

RETURN TO OUR FIRST LOVE

Have you ever felt like saying to someone, “*I told you so,*” after they ignored your advice?

The prophet Jeremiah had every reason to say, “*I told you so.*” He was God’s prophet at a time when Israel rejected God and turned to idolatry. He conveyed God’s warnings, but he was ignored and became discouraged as a prophet.

Jeremiah 2:1-13 The word of the LORD came to me: ² “Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem: “This is what the LORD says: “‘I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the wilderness, through a land not sown. ³ Israel was holy to the LORD, the first fruits of his harvest; all who devoured her were held guilty, and disaster overtook them, ’” declares the LORD.

God was initially pleased with the nation of Israel who obeyed and were dedicated to Him.

⁴ Hear the word of the LORD, you descendants of Jacob, all you clans of Israel. ⁵ This is what the LORD says: “What fault did your ancestors find in me, that they strayed so far from me? They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves.

These idols had no substance like a vapor, and those who served these idols became people of no substance!

⁶ They did not ask, ‘Where is the LORD, who brought us up out of Egypt and led us through the barren wilderness, through a land of deserts and ravines, a land of drought and utter darkness, a land where no one travels, and no one lives?’ ⁷ I brought you into a fertile land to eat its fruit and rich produce. But you came and defiled my land and made my inheritance detestable.

Israel had lost sight of God as their provider and their identity as God’s chosen people.

⁸ The priests did not ask, ‘Where is the LORD?’ Those who deal with the law did not know me; the leaders rebelled against me. The prophets prophesied by Baal, following worthless idols. ⁹ “Therefore I bring charges against you again,” declares the LORD. “And I will bring charges against your children’s children.

To worship Baal the Canaanite god included animal sacrifice and prostitution. The sexual orientation of worshipping Baal was enticing to the Israelites, who were called to be holy.

¹⁰ Cross over to the coasts of Cyprus and look, send to Kedar and observe closely; see if there has ever been anything like this: ¹¹ Has a nation ever changed its gods? Yet they are not gods at all. But my people have exchanged their glorious God for worthless idols.

¹² Be appalled at this, you heavens, and shudder with great horror,” declares the LORD.

Even pagan nations remained loyal to their gods.

But Israel had abandoned the One and only God.

¹³ *“My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.*

Jeremiah declares the two sins were;

- **they had abandoned God, and**
- **rejected His provision.**

Images of a ‘spring of living water’ and ‘broken cisterns’ illustrate Israel’s plight.

Rainfall was scarce during the dry season. They made cisterns, or underground pits, to catch and store rainwater during the wet season.

The water from the cistern was dirtier than a natural living spring, and often would end up stagnant. To dig a cistern was hard work.

Whereas a natural living spring is purer, and can flow all year round, and there is no effort as they are not man made.

The Bible often uses water as a picture of God’s blessing.

Physically and also spiritually, Israel was always sustained by God the Giver of life.

Psalm 36;5-9 (erv) Lord, your faithful love reaches to the sky. Your faithfulness is as high as the clouds. ⁶ Your goodness is higher than the highest mountains. Your fairness is deeper than the deepest ocean. Lord, you protect people and animals. ⁷ Nothing is more precious than your loving kindness. All people can find protection close to you. ⁸ They get strength from all the good things in your house. You let them drink from your wonderful river. ⁹ The fountain of life flows from you. Your light lets us see light.

Israel lost sight of God as their Life Giver.

Our society is similar in that;

Our society promotes secularism, materialism, secular humanism, popularity and power that all lean to satisfying self and pleasure.

Society promotes building personal cisterns that are polluted without Jesus and will eventually crack.

We need to guard against abandoning Jesus as our Lord and Saviour and losing sight of God as our Provider.

We should be entirely satisfied drinking from the '*spring of living water.*'

So, satisfied that we don't need ANYTHING else to quench our thirsts or need for more!

John 4:14 Jesus said, “Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

John 7:37-38 Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”

John’s challenge to the Ephesus Church

Revelation 2:4-5a Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first.⁵ Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first...