

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing
Part III: God's Indictment Of Israel's Leaders
(Jeremiah 2:1-8)

I. Introduction

- A. The human leaders of God's people play a key role in the spiritual welfare of the people of God.
- B. Thus, if these leaders fail to fulfill their mission, God disciplines them more severely than He does the people (James 3:1). Jeremiah 2:1-8 explains God's critique of Judah's leaders, and we view it for our insight:

II. God's Indictment Of Israel's Leaders, Jeremiah 2:1-8.

- A. Jeremiah was directed of God to address the Southern Kingdom of Judah, and recall her apostasy through her history from her original commitment to the Lord, revealing how illogical it all was, Jeremiah 2:1-7:
 - 1. God had Jeremiah go and proclaim in the hearing of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the capital of Judah, His fond recollection of Israel's initial dedication to Him when He brought her up out of Egypt, Jer. 2:1-2a.
 - 2. The Lord recalled the nation had been like a young, devoted bride who followed Him as her adored Husband through the barren wilderness, separated unto the Lord, the firstfruits of His harvest, so that any who attacked her were quickly judged by the Lord with utter disaster, Jeremiah 2:2b-3.
 - 3. However, the people of Judah no longer had such a commitment to Him, so God confronted them, asking what iniquity had their forefathers found in Him that they had departed far from Him and walked after worthless idols only for themselves to become spiritually worthless in God's eyes, Jeremiah 2:4-5 NIV.
 - 4. These forefathers who had entered the Promised Land and then lived in it during the era of the judges and the kings had not asked, "Where is the Lord, Who brought us through the barren wilderness, through a land of deserts and rifts, a land of drought and darkness, and land where no one travels and no one lives?" (Jeremiah 2:6 NIV) God thus indicated that the forefathers who had turned from the true Creator to worship pagan fertility gods in the land had illogically neglected the Lord Who sustained them in a barren wilderness where no false pagan, fertility god could provide a livelihood for them, and He had successfully done so all during their 40 years of wilderness travels as if to critique beforehand Canaan's fertility gods.
 - 5. Indeed, the Lord had brought Israel from the wilderness into the Promised Land that was agriculturally fertile that they might eat of its fruit and rich produce, gifts of **His** provision, **not** the provisions of false fertility gods and goddesses of the pagan Canaanites, Jeremiah 2:7a.
 - 6. However, the people of Israel had defiled God's land and made His inheritance in Israel detestable by adopting the worship of pagan Canaanite fertility gods and goddesses, Jeremiah 2:7b; Judges 2:1-3.
- B. God put a lot of the blame on Judah's **leaders** who had failed to influence the people aright, Jeremiah 2:8:
 - 1. The Lord critiqued Israel's **priests** who handled the written Scriptures with not knowing the Lord in their personal walk nor even asking, "Where is the Lord?" when He seemed silent and distant to them, Jer. 2:8a.
 - 2. God critiqued the **leaders**, the "shepherds" (*ro'im*, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1132), the "political and civil leaders appointed by God to guide and protect the nation" for rebelling against Him, Jer. 2:8b; Ibid.
 - 3. As for the **prophets**, men assigned the ministry "of declaring God's words of rebuke and correction," they themselves adopted false pagan Baal worship and theology to prophesy by the name of Baal and to follow vain pagan idols of the land, Jeremiah 2:8c.

Lesson: *The Lord highlighted the failure of Israel's LEADERS to function aright in their God-ordained roles as a significant cause for the apostasy of the people of Judah from the Lord. Specifically, (1) the priests, experts in written Scripture (cf. Malachi 2:4-7), had failed both to study and to heed Scripture, and thus did not even know the Lord in their walk or even ask where He was when He very apparently seemed distant from them. (2) As for the shepherds, the political and civil leaders assigned of God to guide and protect the nation by applying His written Word effectively, they not only did not apply the Word, but they even rebelled against the Lord. (3) The prophets, men called of God to call the nation back to Himself, instead followed false Baal gods and vain theology.*

Application: *(1) If God assigns us to minister His Word, may unlike Judah's apostate priests stay occupied with the Word so that we see God interacting with and guiding us in it that we might effectively disciple others under our care, cf. John 14:21, 23. (2) If assigned of God to be an administrative leader, may we not rebel against God's Word, but obey it to stay effective for God's people. (3) If assigned of God the role of applying His word through teaching, may we apply it and not some unbiblical ideology that is so prevalent in even evangelical circles today.*