



## "Sin's Power to Deceive" (Jeremiah 2-4)

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Intro: God had sent his prophets to Israel, repeatedly calling them to repentance, and warning that if they did not repent, judgment would come upon them. They refused to repent, and God brought the Assyrians upon them. God warned Judah in the same way he had Israel, and despite witnessing all that had happened to their brothers to the north, they also refused to repent. Under Josiah they gave an outward appearance of repentance, but it was hypocritical. Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, & Habakkuk had for years been speaking to them in the name of the Lord, but with no success. Now Jeremiah is the last prophet to speak to them before God sends the Babylonians upon them, just as he had sent the Assyrians upon the northern kingdom of Israel.

### I. THE TEXT

#### A. How Could Judah Stray So Far From The Lord? (2:1-7)

##### 1. God's passion for His bride (2:3a)

- Jer.31: 3 The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.

- Deut.32: 9 For the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance.  
10 In a desert land he found him, in a barren and howling waste. He shielded him and cared for him; he guarded him as the apple of his eye (the pupil of His eye; "I only have eyes for you.").

- Psalm 17: 7 Show the wonder of your great love, you who save by your right hand those who take refuge in you from their foes. 8 Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings

##### 2. God's protection for his bride (2:3b)

##### 3. God's provision for His bride (2:7a)

#### B. Judah's Many Sins (2:8-13)

##### 1. Her leaders knew the Word but not the Lord (2:8)

\* See John 5:39-40

##### 2. Exchanging the glory of God for worthless idols (2:11)

\* See Romans 1

### 3. Building man-made cisterns that cannot hold water (2:13)

\* The best water in Israel came from the natural springs. The worst was from a cistern.

### 4. Hypocrisy (3:10)

\* Pretense: A claim made or implied, but not supported by fact.

## C. The Consequences Of Judah's Sin

### 1. Punishment for corrective purposes, ultimately judgment (2:14-19).

### 2. Spiritual blindness (2:23, 34b-35; 3:1-3)

### 3. Addiction/Enslavement (2:24-25)

\* The habits of the female donkey are dramatic and vulgar. She sniffs the path in front of her, trying to pick up the scent of a male (from his urine). When she finds it, she rubs her nose in the dust and then straightens her neck, and with head high, closes her nostrils and sniffs the wind. What she is really doing is sniffing the dust which is soaked with the urine of a male donkey. With her neck stretched to the utmost, she slowly draws in a long, deep breath, then lets out an earthshaking bray and doubles her pace, racing down the road in search of the male.

\* 2:25b is an amazing inspired word from the Lord! This is what happens when someone goes astray from the Lord and involves themselves in repeated, habitual sin (see 2:32b). They get to the point that they cannot help themselves. They become sin "addicts." Compulsive gamblers, drug addicts, adulterers and fornicators, pleasure seekers, moneymakers, etc.

\* John 8: 33 They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?" 34 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.

\* II Peter 2:19...a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.

## D. God's Willingness To Re-Wed Israel (3:6-15)

1. This message "toward the north" (3:12) is for the benefit of those in the south (Judah).

\* If God was willing to re-wed Israel after he had divorced her, and judgment had fallen upon her - if she would repent, then certainly he was willing to forgive and restore His relationship with Judah.

### 2. The prophetic proof of God's sincerity (3:16-18)

## E. The Sad Reality Of Judah's Response (3:19-21; 4:10-31)

\* 4:10 Jeremiah is obviously referring to the false prophets. This is either sarcasm, or Jeremiah's frustration that God has allowed these false prophets to continue to proclaim lies.

\* 4:15 Dan is the northernmost tribe. They would see the Babylonians first. Ephraim is 10 miles north of Jerusalem. This depicts the swift and unstoppable advance of the Babylonians.

\* 4:23 The destruction of Judah would be so catastrophic that it will be like the un-creation of creation. When God created the world he brought order out of chaos, light out of darkness, and fullness out of emptiness.

\* 4:30 See Ezekiel 16:25-29; 23:40-41

## II. LESSONS

### A. The Incredible Deceitfulness Of Sin

\* Heb.3: 13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

### B. The Fruit Of A Hard Heart

#### 1. Failure to see my sin

\* John 9: 41 Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.

#### 2. Ears that cannot hear truth

\* Matthew 13: 15 For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.' 16 But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.

#### 3. Desire for God's help when in trouble, but no heart of repentance (2:21).

#### 4. Further hardening at any attempt to correct

\* What happened to the hard-hearted Pharisees & Teachers of the Law when Jesus rebuked them in an attempt to correct them?

\* See Acts 7:51-58; Rev.16:9-11

#### 5. False accusations against the Lord

\* Prov.19: 3 A man's own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the LORD.

\* John 8: 47 He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

48 The Jews answered him, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?" 49 "I am not possessed by a demon," said Jesus, "but I honor my Father and you dishonor me.

C. God's Amazing Offer Of Forgiveness

D. Requirements For Forgiveness/Restoration

1. An acknowledgment of guilt (3:13)

2. Circumcised hearts (4:3-4a)

\* This comes as a result of godly sorrow, a breaking up of the hardness that has occurred through years of straying from the Lord.

3. Abolishing your idols

4. Faithfulness to the Lord (4:1)

CONCLUSION

\* Call to repentance

\* Prayer for those we know who need to repent