

A Trek Through Jeremiah 4 - 2:20-37

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Indictment (part 2) 2:20-28

- Exchanging Yahweh for pagan gods 2:20-28

Judgment 2:29-37

Exchanging Yahweh for pagan gods 2:20-28

Harlotry 2:20

Jeremiah 2:20 (LSB)

20“For long ago I broke your yoke And tore off your bonds; But you said, ‘I will not serve!’ For on every high hill And under every green tree You have lain down as a harlot.

- For long ago I broke your yoke And tore off your bonds
 - Your. Feminine plural through 2:32. Speaking to the nation.
 - Two interpretations
 - For long ago I broke your yoke.
 - Re the Exodus. Reminding Israel what He has done for them.
 - For long ago You broke your yoke.
 - Rejecting the covenant. 2:5 ...they went far from Me And walked after vanity and became vain
 - Their rebellion has been going on for a long time.
- But you said, ‘I will not serve!’
 - Israel’s response: rejecting their obligation under the Sinai covenant
 - Turn to Ex 19
 - Israel at Mt Sinai
 - V4 What Yahweh had done for Israel
 - V5 What Yahweh required of them
 - To listen to His voice (hear and obey)
 - To keep the covenant
 - V5-6 What Yahweh would do for them
 - Make them His treasured possession
 - Make them a kingdom of priests (intermediaries)
 - Make them a holy nation (separated unto Him)
 - V8 What Israel said
 - All that Yahweh has spoken we will do
- For on every high hill And under every green tree You have lain down as a harlot.
 - Baal was the Canaanite god of the land.
 - The Canaanites worshiped Baal on hills (near to heavens) and in groves (places of fertility). Worship involved sexual intercourse with religious prostitutes to bring fertility.
 - Israel pictured as a faithless wife abandoning Yahweh her husband for a life of prostitution with false gods.

Degenerate vine 2:21

Jeremiah 2:21 (LSB)

21“Yet I planted you a choice vine, A completely true seed. How then have you turned yourself before Me Into the degenerate shoots of a foreign vine?

- Illustration from viniculture.
- What Yahweh did
 - Planted you a choice vine. Lit Sorek vine: Variety grown in Judah yielding rich purple grapes.
 - Completely true seed. All right and faithful.
- What Israel did
 - Turned yourself into degenerate shoots. Become corrupt, immoral, depraved
 - Of a foreign vine. Not of Yahweh.
 - Before Me. In His presence.
- As Is 5:1-7. Yahweh's vineyard: planted with choice vines; tended carefully; produced worthless grapes. What will I do with My vineyard? I will lay it waste.

Stained 2:22

Jeremiah 2:22 (LSB)

22“Although you wash yourself with lye And use much soap, The stain of your iniquity is before Me,” declares Lord Yahweh.

- Although you wash yourself with lye And use much soap
 - Illustration from common laundering
 - Wash yourself. Re Josiah's religious reforms. Much effort to remove the forms of idol worship.
- “The stain of your iniquity is before Me”, declares Lord Yahweh.
 - Hearts not changed: no confession of sin; no true repentance.
 - Before Yahweh who knows the heart (Jer 17:9)

Faithless and lusting 2:23-24

Jeremiah 2:23–24 (LSB)

23“How can you say, ‘I am not defiled; I have not walked after the Baals’? Look at your way in the valley! Know what you have done! You are a swift young camel entangling her ways,
24A wild donkey accustomed to the wilderness, That sniffs the wind in her passion. In the time of her heat who can turn her away? All who seek her will not become weary; In her month they will find her.

- “How can you say, ‘I am not defiled; I have not walked after the Baals’?
 - Israel asserting their innocence. Because they maintained the temple rituals.
- Look at your way in the valley! Know what you have done!
 - Call to repentance.
 - Valley of Ben-hinnon on the west and south sides of Jerusalem. Site of worship of Baal and Moloch.
 - Know what you have done. Observe and consider and come to know the truth about your behavior.
- Two illustrations from animal husbandry
- You are a swift young camel entangling her ways
 - Young female camels are unreliable, ungainly, easily disturbed, often run about recklessly.
 - Likewise Israel was fickle and unreliable, running here and there.
- A wild donkey...
 - Female donkey, not domesticated, not trained for work.
 - In her passion.
 - Female donkeys in heat are almost violent in their search for a mate.
 - They sniff for the scent of the male’s urine then run after him and will not be denied.
 - Likewise Israel pursued idolatry with a fierce passion and would not repent.

Addicted 2:25

Jeremiah 2:25 (LSB)

25“Keep your feet from being barefoot And your throat from thirst; But you said, ‘It is hopeless! No! For I have loved strangers, And after them I will walk.’

- Keep your feet from being barefoot And your throat from thirst.
 - Jeremiah pleads with the people not to wear themselves out chasing idols.
 - Fulfilled in the Babylonian exile.
- But you said, ‘It is hopeless! No! For I have loved strangers, And after them I will walk.’
 - Israel’s response
 - It is hopeless. I cannot stop.
 - No! Her decision.
 - I have loved strangers. Strange gods. Where her affections lie.
 - After them I will walk. Serving idols.

Shamed 2:26-28

Jeremiah 2:26–28 (LSB)

26“As the thief is shamed when he is found, So the house of Israel is shamed; They, their kings, their princes, And their priests and their prophets,

27Who say to a tree, ‘You are my father,’ And to a stone, ‘You gave me birth.’ For they have turned their back to Me And not their face; But in the time when their evil comes they will say, ‘Arise and save us.’

28“But where are your gods Which you made for yourself? Let them arise, if they can save you In the time when your evil comes; For according to the number of your cities Are your gods, O Judah.

- V26 Caught in the act
 - Illustration of a thief caught in the act: He knows that he has been caught doing something wrong.
 - The house of Israel is shamed. Caught in the act of breaking the covenant that they agreed to: abandoning Yahweh and going after false gods.
 - They, their kings, their princes, And their priests and their prophets,
 - The people and their leaders. As 2:8.
 - Through the reigns of multiple kings.
- V27 What Israel did
 - Who say to a tree, ‘You are my father,’ And to a stone, ‘You gave me birth.’
 - Worshipping Canaanite gods
 - Tree. Wooden Asherah pole representing the female deity.
 - Stone. Stone pillar representing the male deity.
 - Gender confusion: female called father; male gives birth.
 - For they have turned their back to Me And not their face;
 - Turned away from Yahwen. Their face is toward the false gods.
 - But in the time when their evil comes they will say, ‘Arise and save us.’
 - Time of evil will come.
 - Seeing Yahweh as a servant to meet their need.
- V28 Helpless gods
 - Jeremiah being sarcastic.
 - But where are your gods Which you made for yourself?
 - They should call upon the false gods which they have chosen.
 - Which they made.
 - Let them arise, if they can save you In the time when your evil comes;
 - Man-made gods are dead and can do nothing.
 - As 1 Ki 18:29 Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal and they called upon their god: ...there was no voice, no one answered, and no one paid attention.
 - For according to the number of your cities Are your gods, O Judah.
 - Not literal. A baal was a god of a particular location.
 - In all their gods there must be one who can save. But there will be none.

Judgment 2:29-37

Futile contention 2:29-30

Jeremiah 2:29–30 (LSB)

29“Why do you contend with Me? You have all transgressed against Me,” declares Yahweh.

30“In vain I have struck your sons; They received no discipline. Your sword has devoured your prophets Like a destroying lion.

- V29 Verdict
 - Why do you contend with Me?
 - Legal illustration.
 - Israel seeks to bring charges against Yahweh:
 - We are keeping the covenant: faithfully performing the temple ritual and keeping the law.
 - You have not fulfilled the covenant: we are not completely provided for and ruling the world.
 - You have all transgressed against Me,” declares Yahweh.
 - The Judge declares the truth
- V30 Correction rejected
 - Two means of correction rejected.
 - In vain I have struck your sons; They received no discipline.
 - The Sinai covenant promised that Israel would abound in prosperity and be above all nations if they kept the covenant (Dt 28:1-14).
 - When they did not keep the covenant Yahweh sent affliction; Israel never learned from it.
 - Is 5:1 Where will you be stricken again, As you continue in your rebellion?
 - Your sword has devoured your prophets Like a destroying lion.
 - Yahweh sent prophets to warn His people to turn back to Him.
 - Israel killed them: devoured like a destroying lion.

Faithless bride 2:31-32

Jeremiah 2:31–32 (LSB)

31“O generation, behold the word of Yahweh. Have I been a wilderness to Israel Or a land of thick darkness? Why do My people say, ‘We are free to roam; We will no longer come to You’?

32“Can a virgin forget her ornaments, Or a bride her attire? Yet My people have forgotten Me Days without number.

- O generation, behold the word of Yahweh.
 - Call to the current generation to examine the word and gain understanding.
- Have I been a wilderness to Israel Or a land of thick darkness?
 - Reminding Israel of what Yahweh has been like.
 - Wilderness. Uninhabitable.
 - Land of thick darkness. No light. Unseen dangers.
- Why do My people say, ‘We are free to roam; We will no longer come to You’?
 - Denying the covenant which bound them to Yahweh.
 - Choosing to reject the one they are bound to.
- “Can a virgin forget her ornaments, Or a bride her attire? Yet My people have forgotten Me Days without number.
 - Illustration from marriage. Israel became the bride of Yahweh at Sinai.
 - ornaments...attire. Wedding jewelry. Sash identifying a woman as married. Set Israel apart from other nations.
 - Forget. Israel has deliberately forgotten the covenant.
 - Days without number. For a long time.

Deliberate wickedness 2:33-34c

Jeremiah 2:33–34 (LSB)

33“How well you prepare your way To seek love! Therefore even the wicked women You have taught your ways.

34“Also on your skirts is found The lifeblood of the innocent needy; You did not find them breaking in...

- V33 Expert in wickedness
 - Your. Feminine singular. Nation personified for emphasis.
 - How well you prepare your way To seek love!
 - Sarcastic
 - Deliberate planning and preparation for adultery.
 - Therefore even the wicked women You have taught your ways.
 - Experts who can even teach experienced prostitutes.
- V34 Oppressors
 - Also on your skirts is found The lifeblood of the innocent needy.
 - Killing the poor
 - 2 Ki 21:16 Moreover, Manasseh shed very much innocent blood until he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another...
 - You did not find them breaking in
 - No justification. The law allowed killing an intruder but these victims were innocent.
 - Alternately KJV “I have not found it by secret search”. Bloodstains are obvious.

No repentance 2:34d-35

Jeremiah 2:34–35 (LSB)

34 ...But in spite of all these things,

35Yet you said, ‘I am innocent; Surely His anger is turned away from me.’ Behold, I will enter into judgment with you Because you say, ‘I have not sinned.’

- But in spite of all these things. 2:29ff
- Yet you said, ‘I am innocent; Surely His anger is turned away from me.’
 - Innocent of Manassah’s sins not confessed, current idolatry and politics. Re 2:23 I am not defiled.
 - Anger turned away by ritual sacrifices
- Behold, I will enter into judgment with you Because you say, ‘I have not sinned.’
 - Pronounce a verdict.
 - Because they are not repentant.
 - V23 I am not defiled
 - V31 We are free to roam
 - V35 I am innocent...I have not sinned

Sentence 2:36-37

Jeremiah 2:36–37 (LSB)

36“Why do you despise Him so much In changing your way? Also, you will be put to shame by Egypt As you were put to shame by Assyria.

37“From this place also you will go out With your hands on your head; For Yahweh has rejected those in whom you trust, And you will not succeed with them.”

- Why do you despise Him so much In changing your way?
 - Why do you despise Him so much.
 - Lit “Why do you consider it such a small matter...”.
 - Ps 14:1 The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” Not important, does not see, won’t do anything.
 - In changing your way. Leaving Yahweh to go after pagan gods.
- Also, you will be put to shame by Egypt As you were put to shame by Assyria.
 - Shamed by being betrayed by a nation that they had trusted in for security
- From this place also you will go out With your hands on your head
 - Lit “From this also you will go out.
 - From their pagan worship and politics in sorrow when their alliances fail
 - From Jerusalem as captives
- For Yahweh has rejected those in whom you trust, And you will not succeed with them.
 - Yahweh is Lord of nations and history. He controls Judah’s destiny.
 - He is jealous for His people. They have abandoned Him for pagan gods and politics. He will not allow them to succeed.

Application: The enemy within

Jeremiah 2 Israel had forsaken Yahweh, gone after false gods; were a harlot, a degenerate vine, stained with iniquity, defiled, faithless, lusting after apostasy, shamed, transgressors; had rejected the covenant.

Gal 5:16-17 But I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you do not do the things that you want.

- Our flesh is like Israel.
- We deny the flesh by walking in the Spirit

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