

Having A Basic Understanding of Some Old Testament Truths

Part 287 – If A Man Put Away His Wife Through We Have Sinned (Jeremiah 3:1-25)

1. Though Israel played the harlot did they feel shame or understand God's anger?

No: *“(1) They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD. (2) Lift up thine eyes unto the high places, and see where thou hast not been lien with. In the ways hast thou sat for them, as the Arabian in the wilderness; and thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms and with thy wickedness. (3) Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a whore's forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed. (4) Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth? (5) Will he reserve his anger for ever? will he keep it to the end? Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldest” (Jeremiah 3:1-5).*

- The husband who put away his wife, under the Law of Moses (**Deuteronomy 24:1-4**), would not be able to retake the wife.
- Remember, that law was not God's plan (**Matthew 19:3-9**).
- Now, they want God to do what they themselves would not do – take back the treacherous wife (cf. **Romans 2:21-23**).
- They played the spiritual harlot with MANY lovers (**Deuteronomy 31:16**, **Jeremiah 2:20-24**, **Ezekiel 16:26**, **Ezekiel 16:28-29**, and **Hosea 1:1-2**).
- Now, they want to come back to God. How would a man feel after his wife has been used by other men and then wants to come home (**Deuteronomy 22:22**)?
- It is not that God doesn't want them back (**Deuteronomy 4:29-31**). Just consider how dirty they've become.
- God wanted them to consider their ways (**Haggai 1:5; 7**).
- Because of disobedience God withheld the rain from them (**Amos 4:1-8**; cf. **Acts 14:17**).
- In times of correction they cried to God (**Jeremiah 31:18**).
- They questioned God's lasting anger (**Psalms 85:5**) though they should have known He would not retain His anger (**Psalms 103:8-9**).

2. Did Judah learn when God put away Israel?

No: *“(6) The LORD said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. (7) And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. (8) And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. (9) And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks. (10) And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned*

unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the LORD. (11) And the LORD said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah” (Jeremiah 3:6-11).

- In the days of Josiah the king (**Jeremiah 1:1-2**; cf. **II Kings 21:24-23:28** and **II Chronicles 33:25-35:27**) God calls attention to Israel’s sins.
- God’s call for restoration was refused so He put them away (**II Kings 17:14-18**).
- Judah didn’t learn from that (**II Kings 17:19**).
- Their adulterous ways (**Hosea 4:12**).
- Their fake repentance (**Deuteronomy 5:28-29**, **Psalms 78:36-37**, **Isaiah 29:13**, and **Ezekiel 33:31**).
- In verse 11 we see Judah was worse in the sight of God because they didn’t learn from Israel. In application to us, we are given more than they had so what do you think is expected of us (**Luke 12:41-48**)? Shouldn’t we learn from the mistakes they made (**I Corinthians 10:1-12**)?

3. What did God want backsliding Israel to do?

Return back to Him: *“(12) Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the LORD; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the LORD, and I will not keep anger for ever. (13) Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD” (Jeremiah 3:12-13).*

- A return to God brings forgiveness (**Isaiah 44:22** and **Ezekiel 18:30**).
- They needed to acknowledge their errors (**Proverbs 28:13** and **I John 1:8-9**).

4. What did God say He would do if they returned since He was married to them?

Bring them to Zion, give them pastors, and increase the land: *“(14) Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: (15) And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. (16) And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more” (Jeremiah 3:14-16).*

- God appealed to them as a husband to a wife He wants back (**Isaiah 54:5-7** and **Hosea 2:19-21**).
- He promised them overseers if they returned to Him (**Isaiah 30:18-21** and **Ezekiel 34:22-31**) because their present overseers had failed (**Jeremiah 10:21** and **Jeremiah 12:10**).
- The ark of the covenant of the Lord is gone and will not be brought back, which will prepare them looking forward toward the New Covenant (**Hebrews 9:1-17**).

5. What city would all nations gather unto calling it the throne of the Lord?

Jerusalem: *“At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart”* (**Jeremiah 3:17**).

- **Isaiah 2:2-3, Micah 4:1-2, Zachariah 2:10-12, and Acts 2:1-47.**

6. In the time of unity and the return to God, what did the Lord want to be called?

Father: *“(18) In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers. (19) But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the hosts of nations? and I said, Thou shalt call me, My father; and shalt not turn away from me”* (**Jeremiah 3:18-19**).

- **II Corinthians 6:14-18, Galatians 3:26-4:7, and I John 3:1-2.**

7. How did Israel deal with God from their youth until the time Jeremiah prophesied?

Treacherously and in disobedience: *“(20) Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD. (21) A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel: for they have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the LORD their God. (22) Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God. (23) Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the LORD our God is the salvation of Israel. (24) For shame hath devoured the labour of our fathers from our youth; their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. (25) We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us: for we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God”* (**Jeremiah 3:20-25**).

- Back to how this chapter started (**Jeremiah 3:1-5**). They dealt treacherously with the Lord (**Hosea 5:7**).
- They perverted their way (**Isaiah 47:10**). As we’ve already learned, this is complete doom for them (**Job 33:27-28**).
- It was right and wise to return to God (**Hosea 6:1-3**).
- It was vain to hope in their idols (**Isaiah 44:9-19, Isaiah 45:20, and Jeremiah 10:14-15**).
- Salvation is only in the Lord (**Psalms 68:19, Psalms 121:2, Lamentations 3:26, John 14:6, and Acts 4:10-12**).
- Shame is the result of their actions (**Proverbs 13:5; 13:18**).
- Generations of disobedience have led them down this road (**Deuteronomy 9:24, I Samuel 8:7-8, Acts 7:51, and Romans 10:21**).