

Two Great Evils

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Jeremiah 2:13

About 600 years before Christ, the nation of Judah was facing difficult times...

The northern kingdom of Israel was history, taken into Assyrian captivity.

Manasseh and his son Amnon, very wicked kings, had led the nation into idolatry.

Young Josiah, son and grandson of such kings, struggled to do what was right.

In the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign, God called a young priest to be His prophet.

His name was Jeremiah.

- Jer. 1:1-2, *"The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin: To whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign."*
- Jer. 1:4-5, *"Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."*

A young man himself (about 20), he was hesitant to speak.

Jer. 1:6, *"Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child."*

God did not accept his youth as an excuse.

Jer. 1:7-8, *"But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD."*

In his first assignment as God's prophet, Jeremiah was sent with a message to...

Jerusalem, recalling their past faithfulness.

Jer. 2:1-3, *"Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not*

sown. *Israel was holiness unto the LORD, and the firstfruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, saith the LORD.*”

The house of Jacob and all the families of the house of Israel, bemoaning their apostasy into idolatry.

Jer. 2:4-11, “*Hear ye the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel: Thus saith the LORD, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain? Neither said they, Where is the LORD that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt? And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination. The priests said not, Where is the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit. Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the LORD, and with your children’s children will I plead. For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing. Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.*”

Calling for the heavens to look on in astonishment and great fear, as God accused His people of committing two great evils.

Jer. 2:12-13, “*Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.*”

Forsaking their God, the fountain of living waters.

“*Living waters*” was used to denote springs, fountains, running streams.

As opposed to stale and stagnant water.

Hewing for themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water.

Cisterns were tanks for rain water, usually hewn (cut) out of stone.

At best, they could only offer stagnant water.

Broken with cracks, they could not even retain water.

Could we be guilty of similar evils today? To God's dismay and our own peril, very much so! To see how, let's examine closer the "Two Great Evils" spoken of in Jer. 2:13.

Forsaking the fountain of living waters

Israel forsook her fountain.

God was Israel's fountain of living waters.

Jer. 2:6-7, "*Neither said they, Where is the LORD that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt? And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination.*"

Who delivered her from Egyptian bondage.

Who led her through the wilderness wanderings.

Who brought her into the land of milk and honey.

Israel forgot her God.

Beginning with her own priests and rulers.

Jer. 2:8, "*The priests said not, Where is the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit.*"

From one generation to the next.

Jer. 2:9, "*Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the LORD, and with your children's children will I plead.*"

Unlike other nations that were true to their gods.

Jer. 2:10-11, "*For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing. Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.*"

Israel had changed their Glory (God) into that which did not profit!

Dare we forsake our fountain?

We have our fountain of living waters.

Of which Jesus promised during His ministry...

To the Samaritan woman.

John 4:13-14, “Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

To all who believe in Him.

John 7:37-39, “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”

Of which Jesus later revealed to the apostle John...

Regarding our state between death and the resurrection.

Rev. 7:13-17, “And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

Regarding our eternal destiny in the New Jerusalem.

Rev. 22:1, “And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.”

Dare we forget our God?

Who through Jesus and His Spirit offers to us in this life:

A fountain springing up into everlasting life?

John 4:14, “But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

Rivers of living water flowing from our hearts?

John 7:38, “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

Who through Jesus and His Spirit promises to us after this life:

To lead us to living fountains of water?

Rev. 7:17, *“For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”*

A pure river of water of life, proceeding from the throne of God?

Rev. 22:1, *“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.”*

We face a very real possibility of departing from the living God!

Heb. 3:12-14, *“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end,”*

Forsaking our fountain of living water occurs when we substitute with it “broken cisterns” that promise but do not deliver. Consider what Judah had done...

Hewing cisterns that hold no water

Israel had her broken cisterns...

False gods like Baal.

Jer. 2:8, *“The priests said not, Where is the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit.”*

False prophets who spoke in the name of Baal.

False sense of prosperity, of which God forewarned.

- Deut. 8:11-17, *“Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that*

he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth."

- Jer. 2:6, "*Neither said they, Where is the LORD that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt?"*

Israel foolishly left God for what were poor substitutes!

Are we hewing broken cisterns?

We can be guilty of going after false gods today.

- Eph. 5:5, "*For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."*
- Col. 3:5, "*Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."*

Such as materialism and immorality.

Which is a form of idolatry.

We can be guilty of heeding false prophets (teachers).

2 Pet. 2:1-3, "*But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."*

Who lead us into denominationalism or sectarianism.

Contrary to Jesus' prayer and the unity of the Spirit.

- John 17:20-21, "*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."*
- Eph. 4:3-6, "*Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one*

baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

Others who offer false hopes: new-agers, false religions, get rich quick schemers.

We can be guilty of a false sense of prosperity.

Rev. 3:17-18, *“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.”*

Believing we are spiritually secure...

When we are in grave danger of falling.

1 Cor. 10:12, *“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”*

We can be guilty of leaving God for a poor substitute of true religion!

Conclusion

The two evils committed by Israel...

First, they forsook God, the Fountain of life, light, and happiness.

Secondly, they hewed out broken cisterns; they joined themselves to idols, from which they could receive neither temporal nor spiritual good! Their conduct was the excess of folly and blindness.”

How much more would it be an excess of folly and blindness for us today...

To forsake God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, by neglecting our devotion and obedience to the Word of God!

To spend more time drinking from “broken cisterns” (teachings and traditions of men), than from the fountain of living water (the living Word of God).

May the unfortunate example of Judah serve as a warning to us as to where to get our “water”, and may we ever be open to the wonderful invitation extended at the end of the book of Revelation:

Rev. 22:17, *“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”*

Are you drinking from “the water of life”, or from “broken cisterns that can hold no water”?

