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*God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.*

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Various information and topics that help the reader of the Bible understand the apostles and the Lord Jesus Christ's teachings.

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## Jeremiah 2.

(2010).

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*Teach it, don't demand it.*

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## Jeremiah 2.

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### Israel was Holy to the LORD.

Jeremiah 2:1-3 ----- <sup>1</sup>The word of the LORD came to me, saying, <sup>2</sup>"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. <sup>3</sup>Israel was holy to the LORD, the first fruits of his harvest. All who ate of it incurred guilt; disaster came upon them, declares the LORD."

God reminds the people of Israel of their past, how they used to be a faithful nation and love God with the same kind of overflowing love a bride has for her husband.

All who ate of it incurred guilt; means because Israel was holy and faithful to the LORD, any nation who brought harm to the people would be found guilty before God and consequently reap disaster.

### Israel has become Worthless to God.

Jeremiah 2:4-5 ----- <sup>4</sup>Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the clans of the house of Israel. <sup>5</sup>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?"

**Notice;** both Judah and Israel are included in Jeremiah's question, because he is referring back to their past history.

At the time of Jeremiah the united nation of Israel was divided into two nations.

**Israel;** (the Ten Tribes) where called the Northern Kingdom (sometimes Ephraim) in the land of Samaria.

**Judah;** (the Two Tribes) where called the Southern Kingdom at Jerusalem in the land of Judah.

### Israel did not reflect on the Wonder of God.

Jeremiah 2:6 ----- <sup>6</sup>They did not say, 'Where is the LORD who brought us up from the land of Egypt, who led us in the wilderness, in a land of deserts and pits, in a land of drought and deep darkness, in a land that none passes through, where no man dwells?'

Israel did not reflect on all the amazing miracles and good the LORD had done for them in the past, the plagues of Egypt, their deliverance, the Red Sea parting etc, and the miracle of surviving in a desert for 40 years that was not fit for any man to live in let alone an entire nation (v6).

**Trials, Testing and Moments of Despair;** sometimes during times of testing, trials or crisis's of darkness, the only light and hope that a godly person finds is to reflect back on the goodness and love of God. During the Old Testament era Israel could look back to the multitudes of miracles and wonders of the LORD. During the age of the New Testament, Christians can look back to the LORD'S love manifested to them through an innocent man, God's beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ who chose to allow himself to be mocked, humiliated and painfully nailed to a cross that they through faith in his Name would be counted righteous before God and be granted eternal life.

John 3:16 ----- <sup>16</sup>Jesus said, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

### Israel did Not Seek the LORD.

Jeremiah 2:7-9 ----- <sup>7</sup>And I (the LORD) brought you (Israel) into a plentiful land to enjoy its fruits and its good things. But when you came in, you defiled my land and made my heritage an abomination.

<sup>8</sup>The priests did not say, 'Where is the LORD?' Those who handle the law did not know me; the shepherds transgressed against me; the prophets prophesied by Baal and went after things that do not profit. <sup>9</sup>"Therefore I still contend with you, declares the LORD, and with your children's children I will contend.

**Notice;** God wanted His people to be happy and full of joy and laughter, but the LORD is now against Israel because: -

- They defiled His land and made it an abomination by worshipping idols and pagan gods.
- The priests did seek the LORD.
- Those who handled the law did not know God, because they perverted justice and oppressed the less fortunate for their own gain and did not help the poor.
- The shepherds transgressed against God because they were more concerned about their own power, wealth and control than they were the things that mattered to God.
- The prophets prophesied by Baal and went after things that do not profit. They prophesied to please the king to win man's favour and the favour of the people rather than speaking the words of God.

### **An Enormously Tragic Statement.**

Jeremiah 2:10-12 ----- <sup>10</sup>For cross to the coasts of Cyprus and see, or send to Kedar and examine with care; see if there has been such a thing. <sup>11</sup>Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit. <sup>12</sup>Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the LORD,

**Cyprus;** is the third largest island in Mediterranean.

**Kedar;** was one of the 12 sons of Ishmael they were called princes and helped originate the Arab people their territory was in the northern part of the Arabian Desert.

My people have changed their Glory; (v11) means Israel has changed their God for idols.

Habakkuk gives a good example of the stupidity of worshipping idols.

Habakkuk 2:18 ----- <sup>18</sup>"What profit is an idol when its maker has shaped it, a metal image, a teacher of lies? For its maker trusts in his own creation when he makes speechless idols!

**The Living Bible;** says something like this a man cuts down a tree and chops some of it up to build a house, some he uses for furniture, some for cooking and some for fire wood to keep himself warm, and then from the same wood makes an idol and bows down and worships it, "O Stupid man can't you see it's just a block of wood." God is stunned, He tells the people of Israel to look at the nations around them and see if any of them have ever changed their gods. No nation ever has and yet Israel who had the One True God have downsized to gods who have no power, they are simply images and entities' of the imagination created by superstition, deceptive teaching and a strong belief in them.

"**O Heavens,**" (v12) in this context, refers to God's people Israel, the LORD calls all the people of Israel to be appalled and shocked at what they have done or they will be made desolate.

### **Israel has committed two Evils.**

Jeremiah 2:13 ----- <sup>13</sup>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.

Israel has forsaken God, the source of all life and hewed out cisterns for themselves, referring to idols and pagan gods that have no power at all.

Jeremiah 2:14-16 ----- 14"Is Israel a slave? Is he a home born servant? Why then has he become a prey? 15The lions have roared against him; they have roared loudly. They have made his land a waste; his cities are in ruins, without inhabitant. 16Moreover, the men of Memphis and Tahpanhes have shaved the crown of your head.

**Memphis;** Memphis was the first capital of united Egypt, their chief god was Ptah.'

**Tahapanes;** a fortress city at the eastern edge of the Nile Delta, on the eastern border of Egypt, on an old caravan road to Palestine and beyond.

The lions have roared; against Israel; refers to Assyria and it allied nations.

At this time the 10 Tribes of Israel that dwelt in the land of Samaria have been taken captive by Assyria and their land, farms and houses destroyed by the Assyrian armies.

Memphis and Tahpanhes have shaved the crown of your head; refers to the Egyptians who the people of Israel have fled to for shelter and protection, instead of looking to God.

**The Fear of God is not in Israel.**

Jeremiah 2:17-19 ----- 17Have you not brought this upon yourself by forsaking the LORD your God, when he led you in the way? 18And now what do you gain by going to Egypt to drink the waters of the Nile? Or what do you gain by going to Assyria to drink the waters of the Euphrates? 19Your 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.

**Notice;** Israel brought the judgment of God on themselves, because they turned from their LORD and God to idols and pagan gods.

**Egypt's Religion;** in general the religion may be described as a complex polytheism, with many local deities of varying importance.

**Some of their more commonly known gods; were: -**

- Osiris, Isis and their son Horus (a Sun-god).
- Amon-Re (Who became the god of the Egyptian empire).
- Pta (The god of Memphis).
- Khnum (The god of Elephantine).

**Nile River;** the Nile River is the longest in the world it covers some 4000 miles from its sources in equatorial Africa to its divided mouth which open into the Mediterranean. The annual overflow of the Nile watered the soil and provided it with some organic fertilizer. Its waters were used for drinking, bathing and for irrigation and it was the main channel of commerce and travel.

**Assyria;** was a great international power in the country along upper Tigris River in Iraq. The Assyrians (Iraq) are depicted as lions and a very cruel race. In the British Museum there are huge statues of lions always depicted with wings (symbolizing aggression). Babylon took of Assyria's wings and stood up in its place.

**Euphrates River.**

Is a major river that flows from Turkey through Syria and Iraq to the Persian Gulf, it is the traditional boundary of the Promised Land and the longest and most important river of Western Asia.

## **Israel Refused to Serve God.**

Jeremiah 2:20-22 ----- <sup>20</sup>"For long ago I broke your yoke and burst your bonds; but you said, 'I will not serve.' yes, on every high hill and under every green tree you bowed down like a whore. <sup>21</sup>Yet I planted you a choice vine, wholly of pure seed. How then have you turned degenerate and become a wild vine? <sup>22</sup>Though you wash yourself with lye and use much soap, the stain of your guilt is still before me, declares the Lord GOD.

The LORD had ordained that Israel was to worship God at the Temple in Jerusalem, but Jeroboam had set up two worship centres in the land of Samaria, one in Dan and another at Bethel, to add to this offence altars that the people bowed down to were built on the top of hills under trees that gave a lot of shade (these altars are referred to as "the High Places" throughout the Bible).

## **Israel is Blind to their Sin.**

Jeremiah 2:23-25 ----- <sup>23</sup>How can you (Israel) say, 'I am not unclean, I have not gone after the Baals'? Look at your way in the valley; know what you have done—a restless young camel running here and there, <sup>24</sup>a wild donkey used to the wilderness, in her heat sniffing the wind! Who can restrain her lust? None who seek her need weary themselves; in her month they will find her. <sup>25</sup>Keep your feet from going unshod and your throat from thirst. But you said, 'It is hopeless, for I have loved foreigners, and after them I will go.'

Israel is so far fallen that they believe they are doing the right thing, God tells them to examine themselves, take note of what they are doing.

Israel is pictured like a wild donkey on heat in wide open spaces with no boundaries, sniffing the wind looking for a mate to satisfy its lust.

## **The application of this is: -**

Israel is looking for a God that will not put any restrictions on them, they want to worship a God that allows them to run rampant and satisfy whatever wrongful desire they crave, thus they create gods that suit their own sinful cravings. This is why the people of Israel turned from the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to idols and pagan gods.

## **Israel's, Officials, Priests, Prophets and the People will Shamed.**

Jeremiah 2:26-29 ----- <sup>26</sup>"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, <sup>27</sup>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!' <sup>28</sup>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. <sup>29</sup>"Why do you contend with me? You have all transgressed against me, declares the LORD.

The power of deception; Israel's kings, officials, priests, prophets are saying to a tree, "You are my father," and to a stone, "You gave me birth."

The tree and stone; in this context refers to Idols.

The human mind is like a great sponge, once it turns from God and His ways, it is open to anything, and will in most cases create a god that suits the wrongful desires and cravings of the flesh or one that suits a person's own selfish will. Israel has become so deceived they believe the idol they are bowing down to is actually the God of their fathers who gave birth to them. When they bow down to their idols they believe they are bowing down to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, when in actual fact they are worshipping pagan gods.

This is a common trait of Human Nature; Israel creates a god that suits their lifestyle and allows them to do as they please, but when a crisis comes they called out to the LORD God to save them, but God tells them to pray to their own gods that they have created for themselves.

## Israel Refused to Accept the LORD'S Correction.

Jeremiah 2:30-31 ----- <sup>30</sup>In vain have I struck your children; they took no correction; your own sword devoured your prophets like a ravaging lion. <sup>31</sup>And you, O generation, behold the word of the LORD. Have I been a wilderness to Israel, or a land of thick darkness? Why then do my people say, 'We are free, we will come no more to you'?

### Your own sword devoured your prophets like a ravaging lion, refers to: -

God through the prophets He sent has constantly tried to correct the people of Israel, but because they did not like what the prophets spoke they killed them.

### Can a Virgin Forget Her Ornaments, or a Bride her Attire.

Jeremiah 2:32-37 ----- <sup>32</sup>Can a virgin forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number. <sup>33</sup>How well you direct your course to seek love! So that even to wicked women you have taught your ways. <sup>34</sup>Also on your skirts is found the lifeblood of the guiltless poor; you did not find them breaking in. Yet in spite of all these things <sup>35</sup>you say, 'I am innocent; surely his anger has turned from me.' Behold, I will bring you to judgment for saying, 'I have not sinned.' <sup>36</sup>How much you go about, changing your way! You shall be put to shame by Egypt as you were put to shame by Assyria. <sup>37</sup>From it too you will come away with your hands on your head, for the LORD has rejected those in whom you trust, and you will not prosper by them.

It is almost impossible that a bride would forget her wedding dress, yet the LORD'S chosen people have forgotten God. Rather than bringing sinful woman to repentance the religious leaders of Israel actually encouraged them in their ways. Even worse than this they killed those who were poor and innocent of any crime (probably so they could possess their houses and land). Adding to their sins the religious leaders were saying they were innocent of any wrongdoing, but God says because they say, "they are innocent and have not sinned," He will bring judgment on them.

The following verses show it is a Bible principle, that before forgiveness can be received a person must acknowledge (confess) their wrongdoing.

### God says: -

Leviticus 26:40 ----- <sup>40</sup>"But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers in their treachery that they committed against me, and also in walking contrary to me, <sup>41</sup>so that I walked contrary to them and brought them into the land of their enemies—if then their uncircumcised heart is humbled and they make amends for their iniquity, <sup>42</sup>then I will remember my covenant with Jacob, and I will remember my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land.

### David says: -

Psalms 32:5 ----- <sup>5</sup>I (David) acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. *Selah*.

### The apostle John says: -

1 John 1:9 ----- <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

**Forgiveness;** if a person does not acknowledge their wrong doing how can they possibly be sorry for the hurt they have caused? Even more how can they put right something they don't acknowledge is wrong, thus God's forgiveness is always available, forever flowing, but confessing ones wrong actions is required before it can be received and experienced in the heart. In some cases when possible restitution may be required to help repair the hurt caused to others.

True repentance would automatically bring about this desire in the heart. Restitution in most cases may simply be saying sorry to the person offended or to God.

**Notice; no-one can escape God.**

God tells Israel they will not prosper by fleeing to the surrounding nations and trusting in them for shelter and protection from their enemies (Jeremiah 2:36-37).

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End.