

Notes on Jeremiah 2:1-4:2

Intro: Baxter summarizes the message of Jeremiah this way--two dominant thoughts, I will punish....I will restore; thus wrath to the full, love to the end.

We have spent several lessons putting Jeremiah's prophecy into perspective of the other prophets and the historical background. Let's start to work on mastering the outline of Jeremiah's prophecy. (Cf. note from previous lesson).

The prophecies of the first section seem to be the most general of prophecies. There is no mention of time or circumstances except the one general statement of 3:6 "in the days of Josiah". That in fact, may be a clue to the time period of all these prophecies. They may in fact be general summaries of the prophecies uttered by Jeremiah during the days of Josiah.

Remember again the circumstances. Jeremiah received his prophetic call in 627, the 13th year of Josiah, the year after Josiah had begun his attempt to purge idolatry from Judah. This discourse may well be Jeremiah's first to the nation.

Jeremiah 2:1-3:5

Israel, in response to God's love, loved him as her husband, v. 1-3

v. 1--The period from the Exodus to Mt. Sinai is likened to the devotions and betrothal of a marriage. And then the wilderness wanderings are as the loyal love of a wife to her husband, following him wherever he goes.

v. 3--In this relation Israel was special to God. "Kodesh" are gifts offered to the Lord. First of his harvest--derives its meaning from Ex. 22:29; 23:19; 34:26. On this point compare the Christian as "the first-fruit of his creatures" (Jas. 1:18; Rev. 14:4). Thus no one could touch Israel without penalty. Cf. Sihon (Amorites), Og (Bashan).

But now Israel has not remained true to the Lord, v. 4-8.

v. 4--to worship idols is to "walk after wind (vanity)".

v. 8--those in leadership also led the people astray (priests, rulers, prophets)

Her apostacy is unprecedented and appalling, v. 9-13.

Kittim is Cyprus, the isles of the Mediterranean; Kedar is eastward between Babylonian and Arabian Petra. These pagan nations did never exchange gods as did Israel.

Israel has brought upon herself her difficulties, v. 14-19

Her unbelief has existed for a long time, v. 20-25

Israel acts like a camel filly or she-ass in heat.

Her idolatries has only brought shame, v. 26-28

Yet, Judah refuses to repent or admit guilt and yet relies of political alliances to deliver her! (v. 29-37)

Judah can no more return to God in her sins that a divorced woman could return to her former husband, 3:1-5

Jeremiah 3:6-4:2

Two key ideas:

Israel is not to remain always rejected

Judah is not to be always spared

Thus God recalls the sins of Israel and her captivity; yet Judah has learned nothing from her experience but imagines that she will not be destroyed, 3:6-10

God calls Israel back from captivity in answer to Judah's misconception, v. 3:11-18