

12/20/01

### Jeremiah 3-4

God has just finished indicting Judah for her sin and her shameless adultery and treachery towards Yahweh.

This first sermon of Jeremiah runs from chapter two to the fifth verse of chapter three, this is a better division of the chapter.

The second sermon of Jeremiah begins in verse six of chapter three and goes on to the end of chapter six, making it the longest sermon in the book.

The prophet is in the process of observing the death of his nation!

#### **3:1-5 The indictment of Judah continued**

**3:1-5** *The shamelessness pollution of the nation*

**3:1** The teaching of the Law regarding divorce.

- 1) The provision being referred to is found in the book of Deuteronomy. Deut. 24:1-4
  - a) The provision was really for the protection of the woman against an

unreasonable man who had no real right for divorce.

- b) The consequences of such an action taken by a man was that he could never take his wife back even if the second husband divorced her or he died.
  - c) The purpose behind the law was to keep the land from becoming polluted through easy divorce and the nucleus of society be destroyed, the family and the home.
- 2) Then God turns around and says, “But you have played the harlot”, in other words the provision was not for one who played the harlot but some unjustifiable uncleanness in the husbands mind and heart, the penalty for one who played the harlot was stoning.
  - 3) Then God turns around and says, “But you have played the harlot; yet return to Me, says the Lord.” Vs. 1f-h
    - a) In other words the provision was not for one who played the harlot but some unjustifiable uncleanness in the husbands mind and heart, the penalty for one who played the harlot was stoning.
    - b) God was saying that though He has the right to put her away, He chooses to forgive her by the phrase, “Return

to Me”, this is the interpretation of the imperative.

\* No other prophet makes use of the word “sub” return or turn as Jeremiah, the root appears 125 times in the book, twenty of them in chapters 3-4.

- 1)) He has come full circle to the love of their betrothal. Jer. 2:2
  - 2)) He married her in holiness, to make her holy for Himself. Jer. 2:3
- \* Some think the infinitive is best, “Let her return?”, but that would infer a contradiction to what Yahweh has promised.

**3:2** Judah is charged once again with her treachery of spiritual adultery.

- 1) Yahweh tells her to lift her eyes to see all the high places where she has laid with men and was violated.  
\* The sacred groves and with their sexual rites of fertility!
- 2) She was as a roving Bedoin polluting the land with her harlotries and wickedness.

**3:3** Judah punishment was for her to repent but she refused. Vs. 3

- 1) Yahweh withheld the latter rains in March and April for the maturing of the

crops, according to the covenant. Lev. 26:19, Deut. 28:23-24

- a) The early rains were October-November.
  - b) Baal was the Canaanite god of the storm, of the lightning thunder, of the life giving rain.
- 2) Judah was said to be figuratively marked on the forehead as a harlot but she refused to be ashamed.

**3:4-5** Judah knew Judah’s heart, she would attempt to manipulate Yahweh to serve herself being more treacherous than before. Vs. 4-5

- 1) Yahweh says, “Will you not from this time cry to Me, `My father, You are the guide of my youth?” Vs. 4  
\* She would attempt to serve herself one more time!
- 2) Yahweh knew her smooth words, “Will He remain angry forever? Will He keep it to the end?” Vs. 5a-b  
\* She would play on His love for her!
- 3) Yahweh said, “Behold, you have spoken and done evil things, As you were able.” Vs. 5c-e  
\* She would be exposed for using and polluting her marriage relationship with Yahweh!

**3:6-4:4**     **The call to repentance.****3:6-10**     *The failure of Israel and Judah.*

**3:6**     God calls the prophet to observe Israel's harlotry.

- 1) The date is in the reign of Josiah the king. 639 B.C- 609 B.C.
- 2) Israel had been taken into captivity by Assyria in 722 B.C.
- 3) Israel's sin was spiritual adultery, described as harlotry as she had given herself over to the fertility gods under every mountain and green tree. Amos 3-4; Hos. 8:4

**3:7**     God recalled Israel's refusal to repent.

- 1) God asked Israel to repent, "Return to Me", after her pollution.
  - a) The word return is key to the entire book making the condition of the nation.
  - b) She had turned her back on God and turned to serve idols.
  - c) She was pleaded with to return to Yahweh by turning from her harlotries.
- 2) Israel did not return and Judah witnessed her rebellion.

**3:8**     God recalls His painful divorce to Israel.

- 1) For her backslidings He put her away and she went into captivity in 722 B.C. Jer. 3:1-5; 2Kings 17-18
- 2) Forged in the same bent Judah played the harlot also.
  - a) Judah is called treacherous or unfaithful due to the intimacy of the marriage relationship.
  - b) Judah did not fear God or the consequences, rather than learning from her sister's evil, she imitated it!
  - c) The reform of Josiah was superficial and insincere by the people. 2Kings 23-24; 2Chron.34-35
- a) The word of the LORD first came to Jeremiah in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign in 626 B.C, five years before the reform of Josiah when the father of Jeremiah found the book of the law 621 B.C. 2Kings 22-23

**3:9-10**     God describes the greater evil of Judah.

- 1) Israel through her casual harlotry had defiled the land and engaged in spiritual adultery with the fertility cults with stones and trees, Vs. 9

- 2) Judah was not turning to Yahweh with a whole heart but only in pretense and became treacherous to Yahweh.. Vs. 10

**3:11-18** *The message of God to Israel and Judah was repentance.*

**3:11** God's verdict of Judah is greater guilt than Israel.

- 1) Israel had been more righteous than treacherous Judah God declared. Ezk. 23
- 2) The reason being due to Judah having seen the evil example Israel and after that she became treacherous to God rather than faithful with a whole heart. Ezk. 16:44-52,;23:1-49; Lk. 12:48

**3:12** God invites Israel to repent.

- 1) The prophet Jeremiah is told to go to the North and proclaim, "Return, backsliding Israel" as the proclamation of His steadfast love. Jer. 2:1-3  
\* Most likely it was directed to the remnant that had been left in the land and intermingled and resulting in the Samaritans.
- 2) Yahweh would not cause His anger to fall, literally "cause my face to fall", but mercy and His anger would not be forever, if repentance took place.

**3:13** God declares the evidence of repentance.

- 1) The recognition one's sin, "Only acknowledge your iniquity." 1Jn. 1:9
- 2) The acknowledgment that sin is against God, "That you have transgressed against the Lord your God." Ps. 51:4  
\* Literally it says, "Know your sin".
- 3) The confession of the specific sins, "And have scattered your charms To alien deities under every green tree, And you have not obeyed My voice," says the LORD."  
\* He who covers his sin shall not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will have mercy. Prov. 28:13

**3:14** God invites Judah to repent.

- 1) The invitation once again is, "Return, O backsliding children". Vs. 14  
\* There is a play on word, "Turn, you turned away ones".
- 2) The right of God to the people is based on the marriage covenant, "For I am your husband.", literally your Baal, which literally means lord and master. Mal. 2:16
- 3) The context is the future when Yahweh will take one from a city the remnant and

two from a family and bring them to Zion.

\* There are certainly short and long-term fulfillment often such prophecies but the ultimate is in the Kingdom.

**3:15** The promise of God is to provide Shepherds. Vs. 15

- 1) Those who have the heart of God to feed the people. Jer. 2:8, 26; 23:4; Ezk. 34
- 2) Their ability through the gift of God will enable them to declare proper spiritual knowledge and understanding.

\* The word understanding “sakar” means insight as the result of practice and contemplation of God’s word.

**3:16** The prophecy will be fulfilled in the Kingdom Age.

- 1) When they are multiplied and increased in the land.
- 2) “In those days” is a phrase for the Kingdom Age.  
\* Some attempt to interpret this as the New Testament but it is foreign to the text and the evidence of the New Testament denies it.
- 3) The promise is based on the authority of Yahweh, “Says the LORD”.

4) The Jews will no longer look to the Old Covenant or the ark, it won’t even come into their minds.

\* The last time it was seen was prior to the third siege by Babylon and no one knows what became of it. 586 B.C.

**3:17** The particular capital of Kingdom. Vs. 17

- 1) Jerusalem shall be called the Throne of the Lord.
- 2) All the nations will be gathered to it, to the name of the Lord at Jerusalem. Is. 2:2-4
- 3) They will no longer follow the dictates of their evil hearts.
- 4) Jesus will be reigning as King even onto the New heaven and earth as well as the New Jerusalem. Rev. 21:22-24  
\* But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.

**3:18** The Kingdom Age will have a united nation. Vs. 18

- 1) The phrase “In those days” again refers to the Kingdom Age.  
\* Short-term Ezra, Nehemiah, etc.
- 2) Judah and Israel shall walk together as God brings them out of the north.
- 3) The fulfillment is their inheritance God gave their fathers.

**3:19-20** *The heart grief of Yahweh towards Judah.*

**3:19** The dilemma of God.

- 1) Yahweh’s love for Judah to favor her in the promised inheritance is grieving due to the fact that they are ungrateful and disobedient to Him.
- 2) Yahweh’s hope for them was to treat them as sons and daughters but they only call Yahweh “Father” in name only while denying Him in their life-style.  
\* Hosea the prophet records a familiar scene as God’s reveals His anguish out love for them. Hos.11:8
- 3) The will of God promised would only come by obedience to the word of God.

**3:20** Yahweh charges Judah with unfaithfulness.

- 1) She as the wife of Yahweh had departed from Him and dealt treacherously with Him through her whoredoms.

- 2) The phrase “house of Israel” represents the entire nation here the North and Southern kingdoms.

**3:21-25** *The dialogue between God and Judah.*

**3:21** The words of Israel avowed repentance.

- 1) Israel’s weeping and supplications were heard in the desolate heights of her idolatry in lamentation. 1Kings 18:26-29
- 2) The reasons is two-fold.
  - a) She had perverted her way.
  - b) She had forgotten the LORD their God.
  - c) The two most intimate metaphors are used to communicate the deepest love, that of children and marriage.  
Vs. 20-21

**3:22a-c** The responds of God to Israel.

- 1) Yahweh called out for her to return, the repeated phrase is through the second sermon.
- 2) The reason is due to the fact that they are backslidden, another repeated phrase to identify the nations condition, “Turn you turned away ones”.

- 3) The promise is that God Himself will heal their backslidings, through their repentance, not apart from it.

**3:22d-25** The seeming confession and repentance of the people.

- 1) Their words are, “Indeed we do come to You”, implying that they were turning from their sins.
- 2) Their basis is in confessing their special relation to Yahweh, “For you are the LORD our God”.
- 3) They acknowledged the vanity in seeking salvation in the cult worship of the hills and the mountains but only in Yahweh their God there was salvation.
- 4) They acknowledged that shame had consumed them and that the loss of their father’s labor from their youth was due to their life of disobedience and sin. Vs. 24  
\* Shame “bosheth” is at time used in place for the Baals. Jer. 11:13
- 5) They acknowledged living in shame and known for their disgrace. Vs. 25a-b  
\* How sin robs a person of vigor, dignity and fullness of life!
- 6) The reason is declared, they had sinned against the LORD their God, they and their father. Vs. 225c-f
  - a) This had been their pattern from their youth to the present day.

- b) They had not obeyed the voice of the LORD their God.
  - \* He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without **remedy**. Prov. 29:1

**4:1-4** *The promise and prescription for true repentance.*

- 4:1** Their conversion must be true and complete.  
\* The chapter break would be better at verse four.
- 1) If Israel was to return to Yahweh then it would have to manifest a complete turning from the evil and obedience to God’s word.
    - a) The Hebrew reveals the play on words, in turning you must turn completely!
    - b) God could see the insincerity of the heart, He is not taken in as we are, for He alone knows the heart.
  - 2) If Israel put away her abominations out of Yahweh’s sight, then they would not waiver in their faith but be steadfast.
- 4:2** Their conversion is to be under an oath of allegiance.

- 1) To take an oath bound a person to what was declared and once again gives us the language of a legal court.. Num. 30
- 2) To use God's name in an oath was a serious matter acknowledging God as alive, so it was to be done in truth, in judgment and in righteousness and not flippantly.
- 3) The desire of God was that the nations might be blessed by God through Israel. Gen. 12:3; 22:18

**4:3** Their conversion had to be spiritual not religious.

- 1) The council is directed to the men of Judah and Jerusalem.
- 2) The council is that they break up their fallow ground and not sow among thorns.
  - a) Their live had become hard to God and the things of God and the pagan influences had become thorns in their lives that impeded their spiritual growth and development.
    - (1) The metaphor is from farming, as the farmer has to go out first and turn over the hard ground so that it may receive the seed and water to cause growth, so they spiritually!
    - (2) Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to

seek the LORD, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you. Hos. 10:12

- b) Their practice of life was to be different now, sowing on the good ground of God not among the religious pagan sites. Matt. 13:1-9

**4:4** Their conversion had to accompany holiness.

- 1) The council was to circumcise themselves to the LORD.
  - a) Circumcision represented the cutting away of the flesh life, that which is opposed to God in uncleanness.
  - b) The rite was given to Abraham after he attempted to fulfill God's promise by taking Hagar and producing Ishmael, instead of trusting God for Isaac. Gen. 17:9-14
- 2) The men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem were to take away the foreskins of their hearts.
  - a) Circumcision of the heart speaks of a whole hearted commitment to God without any rivals and had always been the principal. Deut. 10:16; Jer. 31:33
  - b) True genuine inward transformation in contrast to outward religious ceremony.

- c) In fact Judah is ranked among the heathen calling Israel “uncircumcised in heart” Jer. 9:25-26
- d) Circumcision is the mark of a life of faith obeying God. Rom. 2:25-29; Gal. 5:6; Phil. 3:2-3; Col. 2:11-14
- de Repentance is far more than merely turning from evil, it is turn to God in order to manifest the new life.
- 3) The alternative was that Yahweh’s fury would come like an unquenchable fire due to the evil they were doing.
  - a) God is the Holy One of Israel. Is. 1:4; 5:19; 5:24; 10:17; Jer. 50:29; 51:5
  - b) Yahweh can not look on sin with any approval. Hab. 2:4
  - c) Yahweh will judge all sin by His holiness. Amos 4:2

**4:5-31      The alarm for the coming destruction.**

**4:5-18**    *The invading armies of Babylon are on their way.*

- 4:5**      The alarm is to be sounded.
- 1) To Judah and Jerusalem.
  - 2) The blowing of the trumpet was for the impending judgment. Amos 3:6  
\* Jer. 1:13; 4:5-7; 5:15-17; 6:1-6, 22-23

- 3) They were to gather into the fortified cities.

**4:6-7**      The time is short.

- 1) They were not to delay. Vs. 6
- 2) The disaster would come from the north by Babylon with great destruction. Vs. 6
- 3) The armies are on their way pictured as a lion to devour. Vs. 7
- 4) Their intent is to waste and dis-inhabit the land of it’s people. Vs. 7

**4:8**      The need of humility.

- 1) They were to clothe themselves with sackcloth, a very coarse skin that afflicted the skin.
- 2) They were to lament and wail for the judgment of Yahweh has not bee averted.

**4:9**      The judgment of the leaders.

- 1) In that day the heart of the king shall perish.
- 2) In that day the heart of the princes shall perish.
- 3) In that day the priest shall be astonished.
- 4) In that day the prophet shall wonder.  
\* Jer. 2:26

**4:10**      The false deception of the people.

- 1) Jeremiah is not saying that God deceived the people through his message, for he

spoke of judgment to come from the beginning.

- 2) The false prophets had spoken falsely and gave false hope to the people.

**4:11-12** The coming judgment will be like a scorching wind.

- 1) The Babylonian army is depicted as his dry wind or sirocco of the desert that often was utilized to clean the shaft from the wheat but this wind was not for cleansing but to judge. Vs. 11
- 2) The prophet proceeds to interpret it properly and committed to speak judgment. Vs. 12

**4:13** The coming judgment.

- 1) The certainly is stated again, “He shall come”
- 2) The metaphor of a cloud and similes of chariots like a whirlwind and metonymy horses swifter than eagles.
- 3) The prophet’s overwhelmingness cries out, “Woe to us, for we are plundered.”

**4:14** The faithful warning of the prophet.

- 1) He addresses Jerusalem to wash her heart from wickedness, Jer. 4:3-4
- 2) His intent is that they be saved, individually, for the nation had gone too far already.

- 3) He reasons with the people regarding their foolishness to continue in their evil thoughts “within them”.

**4:15-17** The nearness of the Babylonian army is confirmed.

- 1) From Dan to Mount Ephraim their presence was there. Vs. 15
- 2) The prophet was to proclaim to the nations the judgment against Jerusalem. Vs. 16
- 3) That God was bringing watchers from a far away land to raise their voice against the cities of Judah. Vs. 16
- 4) Like keepers of a field they are all around her, no escape was possible. Vs. 17
- 5) The reason being that they had been rebellious against Yahweh. Vs. 17  
\* The authority of the proclamation is qualified, “Says the LORD”, Yahweh.

**4:18** The principal of sowing and reaping.

- 1) Their ways and doing procured these very things to their lives.
- 2) This was their wickedness they were responsible for their own sin.
- 3) The end result is bitterness to their lives reaching their hearts.

**4:19-22** *The agony of Jeremiah.*

**4:19-20** The prophet weeps for the nation.

- 1) The deep hurt is declared, “O my soul, my soul! I am pained in my very heart! My heart makes a noise in me.” Vs. 19  
\* Like our Lord as He wept over Jerusalem, so Jeremiah is called the weeping prophet. Matt. 23:37-39
- 2) The evident nearness by the blowing of the trumpet and the judgment of his people could not let him rest, “I cannot hold my peace, Because you have heard, O my soul, The sound of the trumpet, The alarm of war.” Vs. 19
- 3) The news of the sudden destruction and the plundering was too much for Jeremiah. Vs. 20

**4:21** The prophet is unable to endure the pain of his people.

- 1) “How long will I see the standard, *And* hear the sound of the trumpet?”  
\* The martyrs under the fifth seal also cry out, “How long Oh Lord?”. Rev. 5:?
- 2) The prophet in obedience declared the judgment to come but he did not delight in the suffering of the people.

**4:22** Yahweh’ verdict on His people.

- 1) Yahweh says, “For My people are foolish”, due to the fact that they forsook Him, the fountain of living waters.
- 2) Yahweh says, “They have not known Me”, they have only been religious instead of having a personal relationship.
- 3) Yahweh says, “They are silly children, And they have no understanding”, they are self-centered, fickle and have no spiritual understanding.
- 4) Yahweh says, “They are wise to do evil, But to do good they have no knowledge”, they mastered by their sin-nature and have developed it so, while allowing their knowledge of God to fall by the wayside.

**4:23-26** *The cosmic chaos,*

**4:23** The utter devastation.

- 1) Many have used these four verses as a basis for the gap-theory in Genesis one, teaching that there was a creation and destruction in between verse one and two.  
\* This is where they put Lucifer’s rebellion!

- 2) I also have mentioned this possibility before but I don't really espouse the gap-theory.
- a) First Jeremiah is prophesying about Israel's future judgment and devastation.
  - b) Second though prophecies do have a two-fold fulfillment at time, they do so short-term and long-term in the future, not back to the past.
  - c) Thirdly the Bible teacher that death did not exist prior to Adam and Eve. Rom. 5:12
- 3) It most likely speaks of the event of the day of the Lord when the earth is burned up with fervent heat and all will melt. 2Pet. 3:10
- 4) There are four aspects to the cosmic chaos.
- a) I beheld the earth, and indeed it was without form, and void; And the heavens, they had no light. Vs. 23
  - b) I beheld the mountains, and indeed they trembled, And all the hills moved back and forth. Vs. 24
  - c) I beheld, and indeed *there was* no man, And all the birds of the heavens had fled. Vs. 25
  - d) I beheld, and indeed the fruitful land was a wilderness, And all its cities were broken down At the presence of

the LORD, By His fierce anger. Vs. 26

**4:27-31** *The desolation of the land.*

**4:27** Yahweh judgment would be tempered with mercy.

- 1) He would not destroy the land completely, "For thus says the LORD: "The whole land shall be desolate; Yet I will not make a full end."
- 2) God's faithfulness is steadfast.

**4:28** The judgement of Yahweh is revealed in nature.

- 1) The earth mourn and the heavens above be black.
- 2) The reason is because, "I have spoken. I have purposed and will not relent, Nor will I turn back from it", it is a most awesome and solemn matter. Vs. 26

**4:29** The entire population shall be affected.

- 1) The whole city shall flee from the noise of the horsemen and bowmen, fear shall strike the people.
- 2) They shall go into thickets and climb up on the rocks, in attempts to hid.

- 3) Every city shall be forsaken, And not a man shall dwell in it, the captivity will be of all.

**4:30** No manner of scheme will avert the judgment.

- 1) Yahweh asks, “And when you are plundered, What will you do?”
- 2) Yahweh tells them, that though one clothe himself with crimson, though one adorn yourself with ornaments of gold, though she enlarge her eyes with paint, In vain the person would make themselves fair.
- 3) Yahweh declares, “Your lovers will despise you; They will seek your life.”
  - \* The nation is pictured as a prostitute attempting to use her charm to escape her consequences!

**4:31** The anguish and suffering heard.

- 1) Yahweh depicts the event as sudden and unexpected as the birth of a child.
  - \* “For I have heard a voice as of a woman in labor, The anguish as of her who brings forth her first child,”
- 2) Yahweh describes the physical anguish.
  - \* “The voice of the daughter of Zion bewailing herself; She spreads her hands, saying,”
- 3) Yahweh desperation of the nation,

- \* “Woe *is* me now, for my soul is weary Because of murderers!”