

Fact Sheet for **“Who Influences Whom?”**
Jeremiah 13-15

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Jeremiah 2-25 is made up of 13 messages to the people of Judah. Today we are going to take on two of those messages. The first is in chapter 13, and the second is in chapters 14-15.

There are many influences in our world that would pull us away from God and the Bible if we let them. A little compromise here, a seemingly minor change of thought there, a bit of emotional self-pity and we are on our way down the slippery slope. God created us. But did He do it through evolution? Many Christians have taken that view, but it shreds the integrity of the Bible and calls all of it into question. In politics some have voiced the view that Christians have got to come into the 21st century and accept abortion. But God is clear that human life begins at conception. We are told that all “faith communities” lead to god. But look at what Jesus said in John 14:6. The media portrays sex as a recreational activity that is not limited to one person of the opposite gender in marriage. God calls this view presented in the media immoral. What is offered for sale legally may not please God if we purchase and use it. Righteousness sets a higher standard than what is legal.

There are many influences that can cause us to weaken our commitment to God and go against the Bible’s teachings. Jeremiah was not immune to the influences in his day either. We will see today that God had to pull him back from the brink.

The 5th prophetic message in the book of Jeremiah is in chapter 13. God begins that chapter with two illustrations. 1 – (13:1-11) God told Jeremiah to buy a linen waistcloth and wear it for a while. He then told Jeremiah to hide it in the cleft of the rock at the Euphrates. Then after many days God sent Jeremiah to retrieve the waistband. And it was ruined. *That would have entailed one or two almost 700 mile round trips. However the word translated “Euphrates” could also refer to a village about three miles north named “Parah”. It too had such a cleft in the rocks.* God said that He had made Israel and Judah to cling to Him, but that they did not. So God would spoil them as this waistband was spoiled. 2 – (13:12-14) God gave the parable that every wine jar would be filled with wine, but with the meaning of verses 13-14. Both of these illustrations spoke of the certainty of Judah’s destruction.

Jeremiah’s Response (13:15-17)

Jeremiah directed these words to the people of Judah. Keep verse 17 in mind. Jeremiah pled with the people to listen to God. But if they didn’t he would weep bitterly for them.

God’s Response (13:18—27)

Unlike Jeremiah, God gave the people of Judah no quarter. They were certainly going to be conquered. Here is one verse in God’s response.

NLT Jeremiah 13:23 Can an Ethiopian change the color of his skin? Can a leopard take away its spots? Neither can you start doing good, for you have always done evil.

The 6th prophetic message in the book of Jeremiah is in chapters 14-15.

God’s Judgment Had Already Begun (14:1-6)

God had already been judging Judah and had sent a devastating drought.

Jeremiah’s Response (14:7-9)

Jeremiah responded by confessing the sins of Judah, and pleading for God’s mercy. In spite of Judah’s *continuing* sin Jeremiah plead God’s historical care for His people.

God's Response to Jeremiah (14:10-12)

God would have none of it. Judah would certainly be destroyed by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence. In fact, God instructed Jeremiah not even to pray for them.

Jeremiah Then Mentioned Their Prophets and God Answered Him (14:13-16)

Jeremiah said that the prophets prophesied peace. God came back to Jeremiah and said that these prophets were prophesying lies in His name. He would surely bring judgment on both them and their families.

Words That God Gave Jeremiah to Say (14:17-18)

These words were framed by God, not Jeremiah. Compare 14:17 with 13:17. Here God's message was of certain doom, not Jeremiah's hope for their repentance.

Jeremiah's Response (14:19-22)

Jeremiah, in an almost accusatory tone, pleads again with God.

God Would Not Relent This Time (15:1-9)

Read Jeremiah 15:1.

God was ready to destroy Israel in the wilderness twice and make of Moses a great nation. But Moses interceded for them and God relented from the disaster He would have brought on them. The first time was with the golden calf (Exodus 32:9-14). The second time was with the twelve spies (Numbers 14:11-20). Samuel had interceded for the people when they had fallen under the hands of the Philistines for years (1 Samuel 7:8-14).

Listen to God's words in 15:2-4.

This 6th prophetic message ends with a conversation between Jeremiah and God (15:10-21).

Jeremiah had pled for their repentance. Then he pled for God's mercy in spite of their continuing sin. Now he focused on his own situation (15:10-21). God answered him (15:11), and then spoke to Judah (15:12-14). Jeremiah returned to his own plight 15:15-18). Then God rebukes Jeremiah (15:19).

¹⁹ THIS IS HOW THE LORD RESPONDS:

"IF YOU RETURN TO ME, I WILL RESTORE YOU

SO YOU CAN CONTINUE TO SERVE ME.

IF YOU SPEAK GOOD WORDS RATHER THAN WORTHLESS ONES,

YOU WILL BE MY SPOKESMAN.

YOU MUST INFLUENCE THEM;

DO NOT LET THEM INFLUENCE YOU!

God spoke these words to Jeremiah, not to Judah! Then God restated the promises He made when He commissioned Jeremiah as a prophet (1:18-19).

There are many influences in our world that would pull us away from God and the Bible if we let them. They would pull us away from dedicated living for God. They would pull us away from clear statements of the Word of God. They would pull us away from a clear statement of the gospel. They would pull us away from being bold about our faith. God told Jeremiah, "You must influence them; do not let them influence you!" God never once wavered in His message of the certainty of the coming destruction for Judah in these two prophetic messages. Jeremiah wavered all over the place in his emotions. He wanted Judah to repent and avoid disaster. He pled with God for mercy. And he descended into self-pity. He had to be reminded to stand firmly with God.

That seems to me to be a message quite apropos for today! Influence the people around you for good. Don't let them influence you for evil!