

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing Part VII: Learning Our Lesson From God's Discipline Of Another (Jeremiah 3:6-11)

I. Introduction

- A. God's punishment of the Northern Kingdom of Israel was meant as a warning to the Southern Kingdom of Judah (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Jeremiah 3:6-10). However, Judah failed to learn this lesson!
- B. We view God's presentation of this fact in Jeremiah 3:6-11 for insight and application for our era (as follows):

II. Learning Our Lesson From God's Discipline Of Another, Jeremiah 3:6-11.

- A. After the nation Israel split into the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, Israel went apostate sooner than her sister nation of Judah.
- B. Israel had thus fallen in judgment in 722 B. C. to Assyria (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 570), and God later called Jeremiah to his prophetic ministry in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign, in 627 B. C. (Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to Jeremiah 1:2), 95 years after Israel's fall when Judah had had ample time to consider the effects of Israel's apostasy in terms of God's judgment so as to repent of her own sins!
- C. Accordingly, in the days of Judah's king Josiah, the Lord told Jeremiah to consider what faithless Israel had done, Jer. 3:6a. She had committed spiritual (along with the physical that accompanied it) adultery (in pagan worship) on all the high places in giving herself over to idol worship, Jer. 3:6b, Ibid., B. K. C., O. T., p. 1134.
- D. After Israel had done all of these abominable things, the Lord in patience and grace had told her through His prophetic messengers to turn back to Him, but she had not done so, Jeremiah 3:7a,b. The faithless sister nation of Judah had witnessed this failure on Israel's part, Jeremiah 3:7c.
- E. God had thus given Israel a certificate of divorce to send her away, figuratively referring to "the destruction of the land of the Northern Kingdom of Israel by Assyria in 722 B. C. (cf. 2 Kings 17:5-20)," Ibid.; Jer. 3:8a.
- F. Since her unfaithful sister nation of Judah had witnessed Israel's idolatry, her failure to repent and then God's consequent judgment of her by the Assyrian invasion and captivity, though one would expect Judah to repent of her sin to avoid Israel's destiny, she also had expressed no fear of accountability to the Lord, but had gone and committed spiritual (and hence physical) adultery with pagan idols just as Israel had done, Jer. 3:8b NIV.
- G. In fact, since Israel's idolatry mattered so little to Judah, the people of Judah had defiled the land, committing adultery with stone and wood objects, likely a reference not only to worshiping idols, but of vile practices involving stone and wood cult objects in sexual debauchery typical of the Canaanites before them, Jer. 3:9.
- H. On top of all this enhanced idolatry, Judah did not return to the Lord with all of her heart in repentance, but had pretended to repent, seeking to manipulate the Lord as in idolatry not to be angry at her sin, Jer. 3:10. [In ancient pagan idolatry, people would seek to pet or manipulate various parts of the body of the idol so as to manipulate the god or goddess behind it to be swayed by their efforts to grant them their petition. Apparently this practice was presumed to be effective with God in feinting repentance in an effort to manipulate Him!]
- I. In conclusion, God told Jeremiah that faithless Israel whom He had already punished by Assyrian invasion and captivity was more righteous than Judah (Jeremiah 3:11); Judah was thus in worse standing before the Lord than Israel had been when she had been punished, meaning that Judah was on the verge of grave divine discipline by way of invasion and captivity by a foreign nation!

Lesson: *Through her exposure to and involvement with idolatry, treacherous Judah not only had not learned the lesson of her accountability to a sovereign, righteous God through the judgment on idolatrous Israel, she had even become numbed to realizing God was sovereign and unaffected by manipulation typical of the pagan idolatry to which she had devoted herself so as to fail to see her need to repent in truth to avoid God's severe judgment.*

Application: *(1) If we see God discipline another party, He wants us to evaluate ourselves to see where we are in relationship to Him lest we also face His discipline, Gal. 6:1. (2) If our sin is relying on some crutch other than the Lord in subtle idolatry, we must repent as soon as possible lest we like Judah become insensitive to our own accountability to the Lord through the distorted thinking produced by our idolatry. (3) We must recall that God is immutable, He is not susceptible to change, to being affected by anything outside of Himself, where we ARE easily swayed by errant thinking around us! It is thus ABSOLUTELY necessary that we regularly purge our thinking of errant worldly thought patterns and errant value systems by exposing our minds and hearts to Scripture lest we unwittingly go astray from the Lord and face His severe discipline, cf. John 15:1-3.*