

THE WAY HOME

Jeremiah 3

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Broken Vows



JEREMIAH 3

- The theme of God's relationship with His people in terms of marriage is developed in the OT.
- It taught in the context of Israel's unfaithfulness.
- God is the innocent faithful husband and Israel is guilty of breaking her vow to have no other God before her through idolatry.
- Gomer's unfaithfulness to Hosea is an example.
- Jeremiah 3 uses the marriage theme.

KEY WORD: RETURN

- Jeremiah 3:1; “If a man divorces his wife and she goes from him and becomes another man’s wife, will he return to her? Would not that land be greatly polluted? You have played the whore with many lovers; and would you return to me? declares the Lord.”
- Jeremiah 3:7; “And I thought, ‘After she has done all this she will return to me,’ but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it.”
- Jeremiah 3:12; “Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, ‘**Return**, faithless Israel, declares the Lord. I will not look on you in anger, for I am merciful, declares the Lord; I will not be angry forever.’”
- Jeremiah 3:22; “**Return**, O faithless sons; I will heal your faithlessness.” “Behold, we come to you, for you are the Lord our God.”

KEY WORD: FAITHLESS

- Jeremiah 3:6; The Lord said to me in the days of King Josiah: “Have you seen what she did, that ***faithless*** one, Israel, how she went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and there played the whore?”
- Jeremiah 3:8; “She saw that for all the adulteries of that ***faithless*** one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce. Yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the whore.”
- Jeremiah 3:11; And the Lord said to me, “***Faithless*** Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah.
- Jeremiah 3:12; Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, “ ‘Return, ***faithless*** Israel, declares the Lord. I will not look on you in anger, for I am merciful, declares the Lord; I will not be angry forever.
- Jeremiah 3:14; “Return, O ***faithless*** children, declares the Lord; for I am your master; I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.”
- Jeremiah 3:22; “Return, O ***faithless*** sons; I will heal your ***faithlessness***. Behold, we come to you, for you are the Lord our God.”

THE WAY BACK HOME

- Some of the things God says indicate that Judah wants to return to God.
 - Jeremiah 3:1; “If a man divorces his wife and she goes from him and becomes another man’s wife, will he return to her? Would not that land be greatly polluted? You have played the whore with many lovers; and would you return to me? declares the Lord.”
 - Jeremiah 3:4–5; “Have you not just now called to me, ‘My father, you are the friend of my youth—⁵ will he be angry forever, will he be indignant to the end?’ Behold, you have spoken, but you have done all the evil that you could.”

RECOGNIZE HOW FAR AWAY FROM GOD THEY ARE

- They have broken their marriage vows.
- The children of Israel have been sleeping with every god they can.
 - “Look up to the barren heights and see,” says God. “Is there any place where you have not been ravished?” (Jeremiah 3:2a).
- Judah does not recognize God’s punishment.
 - Jeremiah 3:3; “Therefore the showers have been withheld, and the spring rain has not come; yet you have the forehead of a whore; you refuse to be ashamed.”

RECOGNIZE HOW FAR AWAY FROM GOD THEY ARE

- Judah doesn't see that she will be held accountable even though her sister Israel was severely punished for her infidelity.
 - Jeremiah 3:6–11; “The Lord said to me in the days of King Josiah: “Have you seen what she did, that faithless one, Israel, how she went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and there played the whore? ⁷ And I thought, ‘After she has done all this she will return to me,’ but she did not return, and her treacherous sister Judah saw it. ⁸ She saw that for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce. Yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the whore. ⁹ Because she took her whoredom lightly, she polluted the land, committing adultery with stone and tree. ¹⁰ Yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah did not return to me with her whole heart, but in pretense, declares the Lord.” ¹¹ And the Lord said to me, “Faithless Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah.”

TODAY, UNFAITHFUL PEOPLE DO NOT RECOGNIZE HOW FAR AWAY FROM GOD THEY ARE

- How have they not recognized how far away they are?
 - It does not cross their minds that they have broken their vows to God.
 - They have given their love to another.
 - They may feel that no one at church will notice that they no longer attend.
 - They do not understand that all churches are not alike.
 - Jesus built his church the way he wanted it.
 - It is not up to us to choose one we like over the one He built.
 - It would be like a wife leaving her husband's home because she liked some other house better.

THE JOURNEY HOME

- Jeremiah 3:11–15; “And the Lord said to me, “Faithless Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah. ¹² Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, “ ‘Return, faithless Israel, declares the Lord. I will not look on you in anger, for I am merciful, declares the Lord; I will not be angry forever. ¹³ Only acknowledge your guilt, that you rebelled against the Lord your God and scattered your favors among foreigners under every green tree, and that you have not obeyed my voice, declares the Lord. ¹⁴ Return, O faithless children, declares the Lord; for I am your master; I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. ¹⁵ “ ‘And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.’”

ANSWER THE INVITATION

- ¹² Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, “Return, faithless Israel, declares the Lord. I will not look on you in anger, for I am merciful, declares the Lord; I will not be angry forever.
- ¹⁴ Return, O faithless children, declares the Lord; for I am your master; I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.

REPENT

- Not False repentance.
 - Jeremiah 3:10; “Yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah did not return to me with her whole heart, but in pretense, declares the Lord.”
- True Repentance
 - Whole-hearted
 - God-directed
 - Jeremiah 3:13; “Only acknowledge your guilt, that you rebelled against the Lord your God and scattered your favors among foreigners under every green tree, and that you have not obeyed my voice, declares the Lord.”
 - Obedience-producing

FEED ON GOD'S WORD

- Jeremiah 3:15; “And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.”
 - Listening to godly teachers is the best way to feed on God’s word as you grow.

WILL THEY EVER RETURN?

- Jeremiah 3:16–18; “And when you have multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, declares the Lord, they shall no more say, “The ark of the covenant of the Lord.” It shall not come to mind or be remembered or missed; it shall not be made again. ¹⁷ At that time Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the Lord, and all nations shall gather to it, to the presence of the Lord in Jerusalem, and they shall no more stubbornly follow their own evil heart. ¹⁸ In those days the house of Judah shall join the house of Israel, and together they shall come from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers for a heritage.”

ISRAEL'S RESPONSE

- Jeremiah 3:22–25; “Return, O faithless sons; I will heal your faithlessness.” “Behold, we come to you, for you are the Lord our God. ²³ Truly the hills are a delusion, the orgies on the mountains. Truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel. ²⁴ “But from our youth the shameful thing has devoured all for which our fathers labored, their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. ²⁵ Let us lie down in our shame, and let our dishonor cover us. For we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even to this day, and we have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God.”
 - It properly recognizes God
 - It recognizes how sinful sin is

MORE THAN JUST WORDS

- Jeremiah 4:1–4; “If you return, O Israel, declares the Lord, to me you should return. If you remove your detestable things from my presence, and do not waver,² and if you swear, ‘As the Lord lives,’ in truth, in justice, and in righteousness, then nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory.”³ For thus says the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem: “Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.⁴ Circumcise yourselves to the Lord; remove the foreskin of your hearts, O men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem; lest my wrath go forth like fire, and burn with none to quench it, because of the evil of your deeds.”

THE NEW TESTAMENT WARNS US AS WELL

- This portion of Jeremiah's prophecy thus ends with a solemn warning.
- Do not think that God's grace allows him to ignore your sin.
- "If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.... It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:26, 31).