



INTRODUCTION:

The Wages of the Harlot

Chapter 3:1–5 – An Estranged Wife Called Home

The chapter opens with the picture of a wife who has left her husband for many lovers. By the law of Deuteronomy 24:1–4, that wife could never be welcomed back—yet the LORD asks, “*Would you now return to Me?*” (v.1). ¹Jeremiah used that law to teach Israel, that they must not expect the LORD to forgive them so easily. The people had behaved like prostitutes. They worshipped the local false gods on the tops of the hills (v.2). The LORD is the One who controls nature, and now there is no rain in the Spring, and Israel is still looking like a prostitute refusing to be ashamed; still being unfaithful, and it is like a contagious disease that overcomes the whole land (v.3). They now ask for help from the LORD, for He has always been their Father, even after droughts and discipline. Judah merely “*puts on a show*” of repentance, for they didn’t change their behavior (vv.4–5).

Chapter 3:6–10 – The Faithless Sisters

During King Josiah’s reign, the LORD reminds Jeremiah how the northern kingdom (“Israel” exiled by the Assyrians) practiced the same spiritual adultery. Israel had worshipped false gods under every green tree (v.6). “Judah”, the southern kingdom watched it all, and felt no fear. She copied the same sins. They failed to respect the LORD. and still “*did not return to the LORD with all her heart. but only in pretense*” (v.7). The LORD gave notice of divorce to Israel. He allowed the Assyrians to take Israel away from their own country. And Judah refused to learn from Israel’s experience. Instead, Judah had followed Israel’s same example, and the country became unclean (vv.8-9). Judah, did not come back to God completely. They only pretended to respect God’ (v.10).

LESSON:

I. JEREMIAH 3:11

3:11 And the Lord said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah. The LORD called them through Jeremiah “**The Backsliding Israel**”, those who have wandered from their faith; their God, and returned to their old sinful habits, forgetting what they’ve been taught; not going forward but backwards. What’s the accountability between Israel and Judah? Well, ‘*Both Israel and Judah have not been loyal to God. But Israel was not as guilty as Judah.*’ This meant that the accountability rests on Judah who willfully pretended to be unaware. Judah had seen what Israel did, and the consequences of Israel’s disobedience, but Judah had failed to learn from what they saw, and willfully committed the same sins with hypocritical pretense. That’s like pointing the finger at others, while doing the same thing! So, Judah pretended to be loyal, having an appearance of worship while being treacherous to the LORD engaging in sinful idolatry. They didn’t heed to the warnings. And Israel was downright

¹ <https://www.easyenglish.bible/bible-commentary/jeremiah1-10-lbw.htm>
<https://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>



PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

idolatrous, not even pretending before God. God sees everything and He has standards!

II. JEREMIAH 3:12-14

3:12 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. Jeremiah is told to go and proclaim these words toward a particular place, specifically—the Northern Kingdom. In 722 BC the Assyrians had taken away the ten tribes of the northern kingdom (Israel), and made them prisoners in the Assyrian country. The LORD told the people in Israel to sincerely turn back to Him. If they did, He would not continue with His anger. He would forgive them, and bring them back to their own country. Again, God is willing to hold back His anger and give mercy toward them if they repent. Then they wouldn't have to stay in exile!

3:13 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. Simple huh? —acknowledge your iniquity; your sin; admit you're guilty; that you have transgressed (disobeyed) against the LORD. That's repentance! Confess; own up to it, that you've transgressed against the LORD. Their sin was them putting their love for false foreign gods (Baal) over their love for the One True God. They've scattered (left traces of) their ways (their evil practices) to the strangers under every green tree. **"Under every green tree"** was symbolic of places such as high hills engaging in pagan rituals, burning incense, and offering sacrifices, thereby committing sins of idolatry and harlotry (whoredom; prostituting themselves). The last words: ***"and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the Lord."*** Yes, disobeying God's voice (commands), and broken the Law God commanded! Exodus 20:2-3, 5 says *"I AM the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I AM a Jealous God..."*

3:14 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:—God is still giving His backsliding children another chance. *"Backsliding"*—The root cause is pride; no continuous prayer life, you've made worldly distractions your god, unforgiveness, and no Word within—meaning no connection with the Spirit of God. You can't continue to be the "light" without the connection of God's Spirit. But God says He's married to them (a husband who is committed to His unfaithful spouse). Only a selective remnant (a few people) because of repentance, returns to Jerusalem. He gathers **one of a city, and two of a family, and He will bring them to Zion:—** (Jerusalem).

III. JEREMIAH 3:15-18

3:15 And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. ²The word **"pastor"** derives from the Latin noun pastor which means **"shepherd"** and is derived from the verb pascere – *"to lead to pasture, set to grazing, cause to eat."* The term **"pastor"** also relates to the role of elders within the New Testament, and is synonymous with the biblical understanding of the word **"minister."** Just as a shepherd cares for sheep, a pastor cares

² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pastor#History>
<https://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>





PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

for the flock of God providing spiritual food (sound doctrine), protection (warning against false teachers causing spiritual danger), and leadership (leading the church with a gentle servant's heart). Shepherd is a metaphor (symbol, comparison, allegory), and often the pastors of the people are called under-shepherds, having a higher standard of accountability, keeping watch over our souls, while Jesus is the Chief Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep. The pastor shall feed His congregation with knowledge and understanding. They are to be a blessing to those they teach and preach to because they have the heart of the Master! The LORD would give to Judah new leaders who would be the LORD's true servants.

3:16 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. God says *“And in those days, when they multiply and increase in the land, they will no longer discuss the ark of the covenant of the LORD.”* The Ark of the Covenant was where the Law of God was kept *“...will never come to mind, and no one will remember it or miss it, nor will another one be made.”* There will be no need to recreate the Ark (the symbol of God's presence) because its purpose will be fulfilled in a new way (in the reality of God's presence). The ceremonial system can be seen as a type of Christ, however, at the death of Christ, the ultimate fulfillment of the covenant law brought the new way when the *“Veil; Curtain”* was torn in two, giving all who believe in Jesus, access to His presence, thereby abolishing the ceremonial system of the law.

3:17 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. *“At that time refers to the shift where they will call Jerusalem The Throne of the LORD. It will not be a hidden box; the Ark of the Covenant, but in the heart of Jerusalem, and in the hearts of the people. And all the nations (the returned exiles: Israel and Judah) will be gathered in Jerusalem to honor the name of the LORD. They will no longer follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts.”* These verses look forward to a Messianic era—the new covenant where the church, the new Jerusalem becomes the center of worship. ³The moral turnaround is—Submission will replace stubbornness. Obedience will replace rebellion—not walking after the imagination of their evil heart because God Himself changes the inner person. The shift connection is a transition from external rituals to internal spiritual intimacy (God's presence within).

3:18 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. *“In those days”* refer to a future time of restoration. The house of Judah represents the Southern Kingdom consisting of Judah and Benjamin. The house of Judah will walk with the house of Israel seeking alliance. How will that happen? — through repentance! They will come together out of the land of the north, to the land that God gave their fathers (ancestors) as an inheritance. God is calling believers into unity everyday through the love of Christ.

³ https://biblehub.com/q/What_does_Jeremiah_3_17_mean.htm
<https://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>





PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

GJW

3:19 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. God took time to express His desires and expectations. He wanted to

be Israel's Father and set them among the children— **"But"** comes through! They had been idolatrous, while He desired their repentance. He desired them to see the actions of a forgiving Father towards his children. He wanted them to stop turning away from Him; stop being unfaithful and; and stop committing spiritual adultery. That's why God asks this question in the KJV: *"But...How shall I put you among the children, and give you a pleasant land, a desired land (the Promise Land), a godly heritage of the hosts of nations?"* God is longing for intimacy, with a promise to bless them without them turning away, and for Israel to call Him *"Father."* Sonship implied inheritance, protection, and identity.

3:20 Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the Lord. God gives the analogy of the marriage of an unfaithful wife that deceitfully; treacherously departed from her husband. This is what the house of Israel had done toward God. They had left the LORD and had worshipped the false gods in that country. No Loyalty—Only Betrayal!

SUMMARY:

11 The LORD says to Jeremiah, *"Both Israel and Judah have not been loyal to me. But Israel was not as guilty as Judah."* **12** Jeremiah was told to go and proclaim these words to a particular place—the Northern Kingdom. Israel is to return from their backsliding, and God will not cause His anger to fall upon them: He's merciful, and He will not keep anger forever. **13** They are to confess that they have transgressed against the Lord, that is, given themselves to foreign gods, and scattered their ways (evil practices) to the strangers under every green tree, and have not obeyed God's voice. **14** Jeremiah tells Israel: *"Turn, O backsliding children"*, for God is married to the backslider (Israel): and He seeks to restore those who have committed spiritual adultery. God will take a remnant: one from a city, and two from a family, and bring them to Zion (Jerusalem, the center of worship). Zion is a type of the ultimate gathering of God's people through Christ (**3:11-14**).

15 God will give you pastors according to His heart, which shall feed them with knowledge and understanding. **16** *"And in those days, when they multiply and increase in the land, they will no longer discuss the ark of the covenant of the LORD. It will never come to mind, and no one will remember it or miss it, nor will another one be made."* **17** The whole city of Jerusalem will be God's throne. All nations will come there to worship God, and they will no longer follow their stubborn, evil hearts. **18** *"In those days the house of Judah will walk with the house of Israel, and they will come together out of the land of the north to the land that God had given for an inheritance unto their fathers."* **19** The LORD longed to be Israel's father, and give them a pleasant land; a godly heritage of the hosts of nations, and call Him their Father; and never to turn away from following Him. **20** God gives the analogy of the marriage of an unfaithful wife that deceitfully departed from her husband. This is what the house of Israel had done toward God. No loyalty, only betrayal! (**3:15-20**).

