolatry, to get caught up in materialism.

Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD. 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 (2:12-13).

The recognition that every man has to have something to live by, something that he worships, something that is of primary importance to him, something that is the primary motivation in his life, the mover in his life, the thing that gets him out of bed, the thing that drives him to work; that motivating idea or concept or desire. That thing becomes that person's god, that which controls you, that ideal or philosophy by which your life is controlled. Every person has a controlling power or ideal in their lives. If it is not God it is something else. Many of the things by which people are controlled are self made, they have made their own system of religion, or their own system of thought. Many times people will be willing to express to you how they believe in everything. "I take from this and I take from that, I like this about the Buddhists and I like this about the Hindus and I like this about the Mormons and this about the Bible and it is a pick and choose kind of thing."

The Bahi faith is an example of this where they say, "All the religions are good and all of the religions have something to offer and so we take from all of them." They create their own ideas about God. Now

when a person creates their own ideas about God that very creation is really an extension of themselves. It is predicated upon this, if I were God this is what I would do and how I would think and act. So I don't believe in a God that would send a person to hell, if I were God then I would not send anybody to hell. If I were God than I would do this and that and thus their whole premise or concept of God is premised upon what they are and how they feel, think and react. So in reality they have projected themselves in to the God state. So this is what I believe, I think that God is like this, He is really like me, because it is an extension of me; if I were God this is what I would be like. So I don't really believe in the God of the Bible because He does things that I would not do if I were God. Thus, you carve out your own belief system. You choose what you want to believe. God said of these man made systems that they do not hold water, they are broken cisterns or systems that cannot hold water. Thus they always leave a person thirsty. You try to find satisfaction and fulfillment in those religious systems but you discover that you are still thirsty. The cistern is empty, you are still thirsty. So the question, is Israel a servant or a home born slave, why is he spoiled?"

Is Israel a servant? is he a home born slave? why is he spoiled? The young lions roared upon him, and yelled, and they made his land waste: his cities are burned without inhabitant. Also the children of Noph and Tahapanes have broken the crown of thy head (2:14-16).

The land has been desolate, made desolate. The Egyptians came against Josiah and they carried off much of the treasure.

Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, when he led thee by the way? (2:17).

Aren't you to blame because you have forsaken the LORD your God. You have experienced defeat on the fields of battle but didn't you bring it upon yourself, aren't you responsible because you have forsaken the LORD your God while He was leading you by His way.

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? (2:18).

Some of them had been captive and carried off to Egypt, others had been taken off captives to Assyria.

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 (2:19).

One of the greatest problems we have today is the lack of the fear of the Lord in the hearts of His people. The Bible says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. That is the primary of wisdom, that is where wisdom starts, in the fear of the Lord. Where you have no fear of the Lord you do not have the basics for wisdom. But we are also told that "the fear of the Lord is to hate evil." Now we are being pressed to tolerate evil, worse than that, to accept evil, to embrace evil but the fear of the Lord is to hate evil. So you have done an evil thing, a bitter thing in that they have forsaken the Lord their God and there is no longer a fear of God in them.

For of old time I have broken 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 (2:20).

When God first gave the Law they said to Moses, "Go up and tell us everything that God said and we will obey the Lord and keep His commandments. You just go up and find out what God wants us to do and we will do it." And God broke the yoke of bondage that they were under in Egypt. He burst the bonds that were holding them as slaves and captives. They made a vow unto God at that time. When God set them free they made a vow unto God that they would not transgress the Law and yet now the prophet said, "Upon every high hill and under every green tree you are wondering playing the harlot. You have the images and the idols of these various gods and goddesses on every mountain top and under the trees and you've got all

of these places for the worship of these idols.” Yet the Lord said, “I planted a noble vine, a holy and right seed, in the beginning when I planted you it was strong and a noble vine and holy vine, a holy, right seed.”

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? (2:21).

In the prophecy of Isaiah chapter 5 he gives a similar kind of simile as he speaks of the parable of Jehovah’s vineyard. “I will sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard on a very fruitful hill: And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, [or as Jeremiah put it, the noble vines.] and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I have looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof [the protection that I have placed around my vineyard], and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: and I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged [cultivated]: but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plants: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry” (Isaiah 4:1–7). He looked for righteousness but behold there was not righteousness.

So God’s vineyard, again it is an interesting analogy that is being made and it is repeated here by Jeremiah. It is much of the same thing, God saying, “What could I have done more than what I did. Where did I go wrong, what evil did your fathers find in Me that they should turn from Me.” Now He speaks of the vineyard again, the noble plant, and yet it did not bring fruit, it became a degenerate plant, a strange vine unto me.

For though thou wash thee with nitre, [a form of lye in the Hebrew], and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord GOD (2:22).

Though you try to clean yourself up, the works of the flesh, they are not going to do it, your iniquity is marked, saith the Lord your GOD.

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, [Camel], traversing her ways; 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 (2:23–24).

Like a wild donkey in heat is really what he is saying, looking for a mate, looking for some pleasure. Israel was just looking after other gods, being drawn to other gods, like a wild donkey sniffing the wind to catch the scent of a donkey in heat, looking after these things. So the LORD said,

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 go (2:25).

God is calling them back but they refuse, they will go after the strange gods.

As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed; they, their kings, their princes, and their prophets, 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 (2:27).

How typical Israel was. The stock was the stick that they had carved into the form of the idol. They would take a stick, and Isaiah points out the folly, the total idiocy of this thing. He said they cut down a limb

from a tree and they chop it up and part of it they put in their oven so that they can bake their bread. A part of it they burn in the fireplace to heat the house and then they take a part of it and they carve a little image out of it and then they set it up and say, "This is my god." He said, "Don't you realize it that you burn part of it in the fire and yet you say, 'This is my god.' So here they are saying to the stock, "You are my father or you are my god, the little image that they have carved. And to the stone, that is the stone that they have carved into the form of the image and say, "You are the one that has created me." They worshipped the stone and wood images.

God said in the time of trouble, when things really get tough, then you will say, "Oh God help and save us and deliver us."

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 (2:28).

It is a very sad and tragic day when a person is turned away from God to worship idols. When the time of real trouble comes and that person begins to cry unto God and say, "Oh God help me." God says let your little Ferrari help you. Don't cry unto Me, you have forsaken Me, your love for your little Ferrari has exceeded your love for Me, let him help.....or her, I don't know. Why will you plead with Me, why are you pleading with Me to help you, why are you praying to Me?

Wherefore will ye plead with me? ye all have transgressed against me, saith the LORD (2:29).

The day has come when God has closed His ear to your cry and to your prayer because you have turned against Him. Now God had done many things to wake them up. He had allowed many things to happen. He had allowed plagues, droughts. Many things God did to sort of awaken them to their condition, their sinful condition, to show them that they were drifting from God. They disregarded the warnings. They had a drought but they disregarded it. Perhaps they had AIDS but they were seeking a cure.

In vain have I smitten your children; they received no correction: your own sword hath devoured your prophets, like a destroying lion (2:30).

I spanked them, I chastised them but they didn't receive the correction. So your own sword has devoured the prophets like a destroying lion. You've destroyed those men that I have sent to warn you. The prophets that preceded Jeremiah were killed by the people, your own sword has destroyed the prophets.

In the New Testament; Acts 13, as Stephen is making that brilliant defense before the Sanhedrin, brilliant in as much as he was showing them, they prided them always in their heritage. The Jew would pride in our fathers, our heritage, our father Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and so forth. They were always proudly pointing to their history. Stephen gave them their history in a totally different light. He showed them historically how their fathers seemed to fail to recognize the hand of God through the deliverer that God sent. So that their fathers, their illustrious fathers that they were always bragging about, sold their brother Joseph as a slave into Egypt, they betrayed him. Yet they refused to recognize that God had ordained Joseph as a deliverer. Then Moses, when he thought surely they would know that God has chosen me to deliver them from their bondage, they rejected Moses and he spent 40 years out in the wilderness. And so as Stephen was showing them as their fathers had failed, one after another, to recognize those that God had raised as their deliverers, then Stephen finally said, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers slain." This made them so mad that they killed him. He said, "Actually, you have done worse than your fathers who have killed the prophets because you have killed the one that the prophets have testified should come." Here we find the Lord declaring to them, "You have devoured your prophets with your swords."

O generation, see ye the word of the LORD. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee?

Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number (2:31–32).

Have you heard of a bride showing up for a wedding and saying, “Oh I forgot my wedding gown!” You can be sure that it is right there pressed and all ready to go.

Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love? therefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways. Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents: I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these. Yet thou sayest, Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me. Behold, I will plead with thee, because thou sayest, I have not sinned (2:33–35).

They were denying their sin and their guilt. They were doing these horrible and abominable things but they were saying that God approves or you don’t understand the Greek or Hebrew languages. They were twisting the Scriptures to justify their actions which were clearly opposed to the Word of God. They were saying because I am innocent God’s anger has turned from me.

Why gaddest thou about so much to change thy way? thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt, as thou wast ashamed of Assyria (2:36).

That is, you will be put to shame by the Egyptians (which they were) even as they were put to shame by the Assyrians.

Yea, thou shalt go forth from him, and thine hands upon thine head: for the LORD hath reflected thy confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them (2:37).

The word of the LORD to the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the time of Jeremiah. A people who had turned from their walk and relationship with God after the beggarly elements of the world and yet refusing to acknowledge their guilt or sin and refusing to believe that God’s judgment was going to come upon them because of their sin. They comforted one another in their sin. God is declaring that His judgment is surly going to come against them and it did. Jeremiah is going to be there to watch it. He is going to be there to see the fall. He is going to be there to still be the voice of God right up to the end. God will not quit but will continue to hold out the invitation for them to come up right up to the last moment, until they are carried away as captives to Babylon. So God has His faithful witnesses to cry out against the evil and the practices of evil in a nation, true prophets. There are always those priests that have profaned themselves, those prophets who are prophesying out of their own hearts and not the Word of God. But God has His true prophets giving His word and His warning. Here is Jeremiah, he is a lone voice. There were many other prophets at the time of Jeremiah but they were saying, peace, peace, all is going to be well, no worries, we are going to conquer. Here is Jeremiah, the lone voice of God crying out to the people.

Next week we will go on in to chapter three, we might even take four so read them both. Man, I tell you that I am really slowing down. I am trying to withstall my retirement, the longer I take the longer I will be here.