

A Trek Through Jeremiah 3 - 2:1-19

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September 21, 2025

For today

Indictment (part 1) 2:1-19

- Covenant broken 2:1-8
- Exchanging Yahweh for pagan gods 2:9-13
- Exchanging Yahweh for pagan nations 2:14-19

Indictment (part 1) 2:1-19

Covenant broken 2:1-13

Youth 2:1-3

Jeremiah 2:1–3 (LSB)

1 Now the word of Yahweh came to me saying,

2 “Go and call out in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says Yahweh, “I remember concerning you the lovingkindness of your youth, The love of your betrothals, Your walking after Me in the wilderness, Through a land not sown.

3 “Israel was holy to Yahweh, The first of His produce. All who ate of it became guilty; Evil came upon them,” declares Yahweh.”

- V1-2a Summons
 - Re 1:7 you shall go...you shall speak
 - Go and call in the ears of Jerusalem. Where to go.
 - Saying... What to say
- V2b-3 Remembrance
 - I remember concerning you. Reminding Judah about themselves. To provoke repentance.
 - Four things remembered. Jeremiah idealizing.
 - Faithfulness: The lovingkindness of your youth.
 - Lovingkindness. Heb hesed. Faithfulness, loyalty based on the covenant made at Sinai.
 - Of your youth. After Sinai in the wilderness. Israel lost faith but did not go after false gods. Contrast the current apostasy.
 - Love: The love of your betrothals
 - Betrothals. Lit “being a bride”
 - Affection of a new bride for her husband
 - Trust: Your walking after Me in the wilderness through a land not sown
 - Following her Husband through a wild and uninhabited land. Contrast Egypt civilized and fertile
 - Looking to Him for provision, protection, direction
 - Consecration: Israel was holy to Yahweh
 - The first of His produce.
 - Re the offering of first fruits
 - Ex 23:19 “You shall bring the choice first fruits of your ground into the house of Yahweh your God.
 - Israel was the first nation to worship Yahweh
 - All who ate of it became guilty; evil came upon them
 - Ate of it. Troubled Israel.
 - Became guilty. Because the offering belonged to Yahweh.
 - Evil came upon them. Judgment for taking what belonged to Yahweh. As Amalek who attacked Israel: Ex 17:14...I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.
 - Declares Yahweh. For emphasis

Unfaithfulness 2:4-8

Jeremiah 2:4–8 (LSB)

4Hear the word of Yahweh, O house of Jacob and all the families of the house of Israel.

5Thus says Yahweh, “What injustice did your fathers find in Me, That they went far from Me And walked after vanity and became vain?

6“They did not say, ‘Where is Yahweh Who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, Who led us through the wilderness, Through a land of deserts and of pits, Through a land of drought and of the shadow of death, Through a land that no one crossed And where no man inhabited?’

7“I brought you into the fruitful land To eat its fruit and its good things. But you came and defiled My land, And My inheritance you made an abomination.

8“The priests did not say, ‘Where is Yahweh?’ And those who handle the law did not know Me; The shepherds also transgressed against Me, And the prophets prophesied by Baal And walked after things that did not profit.

- V4-5a Introduction
 - To both Israel and Judah
- V5b Accusation
 - What injustice did your fathers find in Me?
 - Rhetorical question. Answer none.
 - That they went far from Me And walked after vanity and became vain
 - What Israel did: (1) left Yahweh (2) went after vanity
 - Vanity.
 - Emptiness, worthlessness.
 - Heb he.bel. Wordplay on name of Canaanite god Baal.
 - Political terms
 - Went far from. Renounced allegiance.
 - Walked after. Became a vassal of.
 - Became vain. The result of walking after false gods.
- V6a What Israel did (in general)
 - They. All Israel.
 - did not say, “Where is Yahweh?” Stopped seeking Him.
- V6b-7a What Yahweh had done for them
 - Who brought us up out of the land of Egypt. Rescued them from oppression.
 - Who led us through the wilderness. Uninhabitable, trackless.
 - I brought you into the fruitful land.
 - Lit “land of Carmel”; rich and fertile.
 - As promised.

- V7b What Israel did
 - You came. Brought into the land.
 - Defiled My land.
 - Belonged to Yahweh; given to Israel in stewardship
 - Israel made it unclean.
 - My inheritance you made an abomination
 - My inheritance. Israel
 - Abomination. Detestable thing
 - Ritual: idolatry, unclean food, mixed marriages, etc
 - Ethical: wickedness, oppression, etc
- V8 Accusations against the leaders
 - Priests
 - Intermediaries between the people and Yahweh.
 - Responsible for sacrifices, interpreting His word, divine oracles.
 - Stopped seeking Yahweh; indifferent to Him.
 - Those who handle the law
 - Levites.
 - Responsible for teaching God's law.
 - Did not know Him. Knowledge and relationship.
 - Shepherds.
 - Civil authorities.
 - Rebels transgressing.
 - Prophets
 - Spoke the divine word.
 - Looked to Baal rather than Yahweh.
 - Walked after things which did not profit. Heb wordplay on the name of Baal.

Exchanging Yahweh for pagan gods 2:9-13

Jeremiah 2:9–13 (LSB)

9“Therefore I will yet contend with you,” declares Yahweh, “And with your sons’ sons I will contend.

10“For cross to the coastlands of Kittim and see, And send to Kedar and perceive closely And see if there has been such a thing as this!

11“Has a nation changed gods Though they were not gods? But My people have changed their glory For that which does not profit.

12“Be appalled, O heavens, at this, And be horribly afraid, be very devastated,” declares Yahweh.

13“For My people have done two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns That can hold no water.

- V9 Charges brought
 - Therefore. Because of v5-8
 - I will yet contend with you
 - Legal illustration
 - Contend with: Bringing a formal charge of breaking the covenant.
 - Politically like a vassal breaking a covenant with their ruler.
 - With your sons’ sons. Multi-generational unless the sons repent.
- V10-11 An action unheard of
 - Kittim (western islands) to Kedar (eastern desert). From west to east: the whole world
 - Such a thing as this! Exclamation. Unheard of.
 - Has a nation changed their gods though they were not gods.
 - Pagan gods were associated with nature which didn’t change.
 - So pagans didn’t change their gods even though they were nothing.
 - But My people have changed their glory For that which does not profit.
 - Their glory. Yahweh.
 - Israel has changed their God, who is the true God for worthlessness. Wordplay on the name of Baal.
- V12 Heaven appalled
 - The heavens personified.
 - They consistently obey Yahweh.
 - They are called as a witness against Judah.
 - Triple response with superlatives.
 - Appalled. Astonished in a bad way.
 - Horribly afraid. Of the coming judgment.
 - Very devastated. Made waste.

- V13 Summing up
 - Two evils
 - Illustration of water in a dry land
 - They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water
 - Forsaken their God.
 - Fountain of living water
 - Plentiful supply
 - Free
 - Pure, life-giving
 - To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns That can hold no water.
 - Judean farmers who did not have a spring on their property collected rainwater and stored it in cisterns cut into limestone. These typically leaked and had to be repeatedly sealed.
 - Lots of work.
 - Stagnant water.
 - Run dry when needed most.

Exchanging Yahweh for pagan nations 2:14-19

Jeremiah 2:14–19 (LSB)

14“Is Israel a slave? Or is he a homeborn slave? Why has he become plunder?

15“The young lions have roared at him; They have given forth their voice. And they have made his land a desolation; His cities have been turned into ruin, without inhabitant.

16“Also the men of Memphis and Tahpanhes Have shaved the top of your head.

17“Have you not done this to yourself By your forsaking Yahweh your God When He led you in the way?

18“But now what are you doing on the road to Egypt, To drink the waters of the Nile? Or what are you doing on the road to Assyria, To drink the waters of the River?

19“Your own evil will chastise you, And your acts of faithlessness will reprove you; Know therefore and see that it is evil and bitter For you to forsake Yahweh your God, And the dread of Me is not in you,” declares Lord Yahweh of hosts.

- V14 Bondage
 - Is Israel a slave? Or is he a homeborn slave? Israel is presently in bondage to the great nations.
 - Why has he become plunder?
 - Is Yahweh unable to rescue him? No
 - Answer in v17: Israel has done this to herself.
- V15-16 Devastation and shame
 - Illustration of a lion capturing prey
 - Young lions. The lion was the symbol of Assyria.
 - Made his land a desolation.
 - Multiple campaigns against Israel and Judah.
 - Israel conquered; ten tribes dispersed.
 - Judah had survived only through divine intervention.
 - Men of Memphis and Tahpanhes. Egyptians.
 - Shaved the top of your head. Brought Judah to shame.
- V17 Root cause
 - Have you not done this to yourself?
 - Bondage and devastation and shame. All Judah's own doing..
 - By your forsaking Yahweh your God.
 - V5 They went far from Me
 - V11 They have changed their glory for worthlessness
 - V13 They have forsaken me
 - When He led you in the way
 - Yahweh was leading Judah in the way to bring glory to Him and to them.
 - They turned from Him to worthlessness and became worthless.

- V18 Lesson not learned
 - But now what are you doing. Judah has not learned.
 - On the road. Going to make alliances with Egypt and Assyria.
 - Drink the waters.
 - Re v13. Looking to the nations for life-giving water
 - Become a vassal state to the major power.
 - Usually meant accepting their gods.
- V19 Discipline
 - Your own evil will chastise you, And your acts of faithlessness will reprove you
 - Judah's political alliances will be the rod of her discipline.
 - Know therefore and see that it is evil and bitter For you to forsake Yahweh your God
 - Evil: Not good.
 - Bitter: Not pleasant.
 - There could have been good and pleasant things if Judah had remained faithful.
 - And the dread of Me is not in you
 - No fear of God
 - declares Lord Yahweh of hosts.
 - Sovereign over all nations.
 - Can bring them to discipline His people.

Application: Exchanging our Lord

Jer 2:5 they went far from Me And walked after vanity and became vain.

- Turned away from Yahweh
- Subjected themselves to worthless pagan gods.
- Became themselves worthless.

Ja 1:12 ...for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

- Has the angry man turned away from the Lord?
- What has he walked after?
- Is he useful or worthless to the Lord?

References

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