

Journey through Jeremiah Part 15 The Linen Girdle & Jars of Wine

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney, Th.D. – Wednesday, March 22, 2017

† Jeremiah 13:1-27

(1) Thus saith the LORD unto me, Go and get thee a linen girdle, and put it upon thy loins, and put it not in water.

Another new prophecy of God through Jeremiah the Prophet. The prophecy of the Linen Girdle.

It is hard to tell if this is a vision that Jeremiah sees or if this was an actual event that he was doing. I tend to believe it was an actual event. The LORD tells Jeremiah to get a linen girdle. A girdle is a type of belt or better yet, sash, that was worn around the waist. The first thing that came to my mind when I saw a linen girdle was the dress that the LORD appointed to the High Priest. We read about that in **Leviticus 16:3-4**: Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering. 4 He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on.

The linen girdle on the High Priest represents humility and readiness to serve. We see the Lord Jesus donning himself in a type of girdle during the Last Supper as he washed the disciple's feet: **John 13:3-5**: Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; 4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. 5 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

I want you to remember that Jeremiah is from the priestly Tribe of Benjamin. His father was a priest as we read in the very first verse of this Book: **Jeremiah 1:1**: The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin:

So, I think we are safe to say this is the same type of material that the LORD wants Jeremiah to get.

He also tells him not to put the girdle in water. There could be a few reasons for this. It could be that what the LORD has planned for it He wants to make sure there is no question about what is going to happen to it. If it gets put in water some may say that the water had some kind of effect upon it. Or it could be that the linen girdle would be soiled from sins of the people and represented that.

(2) So I got a girdle according to the word of the LORD, and put it on my loins.

Jeremiah, always obedient, does exactly what the LORD tells him to do. He gets a linen girdle and wraps around himself.

(3) And the word of the LORD came unto me the second time, saying, (4) Take the girdle that thou hast got, which is upon thy loins, and arise, go to Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole of the rock. (5) So I went, and hid it by Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me.

Again, Jeremiah is obedient and does exactly what the LORD told him to do and took the linen girdle to the Euphrates and hid it.

These verses are what causes some commentators to think this was only a vision. That claim that there was no way the LORD expected Jeremiah to physically walk 350 miles away to the River Euphrates to hide this girdle.

Well, that is why I believe it was NOT a vision. I believe the distance to be representative of the long distance the inhabitants of Judah would be carried away into captivity. They will be taken over the Euphrates into the land of Babylon.

I think it's funny how people try to make the Bible fit their own reasoning instead of accepting it as written by the LORD Himself. Our God is a mighty and powerful God. What He wrote in His Word is His Word, it doesn't matter if you can sort it out in your little brain or not. We accept it by faith.

(6) And it came to pass after many days, that the LORD said unto me, Arise, go to Euphrates, and take the girdle from thence, which I commanded thee to hide there.

It says "after many days," but we don't know how many days it was. 5, 10, 15, 20? But the LORD tells him to go back and get the girdle that he buried and bring it back. Are you keeping up with the miles? If it was 350 miles there then it was 350 miles back and now he's doing it twice. That's a distance of 1400 miles. That's like walking back and forth from Knoxville to Tupelo, Mississippi two times.

When it comes to living for the LORD it takes going the extra mile. As much as He has done for us, the least we can do for him. We could never repay Him for all He's done. We could walk around the world and it would be nothing but a drop in a bucket compared to what He has done for us.

(7) Then I went to Euphrates, and digged, and took the girdle from the place where I had hid it: and, behold, the girdle was marred, it was profitable for nothing. (8) Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (9) Thus saith the LORD, After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem.

Fortunately for us the Bible interprets itself here and we don't have to wonder what the significance of the marred girdle was. We are told that it represented how the LORD would mar the pride of Judah. Judah had become sinful and worthless just like this linen girdle. It once was a pure garment and worn by the High Priest and was considered holy but now it was dirty, stained, and worthless.

Judah was supposed to be a holy separated people of the LORD but they had become dirty, stained, and worthless. Notice that he points out their pride; "I will mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem." We are warned all through the Bible of the sin of pride: **Proverbs 16:18** Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

(10) This evil people, which refuse to hear my words, which walk in the imagination of their heart, and walk after other gods, to serve them, and to worship them, shall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing.

The description of the people of Judah sounds like a description of the people of the United States of America. "Evil, refusing to hear God's Word, walk in the imagination of their own heart, serve and worship other gods..." I wonder how long the LORD will hold off from marring our pride?

(11) For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith the LORD; that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory: but they would not hear.

How tragic to think of how they pushed aside the God that loved them only to bow down to false gods who have no ability to love, let alone hear them. All the wonderful things the LORD had in store for them but they willingly gave it all up.

I feel like the same thing is going on in the day in which we live. God's grace is free, He has mercy upon us now but this world is pushing Him away, thumbing our noses at Him, telling Him we don't want anything to do with Him and one day, He will say, okay, you ask for it, you got it, I'll withdraw from you. Then let's see what happens.

(12) Therefore thou shalt speak unto them this word; Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Every bottle shall be filled with wine: and they shall say unto thee, Do we not certainly know that every bottle shall be filled with wine? (13) Then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings that sit upon David's throne, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with drunkenness. (14) And I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together, saith the LORD: I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them.

The inhabitants of Judah were very familiar with the wine process. They knew they how they filled the bottles with the wine. This is figurative speech the LORD is telling Jeremiah to use. He is comparing the people of Judah to wine bottles but instead of filling them full of the wine from the grapes, they will be filled with God's wrath until they are so full of it they will be like old wine bottles that have been filled with new wine and burst. God's wrath and fury is going to cause them to be destroyed like those old wine bottles.

(15) Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the LORD hath spoken.

(16) Give glory to the LORD your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, *and make it gross darkness.*

The LORD hates pride. It is the number one downfall of man. In our flesh we are puffed up and prideful and God hates it. **Proverbs 6:16-19: These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: 17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, 19 A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.**

A proud look is number one on the list of things that God hates.

Proverbs 16:5 Every one *that is* proud in heart *is* an abomination to the LORD: *though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.*

Proverbs 16:18 *Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.*

God will destroy the proud just as he allowed Judah to be destroyed.

(17) But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for *your* pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD'S flock is carried away captive.

These are the words of Jeremiah. He tells them if they will not listen to the Lord and turn back to him and he allows them to be destroyed and carried off into captivity that he will weep. Another distinguishing mark of the weeping prophet.

(18) Say unto the king and to the queen, Humble yourselves, sit down: for your principalities shall come down, *even* the crown of your glory. (19) The cities of the south shall be shut up, and none shall open *them*: Judah shall be carried away captive all of it, it shall be wholly carried away captive.

They were warned and told to warn the king, which was most likely referring to Jehoiachin, the grandson of Josiah. We read about the siege of Jerusalem and the taking of the King over in **2 Kings 24:10-12: At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. 11 And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it. 12 And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign.**

(20) Lift up your eyes, and behold them that come from the north: *where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?* (21) What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee? for thou hast taught them *to be* captains, *and* as chief over thee: shall not sorrows take thee, as a woman in travail?

When the enemy comes and carries everyone off into captivity they will look around them and wonder what in the world happened? How could this have possibly happened to us? Our people, our children, our lands, our houses, everything we have been blessed with is all gone. He says they will be like a woman in travail.

(22) And if thou say in thine heart, *Wherefore come these things upon me? For the greatness of thine iniquity are thy skirts discovered, and thy heels made bare.*

The people of Judah will be in utter dismay and shock when this happens. They will look around them at the destruction and wonder why all of this has happened to them. The same way people will look around when the Lord raptures the Church out of here and everyone is left behind. They will look around and wonder how did this happen? They will want to blame someone but the only one to blame are themselves.

(23) *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.*

Here is a good picture of just how deeply rooted in sin the people of Judah were. He asks the question "can an Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" An Ethiopian is a black person. They are born that way they can't change their skin color. And a leopard is born with spots and there's no changing that. These people are so ingrained into their sin that it has become second nature to them. It is who they are and they have done it so long that it will be nearly impossible for them to stop.

(24) Therefore will I scatter them as the stubble that passeth away by the wind of the wilderness.

The LORD says because of their sin He is going to scatter them like the stubble being blown away in the wind. The stubble is the straw left over from the wheat after the grain has been removed. It just blows in the wind and scatters.

(25) This *is* thy lot, the portion of thy measures from me, saith the LORD; because thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood.

The LORD tells them that all of these things are going to happen to them because this is the measure of punishment that he has laid out for them. They believed the lies of the false prophets and the lies of the false gods and they forsook the real God of Heaven, therefore, this is their punishment.

(26) Therefore will I discover thy skirts upon thy face, that thy shame may appear.

(27) I have seen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, *and* thine abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? *when shall it once be?*

When a woman was caught in adultery or living in a wicked or perverse manner, she would be punished by being stripped naked and exposed to the public. "**Skirts upon thy face**," is referring to their clothes being pulled up over their heads leaving their bodies exposed.

Not only is God going to punish them for their wickedness but he is going to humiliate them in front of the whole world.