

Message #6

Jeremiah 2:1-37

We are living in a time in which the idea being promoted by many politically is the idea of total and complete toleration. Just let people do what they want. If a group wants to destroy a city and burn down buildings, just let them do it. The same is true theologically. The idea that is propagated by most people is that God is a loving God and He puts up and tolerates His people doing anything whenever they want or believing anything they want.

Unfortunately, when it comes to God, that is not the truth. **Jeremiah has a very serious warning for the people of God and that is if you persist in living life contrary to Him and His word, He will Divorce you and cut you off from every blessing you could have had.**

Can you imagine the shock of the world when the headline is “God Has Filed For A Divorce.” Now I did not make this concept up about God; God actually says this and the prophet Jeremiah writes this in Jeremiah 3:8. He divorced Israel. God is a divorced God. In fact, right now He is married to another bride called the Church.

The vast majority of people don't ever want to think about the fact that God would cut Himself off from His own people and divorce them and judge them. People like to hear about a God of total toleration, love and grace. They love to get in their car and go to a church where they will hear God loves them just the way they are. He is a God of Grace and He would never judge or do bad things to His own people. God would never Divorce His people; in fact, He hates Divorce so He would never do that. **Jeremiah says yes He would and yes He did.**

When we examine the word of God, it is very evident that God has an angry side and if He gets angry with His own people, He will cause their world to come tumbling down. God does get fed up with people and when He gets fed up His people are in serious trouble.

That is exactly what God wanted Jeremiah to tell His own people.

GOD GAVE JEREMIAH THE RESPONSIBILITY TO GO REBUKE HIS OWN PEOPLE AND WARN THEM THAT THEY HAVE BECOME SO ABOMINABLE IN HIS SIGHT THAT HE WILL JUDGE THEM AND DEVASTATE THEM AND CUT OFF HIS BLESSINGS FROM THEM.

This was no easy message for a young man to present. He had to go to the people of God and point out their depravity and pending judgments.

We learn from **verse 1** that this came by the “word of the LORD.” God told Jeremiah I want you to go to Jerusalem and proclaim the truth about how I view my own people and what I will do to them and will permit to happen to them:

MESSAGE #1 – God describes what His relationship with His people was initially like. **2:1-3**

As this chapter begins, God reflects on what the marriage was originally like. As one commentator said, it is as if He is looking through the photos of a wedding album. The relationship between God and His people began so good:

Initially you were devoted and committed to Me. **2:2a** - You were in a covenant relationship with Me like a marriage. You loved Me and the covenant relationship we had.

Initially you followed Me. **2:2b** - You were devoted to Me and followed Me. This is the way a marriage is supposed to work. The wife follows the husband who is supposed to lead.

Initially you were holy to Me. **3:3a** - You were set apart unto me.

Initially you were My first fruit harvest. **3:3b** - You were My first chosen people.

By virtue of the fact that God says “first” could indicate another is anticipated (John 1:11-12).

Initially you were protected by Me. **3:3c**

Any who touched you were guilty and evil came on them.

This began as a great relationship, but it did not stay that way for long.

MESSAGE #2 – God describes how His relationship with His people pathetically developed. **2:4-8**

God wanted all of His people to hear this (**2:4**). **God did not initially turn away from His people; His people turned away from Him.**

There was not one thing God ever did wrong with His people (**2:5a**). In fact, God challenges His own people to come up with something He did wrong that would justify their unfaithfulness. What did He do that would cause them to become so worthless? But even though God was faithful, His people were not.

His people moved far from God. **2:5b - If God seems far away from His people, it is the people who moved away from God.**

His people walked after empty things. **2:5c - His people devoted themselves to worthless things.**

His people never once asked where I was in their world. **2:6 - They were not concerned about having a personal relationship with God, in spite of all God had done:**

a. I brought them out of Egypt. **2:6a**

b. I led them through the wilderness. **2:6b**

c. I provided for them in desolate areas. **2:6c-7**

God gave them fruit and good things. **2:7a**

God says My own people did not remember Me or thank Me. They didn't ask about Me or talk to Me.

His people defiled the land He gave them. **2:7b**

His people became an abomination to Him. **2:7c**

His leaders became an abomination.

His priests did not call out to Him. **2:8a** - They did not seek God.

His teachers who handled the word did not even know God. **2:8b**

Do you see this? One can be a teacher of God's word and not know God.

The rulers transgressed against God. **2:8c**

The prophets prophesied by a false god. **2:8d** - Prophets prophesied in the name of Baal.

They walked after unprofitable things. **2:8e** - These leaders taught people to go after unprofitable things.

Philip Ryken, in his commentary, said, "A holy calling does not make a holy man" (*Jeremiah and Lamentations*, p. 42). These leaders should have loved God and revered God and His word.

MESSAGE #3 – God accuses His own people. **2:9-13**

God says I want you to take a look at godless, idolatrous nations from the west to the east and see if they have ever turned away from their false gods? Look at the coastlands of Kittim and the land of Kedar (Arab world) (**2:10**) and tell me if they ever changed their concept of their gods.

The answer is those who worship a false god continue to do so and don't try to change its makeup. Here were His people in a true relationship with the Living God and they changed their concept of Him.

God says to the heavens, this is appalling. Look at this in the heavens, this is astonishing. Have you ever seen something so appalling? This was horrifying for His people to do this.

In **verse 13**, God says My own people are guilty of two evils:

- 1) They have changed My glory into something else, which even heathens don't do. **2:11**
- 2) They have forsaken me. **2:13**

They have turned away from the fountain of living waters that really can refresh their souls. They have chosen to drink out of cisterns that don't even hold water.

MESSAGE #4 – Israel is not the glorious free nation, she is the slave nation. **2:14-19**

It would be very wise for people in the United States to take a serious look at these verses.

God had originally made Israel a free nation, but she wasn't during the days of Jeremiah. She had become the prey of every other nation as a judgment of God. She had lost her freedoms.

Israel had seen her land made waste. She had seen foreign powers destroy her cities. What at one time had been flourishing places were now desolate waste areas where no one lived.

She had been humiliated by the Egyptians and the Assyrians who had even shaved their heads (**v. 16**). Literally in I Kings 14:25-28, Egypt attacked Jerusalem under Shishak. In II Kings 23:29, Egypt under Neco had killed Josiah. Memphis was the ancient capital of lower Egypt. Tahpanhes was a fortified city on the NE border of Egypt.

So God used both Assyria and Egypt to punish and scalp His own people because of their unfaithfulness. His own people trusted more in their political alliances with these powers than they did God. God says in **verse 17** that they have done this to themselves. They have forsaken the LORD their God. They did not want Him or His word leading them any longer and this is where it led them. This is what sin does. It will take away the glory and lead one to humiliation.

There is a very important point we want to see here. God's people need to understand that it is God who delivers and saves and not political alliances or affiliations. God's people need to turn to God and cry out to Him or a free nation can become a slave nation.

MESSAGE #5 – God presents reality concerning His own people. **2:20-28**

There are seven realities God presents:

Reality #1 - God set His people free and they would not serve Him. **2:20**

She got involved in every evil thing imaginable. God gave His people freedom but His people did not serve Him with their freedom. In fact, they used their freedom to pursue immoral things. They did not serve God, they were involved in harlotry.

Reality #2 - God planted His people to be a wonderful choice fruit producing vine. **2:21**

She turned against God and became a degenerate foreign vine. God's people did not concern themselves with bearing fruit for God; they were degenerates who turned away from God.

Reality #3 - You wash yourself with soap but you cannot wash off the stain of your filth. **2:22**

There is nothing you may physically do to be washed clean of the filth of your sin. In fact, it is only the blood of Jesus Christ that can purify us (I John 1:7).

Reality #4 - You say you are not defiled and yet everywhere you look you are defiled. **2:23**

A young camel is one of the most fickle and unreliable animals in existence. A young camel runs all different directions and is skittish. It is said that those who try to train a young camel often get frustrated and angry. That is a tremendous illustration of God's people. They run this way in sin and that way in sin and they are skittish and do not trust God. In fact, the reference to the "valley" is probably a reference to the Valley of Hinnom where they sacrificed their own children to a false god (Jer. 7:31).

Reality #5 - You are like a wild donkey in heat consumed by your lusts. **2:24-25**

They would not even take the time to put on shoes. They chased after evil things to the point of being thirsty. She was like a lust-crazed donkey in heat who chases after any male she can track down. God's people were chasing after immoral things.

When God told them to turn to Him from their evil, they said, "It is hopeless." I will walk after those who don't know you and I will love those who are strangers. These were God's own people addicted to evil.

Do not kid yourself; you can become addicted to sin even as a child of God. You can become addicted to sex; immoral things; alcohol; drugs; gambling and other sinful things. You can wear out your shoes chasing after these things. You can crave your addiction and when you reach this point, you anger God and if you do not turn from it, He will divorce you.

Reality #6 - God's people are shameful, including their political and religious leaders. **2:26**

God eventually exposes His people who are involved in evil. He exposes kings, princes, priests and prophets.

Reality #7 - God's people trust in worthless idols until a disastrous time of trouble comes. **2:27**

What is so tragic is that God's people who have moved away from God live in some state of denial. They won't admit the truth and they won't turn to God. It takes a horrible disaster to get people to turn to God as a last resort.

God's people think well when trouble comes we can just call out to God and He will save us. They have not faced their evil sin that brought this on. They think they can call out to God and the trouble will vanish. Well that is not how it works.

When God is fed up with His people to the point of judgment, it is too late.

In **verse 28**, Jeremiah says where are your gods now? Why don't you look to them for help? You don't care about God and His word.

When Jeremiah says they had as many gods as they had cities, it was no joke. F. B. Huey calculated that there were at least 258 gods or deities in Israel (*Jeremiah/Lamentations*, p. 67).

MESSAGE #6 – God says because His people refuse to repent, God will reject them and punish them. **2:29-37**

In **verse 29**, God says you have no complaint about Me and what I do to you because you have transgressed against Me.

In fact, according to **verse 30**, when God struck down their sons, they did not repent. When God destroyed their prophets, they did not repent.

According to **verse 31**, God pleaded with them to heed the word of God, but they wouldn't do it. They lived by the code we are free to roam and they would not come to God. They would not repent.

According to **verse 32**, what Judah did was as unnatural as a bride who would forget her attire. A married woman wore a sash around her waist to indicate she was married. God says no bride would forget that, yet His people forgot Him.

For days and years without number they have forgotten Him. This was not just a slip up; this was her character.

According to **verse 33**, she was a harlot. They were professionals at turning away from God to their immoral behavior.

According to **verses 34-35**, His people mistreated the poor and claimed they were innocent. They said God was never angry with them.

God says I will enter into judgment with you because you say I have not sinned.

He is not entering because she sinned and admitted it and was sorry for it. He entered into it because she said she had not sinned. God says I will use Egypt and Assyria to put you to shame (**v. 36-37**).

God says I am pulling the plug on this relationship. No more support; no more protection; no more forgiveness; no more blessings.