

The Prophets & Kings

From Rehoboam To Zedekiah

Book 1

A Daily Devotional Study Guide

Week 44

“Broken Cisterns”

Study: Jeremiah 2:12-19

Reading: 1 Peter 1:3-9, Hebrews 12:3-17

Memory: Isaiah 40:6

What Does the Bible Say?

In a very descriptive word picture, God described how the heavens were shocked and appalled at the way the Israelites had treated the God who had delivered and blessed them. God declared the Israelites had stopped drinking from the fountain of living water that He provided and had made their own cisterns, which were broken and leaking, to drink from. In those days, living water was a reference to water that was moving, like water from rivers, springs or streams. This water was always fresh and much more healthy and better than water stored in a cistern. A cistern was a cavity made in the rock underground and was often plastered to store water. They would act much like a water tower today, but were underground. These cisterns would develop cracks, causing the water to leak out. This illustration indicates that the Israelites traded something fresh and full of health and life with something that was much more deadly and would leave people with emptiness (vs 12-13).

God asked Israel if they were slaves or servants? He had delivered them as a nation to be free people and had given them the power to be the conquerors, but instead they became slaves and were the ones who had become the prey. The lion-like enemies had roared against them, causing great harm to the



Water Cistern in the Herodium

land. The men of Egypt (represented by the cities of Memphis and Tahpanhes) had shaved the heads of the people. Enemies would often shave the heads of the people they conquered to bring humiliation to their foes (vs 14-16).

All of the destruction and problems that Israel was experiencing was brought upon them because of their own actions. It wasn't that God was neglecting them, it was that they neglected God. Instead of turning to God for help, the Israelites tried to turn to Assyria or Egypt for help. These were the two super powers of the day. If Assyria attacked from the north they would try to pay Egypt to come and help them. If Egypt attacked from the south, they would try to pay Assyria to come and help them. Continuing with the water illustration from earlier, God described how they trusted in the mighty rivers. Egypt had the great Nile river and Assyria had the great Euphrates river (vs 17-18).

Their choice to live in evil was a choice to bring punishment upon themselves. They would experience how difficult life would be by their choice to turn from God. They did not look to God or fear God as they were commanded. The result was not going to be good and God was warning them to turn from their wicked deeds (vs 19).

How Does this Apply to Me?

In very vivid word pictures God described what life would be like for His children when they turned from Him. Some of the events mentioned had already taken place and some of the events mentioned would still take place. The main point that was repeated a few different ways was that all of the harm that had and would happen could have been avoided if they would have simply sought God. The same understanding still applies to us today. Many times, you can create your own problems when you fail to follow the Word of God and seek after Him. This does not mean that every "problem" you have in life is a result of sin. The New Testament is clear that God brings trials to help you grow, but the general theme of Scripture is that when you follow God, you will be blessed. These blessings are not always physical, but they will be greater than that, because the blessings of God go deep in the heart and soul. When you face struggles in your life, don't rule out the fact that maybe you have brought some of these things on yourself by your wrong choices. Take time to examine your life on a regular basis to make sure you are seeking after God.

How did the heavens respond to Israel's rejection of God (vs 12)?

Why do you think God said this?

What two evils had the people done (vs 13)?

- 1.
- 2.

What do you think was meant by this word picture (vs 13)?

How have you experienced fullness in your life when you have sought after God (vs 13)?

How have you experienced emptiness when you have sought after selfish things (vs 13)?

Why did God ask if Israel were slaves or servants (vs 14)?

What has Israel become (vs 14)?

What do you think the lions mentioned in verse 15 were referring to ?

What was the result of these lions (vs 15)?

How were the men of Israel humbled (vs 16)?

What did God declare about the problems Israel was experiencing (vs 17)?

Why would Israel seek after Egypt or Assyria (vs 18)?

How are you tempted to seek after the world's help instead of the help of God?

What was going to be the result of the evil of Israel (vs 19)?

What had Israel failed to do (vs 19)?

How is this passage a great warning to you?

“I Didn’t Notice”

Study: Jeremiah 2:20-28

Reading: Jude 1:8-14

Memory: Isaiah 40:6

Have you ever been shocked when you moved a piece of furniture or a picture on the wall and noticed how dirty or faded the unprotected areas had become? You don’t notice how dirt builds up or how things fade on a daily basis because it happens over time.

Today, we are going to see how we don’t often notice how wrong some of our actions or thoughts are since the incorrect thinking develops over time. We will be reminded of the need to continually clean and cleanse our lives so we can remain pure before God.

What Does the Bible Say?

God had delivered Israel from slavery many years before when Moses led the people out of Egypt. Though He did this for them and led them into a wonderful land, the people decided they wouldn’t serve God. Instead, they built altars to false God on the tops of all the high hills and worshiped in the groves of trees. They acted like whores by turning from God and choosing to follow other gods (vs 20).

Comparing His work to that of a farmer, God described how he had planted them a great place and used the finest seed. The crop that He expected was a bountiful one, but all that sprouted from His labor was a field full of wild vines (vs 21).

Over time the guilt of their sin became like a severely stained garment. No matter how much soap and lye (cleaning products of those days) was used, they could not restore their garments. The stain of the sin they had committed was so great that even the reforms of Josiah were not enough to remove judgement completely from the people. Though they were dirty with sin, many of them didn’t realize it. They thought they were still right before God, though the signs of false worship were all over the land. They were compared to restless camels and wild donkeys. Instead of tamed animals that were useful, they became like wild animals seeking to fulfill their natural desires. They did whatever

they wanted without restraint. Just as animals run toward their mates during season, those who seek sin don’t have a hard time finding it. (vs 22-24).

The people were running towards evil and thirsted for what was wrong. Instead of choosing self control, they decided it was futile to try to do things God’s way. They chose to give into their desires and chase after what was wrong. As a result of this attitude and the actions that accompanied it, they would face consequences just like a thief would suffer when caught. It wasn’t just the people who would be put to shame, but the leaders would face the brunt of this shame. Consequences were going to come since they foolishly worshiped trees and stones, thinking those things were more powerful than their Heavenly Father. They turned their backs to God rather than turning their faces towards Him. When trouble would come, God would not be there to help. Instead, when they called out to God for help He would tell them to give their false gods a try and let their earthly idols save them (vs 25-28).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you realize all the things that God has done for you? One of the great reasons people fall away from the Lord is because they don’t understand what they truly have in salvation. God compared His actions to that of a farmer who carefully cared for the ground and the seed. He does the same for your life today, but when you choose to chase after things of this world, you are also choosing to reject all He has done for you. It should be noted that Jeremiah purposely makes their actions sound terrible since he was trying to get their attention, but in their minds, they didn’t see how they were doing wrong. It is very easy to deceive yourself into going down the wrong path because. This is why God sends spiritual leaders and uses His Word to help open your eyes to the truth. Don’t take for granted what God has done for you. Instead, choose to follow His ways. It will be well worth it.

Suggestions for Prayer

* *Ask God to reveal areas of sin in your life.*

* *Thank God for patiently directing you back to Him.*

Thought for the day

What had God done long ago (vs 20)?

What was this referring to?

What did the people declare (vs 20)?

What did they do instead of serving God (vs 20)?

What did God compare His work with Israel to (vs 21)?

What had Israel become (vs 21)?

What would they use to wash their clothes (vs 22)?

What was the illustration in verse 22 describing?

What did the people of Israel declare (vs 23)?

What did God tell them to look to (vs 23)?

Why did He compare them to camels and wild donkeys (vs 23-24)?

Why do you think the term “lust” is used in verse 24?

What were the people running after (vs 25)?

What attitude had developed in the minds of the people (vs 25)?

What did God compare the shame of Israel to (vs 26)?

Why do you think God mentioned the leaders (vs 26)?

What did they say to the rocks and trees (vs 27)? Why?

What would the people do when they ran into trouble (vs 27)?

How would God respond (vs 28)?

What did God say about the number of gods they worshiped (vs 28)?

“Removing Marriage Symbols”

Study: Jeremiah 2:29-37

Reading: Psalms 1:1-6, Revelation 2:1-7

Memory: Isaiah 40:6

I wore my wedding ring for years after my wife and I were first married. I then jammed my ring finger and could not wear it for a great deal of time because it would no longer fit on my finger. Then, I started driving for Uber. After a short time of doing that, I decided to force my wedding ring back on my finger to limit the number of woman who tried to flirt with me. I never realized how many women look for a wedding ring! I made sure I wore the ring until I ended up having to get it cut off before I had surgery on my elbow. I also stopped driving for Uber shortly after that. If I ever chose to drive again, one of the first things I would do is get some type of wedding ring to wear.

Today, we are going to see how Israel chose not to show any evidence that they were the bride of God. Instead, they made themselves available for the advances of the foreign gods.

What Does the Bible Say?

God asked the Israelites why they chose to fight against Him. He wasn't their enemy, yet they started to view Him this way and chose to sin against Him. He chose to bring difficult times into their lives which would greatly affect their children, yet they chose to do nothing about it. The prophets that God sent were not listened to, but instead they were killed and tortured like lions attacking their prey (vs 29-30).

The people were called to pay attention to the Word of God. God had not been like a desert to the people nor had He brought darkness to the land. Instead, God had blessed the people and brought an abundance of food and wealth to them when they chose to follow Him. Though He did all this for them, the people wanted freedom from the rules He had given. They didn't want to be “slaves” to God, but instead wanted Him to set them free to do whatever they wanted as they chose to no longer worship or serve Him (vs 32).

Judah was compared to a bride who forgot the wedding ornaments that indicated that she was now a married woman. Instead of flaunting

the fact that she was married and now “off the market” for possible suitors, she chose not to wear the symbols of her union. The people had forgotten the fact that they were the bride of God and day after day they sought to do their own thing. They had sought after other lovers with such vigor that even the “wicked women” (probably a reference to prostitutes and whores) were learning what to do from their actions (vs 34).

Not only did they neglect God and chase after other gods, but Judah also was guilty of killing and taking advantage of the poor. Though the poor had done nothing wrong, they were oppressed and treated as criminals. The people of Judah had done all this, but they would not admit to what they had done. They declared they were innocent and that God would not judge them because they did nothing wrong. This attitude was the opposite of humility and repentance, and as a result, they would face sever judgment (vs 35).

Though they would seek the help of Egypt and Assyria, flipping back and forth as they sought the support of these super powers, they would still be put to shame. They would not be delivered or find the freedom they were seeking for, but instead would be led into exile with their hands on their heads as prisoners. The nations they attempted to trust in had been rejected by the Lord and He was the only One who could truly help (vs 36-37).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you seek to live as a servant of God, or do you attempt to overthrow His commands so you can live in “freedom?” Much of the world thinks that following God enslaves a person to religious rules, but the opposite is actually true. When you follow God, you are set free from the bondage of sin. Your choice to become a slave to God is actually a choice for true freedom. This didn’t make sense to the Israelites and doesn’t often make sense to the world, but it does make sense to those who are followers of Christ.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for the freedom found in following Him.*
- * *Ask God to help you embrace your role as a servant of God and a bride of Christ.*
- * *Praise God because He is the ultimate Father, Master and Husband.*

What did they accuse God of (vs 29)?

How have you been tempted to accuse God of doing wrong when things don’t work out well for you?

What did God say Israel had done (vs 29)?

How do you see this type of “blame game” play out in our society today?

What did God do to the children of Judah (vs 30)?

What didn’t the children do (vs 30)?

Why is it so important for you to listen to the correction of God?

What did they do to the prophets (vs 30)?

How did they act towards the godly men in the land (vs 30)?

What did God ask if He had been (vs 31)?

Why do you think He asked this?

What did the people declare about their role before God (vs 31)?

What did God compare Judah’s actions to (vs 32)?

What had Judah done (vs 32)?

What do you think verse 33 is saying?

How did Judah treat the poor (vs 34)?

What did Judah declare about their actions (vs 35)?

Who did Judah flip-flop back and forth seeking help from (vs 36)?

What was going to be the end result (vs 37)? Why?

“Many Lovers”

Study: Jeremiah 3:1-10

Reading: Matthew 12:38-42, James 4:1-10

Memory: Isaiah 40:6

The hardest situations I have had to deal with as a pastor over the years have come when a spouse chooses to have sexual relations outside of marriage. The pain and rejection the faithful spouse experiences and the guilt the unfaithful spouse goes through often tears a marriage apart. Though there can be forgiveness, healing and restoration, this only happens through time and the great work of the Holy Spirit.

Today, we are going to see how Judah was compared to an unfaithful spouse. They should have learned from the destruction of Israel, yet they failed to learn from her adultery and went down the same path.

What Does the Bible Say?

God presented a scenario of an adulterous marriage where a wife chose to leave her husband and marry another man. He then asked if the first husband would be willing to take her back since she would have been polluted. He then applied that illustration to what Judah had done, describing how the nation had acted like a whore and had been involved with many sexual relationships apart from her original husband (vs 1).

The people of Judah were told to look around and see the altars and idols that were all over the land. It was hard to find a place where there was no evidence of this false worship. They were compared to prostitutes waiting for customers and they had become like nomads who were sitting in a desert all alone as a result of their actions. As a punishment and warning from God, He had chosen to hold back the spring rains that could often be counted on. Yet, these difficulties did not challenge the people to turn back to God. They called God their God and honored him with their lips, but they went on doing the evil they had been doing all along. They sought God’s forgiveness and the favor of God, but did all this without turning from their wicked ways (vs 2-5).

Though it is hard to tell exactly when this prophecy was written, Jeremiah declared that this prophecy took place during the reign of

Josiah. Most likely this took place before the reforms that Josiah had enacted and could have been one of the great influences on him to turn the nation back to God.

God was hoping that Judah would learn from what happened to Israel. Israel had established false places of worship all over the land and had acted like a wife who chose to reject her husband. God brought things to the nation in order to get them to return back to Him, but they chose not to. God made it clear that He was going to divorce the nation if the nation did not turn back to Him, yet they disregarded the divorce papers and continued in their wicked ways. Judah had seen what God had done to their “sister,” the Northern tribes of Israel, but they refused to think the same would happen to them. Judah refused to recognize that her sin was great and looked at all the false gods they were following as a light offense to God. They turned to God at times, but much of this was on the outside and not with a change of heart (vs 6-10).

How Does this Apply to Me?

2 Timothy 3:5 describes many selfish people who have “the appearance of godliness, but denying its power.” Though Paul described how this will happen more and more as the return of Christ gets closer, it wasn’t anything new. This is similar to how the people of Judah were described. They thought they were okay as they gave lip service to God, worshiping Him with some of their actions, but their hearts were bent on chasing after other gods. In today’s society, this would describe many people who attend church on a regular basis and have a form of godliness, but don’t truly seek after God in their daily personal lives. They often want the benefits associated with following God, but don’t want to give up the deeds of the flesh. It is vital that you be on guard for this type of attitude in your life. Listen to God when He warns you. Turn back to Him with your whole heart. Choose to make Him your only spiritual husband.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Thank God for His grace and mercy towards you.
- * Ask God to help you be wholly committed to Him.

Thought for the day

What scenario was presented in verse 1?

What point was God trying to make (vs 1)?

What did God call Judah (vs 1)?

Why do you think He used such strong language?

What did God want them to look at (vs 2)?

Why is it important to recognize your sin for what it is?

What two types of people did God compare Judah to (vs 2)? Why?

What did God do as a result of their sin (vs 3)?

How did Judah respond (vs 3)?

What did they say when they called out to God (vs 4)?

Why did they think that God would eventually forgive them (vs 4)?

What did they choose not to do (vs 5)?

Why did God want them to look at what happened to Israel (vs 6)?

What had Israel done (vs 6)?

What did Judah see (vs 7-8)?

Why do you think Judah still continued in sin (vs 8)?

How did Judah look at her sin (vs 9)?

Why is a “stone” and “tree” mentioned (vs 9)?

What did Judah choose not to do (vs 10)?

What did they attempt to do instead (vs 10)?

“Direct Presence”

Study: Jeremiah 3:11-25

Reading: Jeremiah 30:18-24, Revelation 21:1-8

Memory: Isaiah 40:6

Online meetings have become a normal part of our culture today. While there is much good that can be accomplished at these meetings, I have found that online meetings don’t seem to have the effect of face to face meetings, especially in the church realm. It is nice seeing someone on the screen when you talk to them, but it is so much nicer when you are directly present with them.

Today, we are going to see how one day the direct presence of God would dwell with men. There would no longer be a need for things like the ark of the covenant because the presence of God would dwell among His people.

What Does the Bible Say?

In a powerful statement God declared that the nation of Israel was more righteous than the nation of Judah. Judah had immersed itself in wickedness during the reign of Manasseh and Amon and during the first several years of the reign of Josiah. Though the history of Judah compared to the history of Israel showed that Judah had many more righteous years, the last few before this prophecy was given revealed that Judah had fallen deep into sin. Jeremiah was told to go to Judah and call Judah to return to God. God would forgive their sins and look on them with mercy. Though He was angered because of their sin and caused them great harm, God could not stay angry at His chosen people forever. This forgiveness would only be experienced if they first acknowledged their guilt. They would need to admit that they had chosen to seek after foreign gods and that they chose to disobey the voice of the Lord. If they would return to the Lord He would bring them back from the lands that many of the people were scattered to (vs 11-14).

When this restoration takes place (this is a picture of the millennial kingdom), God will place leaders over them who will be wise and understanding men. They will feed the people spiritually and lead them into righteousness. The land will be bountiful and the people will

prosper. They will no longer need to focus their attention on the ark of the covenant, which was a symbol of the presence of God, because the Lord Himself will sit on the throne in Jerusalem. All the nations of the earth will come to Jerusalem to worship and people will no longer follow their own desires. Judah and Israel will be reunited into one kingdom and Israelites will come from all over to dwell in the land (vs 15-18).

God's desire for Israel was for them to prosper in the land He had given them, but they chose not to follow His ways. They became like an unfaithful wife who left her husband to seek after other men. As a result, God brought punishment to Israel, leaving many of them weeping because of the great disaster (vs 19-21).

All of the Israelites were called to return to God, and if they did, they would find healing. Their religious ceremonies that involved sexual orgies were things that would not truly satisfy. True salvation and satisfaction would only come from God (vs 22-23).

Because of their evil, they watched all of the things that their fathers had worked for taken away. Enemies would not only steal their possessions, but would take their children and there was nothing they could do about it. God wanted them to see the shame in their actions and understand that the judgement they were facing was from Him. They experienced all their tragedies because they chose not to obey the voice of God (vs 24-25).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Though judgement is mentioned several times, that is not the focus of this passage. The focus is the call of God for the people to recognize their sin and repent. He wanted to forgive them and wanted to restore them. One day this will happen during the millennial reign, but He didn't want them to wait that long. He wanted them to repent and seek forgiveness immediately. He wanted them to know that their tragedies were a result of their actions and that He was calling them back to Himself. God is continually calling His children to Himself. He wants you to recognize your sin and turn back to Him. Make it a point to examine your life on a regular basis to make sure that you are right before God.

Thought for the day

What did God declare about Israel (vs 11)?

What did God call Judah to do (vs 12)?

What did God want them to admit (vs 13)?

How did God describe Judah (vs 14)?

What will God give the nation one day (vs 15)?

What will they no longer need (vs 16)? Why not?

What will happen in Jerusalem (vs 17)?

What will they not do (vs 17)?

What is going to happen in the land of Israel (vs 18)?

What had God done for Israel (vs 19)?

What did God want them to call Him (vs 19)?

Why do you think this is significant?

What was Judah compared to (vs 20)?

Why was there a voice of weeping heard (vs 21)?

What was God calling the people to do (vs 22)?

What did God want to do (vs 22)?

What did God want them to realize about Himself (vs 22)?

What did they do in place of God (vs 23)?

What had the Israelites been a part of for many years (vs 24)?

What should have the Israelites realized (vs 25)?

“Plantable Ground”

Study: Jeremiah 4:1-10

Reading: Matthew 13:1-23

Memory: Isaiah 40:6

When my wife and I first got married, she wanted to try having a garden. I helped her get the ground ready and plant the seeds. Though the plants started to grow, the weeds also grew. Because we were busy much of the summer taking personal and church trips, we neglected to weed the garden and by the harvest time, the garden produced very little. The next year, I did things a little different and planted the rows far enough apart so I could get the rototiller between each row, allowing for soft ground and easy weed removal. What the garden produced the second year was far more than what it produced the first year.

Today, we are going to see how God wants the soil of our hearts to be ready to receive His Word and for us to make sure the weeds of sin are removed from our lives.

What Does the Bible Say?

God’s great desire was that all of the Israelites turn back to Him. They could if they wanted to. All they needed to do was throw away their idols and choose to seek after the ways of God. Turning to God wasn’t just a removal of evil, but that evil was to be replaced with righteousness. They were to live in truth and carry out proper justice. By doing so they would in turn be a blessing to all the nations around them and all the nations would look to them and bless them (vs 1-2).

The people were challenged to break up their hard hearts and to remove the thorns from their lives. This farming illustration pictured how the ground would need to be worked up and soft in order to receive the seed. The thorns would also have to be removed in order for those seeds to grow and prosper. The issue they were having was not a problem with the seed, but the ground. Jesus used a similar illustration to this in one of His parables, reminding us of the importance of having our hearts ready to receive the Word of God (vs 3).

Another illustration used here was that of removing the foreskin.

Basically, this was a reference to the act of circumcision and the need to remove the excess things from their lives that were leading them in the wrong direction. If they chose to continue to harden their hearts to His commands and His Word and chose to keep the excess things in their lives that were not helpful to them, God was going to bring great judgement upon them (vs 4).

Verse 5 pictures a great proclamation going throughout the land of Judah as if an army was approaching. This declaration told the people to gather in the cities because an enemy army was approaching. God was going to bring an army from the north that would bring great destruction. This army was compared to a lion that was set out to kill and destroy. This enemy was going to cause great destruction and cause the cities to become like wastelands. The end result would be great sadness and lamenting. This was all going to be a result of the fierce anger of the Lord over the sin and rejection of His people (vs 5-8).

Though this destruction had been prophesied over and over, many people will become angry with God and be astounded that He would allow this to happen. They thought since they were God’s children that everything would always go well and they wouldn’t have any problems. They would be completely shocked when God’s judgment would finally come (vs 9-10).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you listen to the warnings of God or do you deceive yourself into thinking that God won’t punish you for your sin? Is your heart soft ground to receive the Word of God or is your heart hardened to what God is trying to tell you? Are you letting the things of this life choke out what God wants to do in and through you? Are you allowing the excess things of this world to pull your attention away from God? God’s Word is very powerful, but at the same time you have to soften your heart to receive the Word and let it grow in you. Examine your heart today to make sure it is soft and free of weeds and excess so that you are allowing God to change you.

Thought for the day

What did God want Israel to do (vs 1)?

What did they need to remove (vs 1)?

What are some things in our lives today that God wants removed?

What did they need to add to their lives (vs 2)?

How can you live in truth?

How can you live in justice?

How can you live in righteousness?

What would be the end result if they turned back to God (vs 2)?

What illustration did God use in verse 3? What does it mean?

How do you think your heart can become hard?

What are “weeds” that can spring up in your life?

What were the people of Judah to remove (vs 4)?

What are things in your life that God may want you to remove?

What was God going to do if they continued in their ways (vs 5)?

What did verse 5 picture?

What were they told to do in verse 6? Why?

What was the destroyer compared to (vs 7)? Why?

Why would they put on sackcloth (vs 8)?

What will fail in the days of destruction (vs 9)?

What would the people say (vs 10)? How was this wrong thinking?

Memory Verses

Isaiah 40:1 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. 3 A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God? 4 Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. 5 Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together. The LORD has spoken!" 6 A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.