

Fact Sheet for **“Passages to Keep in Mind”**
Jeremiah 2:1-3:5

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Judgment was an absolute certainty. There would be no reprieve. The walls of Jerusalem would be torn down. The temple that Solomon built would be destroyed. The enemy would kill thousands. They would bring many to Babylon. And for 41 years Jeremiah would herald this message. The 52 chapters of Jeremiah are filled with these words from God. But at the same time this book has many passages that can teach us about God, teach us about people, and encourage us in our own walk with God.

Remember too that, even though destruction was assured, God's message would be rejected by many but still welcomed by some. Not everyone would reject God. Daniel, his three friends, and Jeremiah himself were just a few examples of the many that served God well. These messages from God (13 of them in chapters 2-25) would strengthen their resolve to serve God more. And they can do the same for us. Here is the way this first message begins. Israel is pictured as God's bride. *And this first message will end with a similar, but darker, thought.*

ESV 2:1 ¶ The word of the LORD came to me, saying, ² "Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem, Thus says the LORD, "I REMEMBER THE DEVOTION OF YOUR YOUTH, YOUR LOVE AS A BRIDE, HOW YOU FOLLOWED ME IN THE WILDERNESS, IN A LAND NOT SOWN. ³ ISRAEL WAS HOLY TO THE LORD, THE FIRSTFRUITS OF HIS HARVEST. ALL WHO ATE OF IT INCURRED GUILT; DISASTER CAME UPON THEM, DECLARES THE LORD."

God is reminding them of His care for Israel in the accounts of Exodus through Deuteronomy. God did take care of them for those 40 years. Those who attacked them incurred God's wrath. At the same time those who sinned were judged severely. But at the end of those years the nation as a whole solidly served the Lord. But everyone has a sin nature and that very quickly showed up with Achan (Joshua 7). As the years passed many chose to worship idols instead of the Lord.

Let's pause here a while. Israel is pictured here as God's bride. But Christians are also pictured as the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:25-33). Do you remember your own devotion to God and your love for Christ when you first became a Christian? Do you remember how He has been with you and helped you over the years? This is a good thing to keep in mind.

⁴ ¶ Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the clans of the house of Israel. ⁵ Thus says the LORD: "WHAT WRONG DID YOUR FATHERS FIND IN ME THAT THEY WENT FAR FROM ME, AND WENT AFTER WORTHLESSNESS, AND BECAME WORTHLESS?"

"Worthlessness" is a reference to idols. They are not alive. They can't move. They can't think. They can do absolutely nothing. People only worship them out of their own imaginations. They are worthless. **Their leaders** did not ask, "Where is the LORD?" so that they could follow Him (2:6-7). Neither did **the priests** ask, "Where is the LORD?" (2:8a). Even **the prophets** went after Baal instead of God (2:8b). Therefore God brought charges against them, and their children's children (2:9).

⁹ "THEREFORE I STILL CONTEND WITH YOU, DECLARES THE LORD, AND WITH YOUR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN I WILL CONTEND.

Israel had changed gods (2:10-12). God put it this way.

¹³ FOR MY PEOPLE HAVE COMMITTED TWO EVILS: THEY HAVE FORSAKEN ME, THE FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATERS, AND HEWED OUT CISTERNS FOR THEMSELVES, BROKEN CISTERNS THAT CAN HOLD NO WATER.

This immediately brings a question to mind... Who will I serve? Do you remember what Jesus said to the woman at the well (John 4:10)?

The nation had broadly forsaken God for idols. As a result the nation had come under the thumbs of Egypt and Assyria (2:14-18). And God put this to them.

19 YOUR EVIL WILL CHASTISE YOU, AND YOUR APOSTASY WILL REPROVE YOU. KNOW AND SEE THAT IT IS EVIL AND BITTER FOR YOU TO FORSAKE THE LORD YOUR GOD; THE FEAR OF ME IS NOT IN YOU, DECLARES THE LORD GOD OF HOSTS.

In your own spiritual journey you will find that this is true for you too.

Even though God had broken the bonds of their slavery in Egypt they still defiantly refused to serve the LORD. They went after the Baals instead. (2:20-25). So God said He would not help them in their times of trouble.

26 "AS A THIEF IS SHAMED WHEN CAUGHT, SO THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL SHALL BE SHAMED: THEY, THEIR KINGS, THEIR OFFICIALS, THEIR PRIESTS, AND THEIR PROPHETS, 27 WHO SAY TO A TREE, 'YOU ARE MY FATHER,' AND TO A STONE, 'YOU GAVE ME BIRTH.' FOR THEY HAVE TURNED THEIR BACK TO ME, AND NOT THEIR FACE. BUT IN THE TIME OF THEIR TROUBLE THEY SAY, 'ARISE AND SAVE US!' 28 BUT WHERE ARE YOUR GODS THAT YOU MADE FOR YOURSELF? LET THEM ARISE, IF THEY CAN SAVE YOU, IN YOUR TIME OF TROUBLE; FOR AS MANY AS YOUR CITIES ARE YOUR GODS, O JUDAH.

Here's a question for you. If you consistently walk away from God in your life choices, get into deep trouble, and only then seek God's help, what is He likely to do?

29 "WHY DO YOU CONTEND WITH ME? YOU HAVE ALL TRANSGRESSED AGAINST ME, DECLARES THE LORD.

This word "contend" is the same word used in verse 9. Those who went after the Baals didn't like what God was saying. They claimed He was at fault instead. Here's a little truth. Never accept without question Biblical interpretation or theology from someone who is not a Christian, or someone who is not living for God. They contended with God, but the problem was theirs (2:30). Even though God was there for Israel, yet His people had forgotten Him (2:31-32). The nation was unashamed in their idolatry, so God would bring them into judgment (2:33-37). I like these words from verse 37, "FOR THE LORD HAS REJECTED THOSE IN WHOM YOU TRUST." In a day when we do not have idols of wood and stone for the most part we still have other things that draw people to serve them (\$ for instance).

The first half of 3:1 brings marriage back into the picture. This is a reference to Deuteronomy 24:1-4. The nation wanted to serve the Baals and yet have God continue to bless them (3:1b-2). God had already been judging them (3:3a). Yet they still reasoned that God wouldn't keep up His anger at their idolatry (3:3b-5).

I find that there are several passages from this 1st message that come to mind, and cause me to think of my own relationship to God. Here they are.

(from 2:1) **I REMEMBER THE DEVOTION OF YOUR YOUTH**

(2:13) **FOR MY PEOPLE HAVE COMMITTED TWO EVILS: THEY HAVE FORSAKEN ME, THE FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATERS, AND HEWED OUT CISTERNS FOR THEMSELVES, BROKEN CISTERNS THAT CAN HOLD NO WATER.**

(from 2:19) **KNOW AND SEE THAT IT IS EVIL AND BITTER FOR YOU TO FORSAKE THE LORD YOUR GOD**

(from 2:28) **BUT WHERE ARE YOUR GODS THAT YOU MADE FOR YOURSELF? LET THEM ARISE, IF THEY CAN SAVE YOU, IN YOUR TIME OF TROUBLE**

(from 2:37) **FOR THE LORD HAS REJECTED THOSE IN WHOM YOU TRUST**

(from 3:5) **WILL HE BE ANGRY FOREVER, WILL HE BE INDIGNANT TO THE END?**

Take some time to think about each of these and what you would like to be true of your own spiritual walk, and what you would not like to be true.