

## A Compassionate Call to a Promised People

Jeremiah 2: 1-13

The setting of our text is very early in Jeremiah's ministry. He had been called of God, a prophet to the people of Israel. It has been some 800 years since the Exodus and their entrance into the Promised Land. During that time Israel had faced many "ups and downs" spiritually. There had been times of revival and renewal, as well as times of rebellion and outright rejection of the Lord. However, there was a constant throughout all of this: the love of God for His people.

There is a great parallel in this passage to the church. She has certainly had her share of "ups and downs." There have been times of revival and great awakenings and times of rejection and apostasy. It is increasingly apparent that the church has lost much of her zeal for the Lord. The fact is: we need revival among God's people! As dark as these days are, we too have that same constant in our lives: the love of Christ for His church. Just as God tenderly pleaded with His chosen people, Christ is pleading with the church today. I want to examine the [certainties](#) within the text and preach on the thought: [A Compassionate Call to a Promised People](#).

### **I. A Call for Remembrance** (2-3) – Jeremiah has been instructed to [cry in the ears of Jerusalem](#).

The Lord Himself had sent a message to His people. As God declares His remembrance, it brings to mind the position Israel once enjoyed. I believe the Spirit is sounding a call for remembrance to us today. The people were challenged to remember:

**A. Their Love** (2a) – [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...](#) The Lord remembered the love Israel once had for Him. He remembered the zeal and devotion they possessed. There had been a time when Israel sought the Lord with all their heart. They worshiped and praised Him for all His wonderful works and for providing their deliverance. But somehow in their day to day living, they had forgotten that love.

- The Lord is calling us to remember the love we once had for Him. He brings this to our attention in [Rev.2:4 – Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love](#). This speaks of *first in rank, influence, and honor*. The idea of leaving speaks of *an intentional, conscious act*. Can we honestly say we love Him with the same fervor we once did? Is He the desire of our hearts as when we were first saved? Is Jesus the priority in our lives or has He been shifted to a place of less prominence? Let us remember our love for Him!

**B. Their Loyalty** (2b) – *when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.* – God remembered a time when Israel had followed Him as they journeyed in the wilderness. He was their guide and their provision. Their loyalty was evident by the lives they lived. They were happy to assemble at the Tabernacle and live according to His Word. There was nothing burdensome about their service unto the Lord. *Ex.24:7 – And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient.*

- Was there a time in your life when serving the Lord was a blessing rather than a burden? Can you remember those times when you were excited about coming to the house of God and having the opportunity to be of service to Him? He wants us to remember those times of joy in serving Him. He wants us to remember the vows we made to give our all to Him. The church needs to rekindle her desire and commitment to Him! I have not regretted one day of my salvation, but I have not lived each day as if I truly believed that.

**C. Their Light** (3) – *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.* There was a day when Israel stood tall among the other nations. She was recognized as the people of God. On many occasions the enemy proclaimed the divine presence of God among His people. Israel had been a great light in a dark world. The Lord remembered the days when His glory was revealed through His people.

- It would do us all good to be reminded of the light of influence the church once had. We cannot live in the past, but it ought to challenge us to regain what we have lost. We must ensure that our light shines brightly among this world. We can live a life that would make others desire what we have. If we possess no more than the average church member reveals, we don't have much. We have the glorious privilege of representing the King of glory! *Mat.5:16 – Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

**II. A Call for Recognition** (5-9) – God not only wanted them to remember, but to be reminded of who He was. It would do us good to contemplate the Lord as well. We need to recognize the greatness of our God. We are to consider:

**A. His Holiness** (5) – *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?* God was asking what charges could be laid against His holiness. What *iniquity*, (*injustice, unrighteousness, or wrong*) had ever been found in Him? What about the divine nature of God would cause men to stray into sin?

- Do you realize the holiness of the God we serve? He is perfect and pure in every way. Moses said in [Ex.15:11 – Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?](#) Isaiah heard the seraphims cry: [Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts. The four beats around the throne rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.](#) There will never come a day when you find anything but absolute holiness in the Lord. He is worthy of our worship and praise!

**B. His Faithfulness** (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?](#) There were no grounds to lay any charges against the faithfulness of God. He had been faithful to bring them out of bondage, leading them through a dry and barren land, providing manna each day, as well as water from the rock. He brought them into a land possessed by giants, driving them out and securing their borders. Israel had certainly witnessed the faithfulness of God.

- Have we not experienced that same faithfulness? Has He not met all of our needs? We have plenty to eat, a roof over our heads, a place to sleep, a land of peace that we enjoy, and the ability to worship our God. God has surely been faithful to me!

**C. His Goodness** (7a) – [And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof.](#) God not only brought them out and met their needs; He also gave them the best available. There is no question that God was good to Israel. There wasn't a one who could deny God's goodness.

- The Lord has surely been good to each of us. We all have difficulties in life, but God has been good. It is good to be able to meet together with those of like faith. We could be in a country where few believed and face persecution for our faith. God's goodness ought to cause us to worship Him! Has He not been good to us today?

**D. His Longsuffering** (9) – [Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the LORD, and with your children's children will I plead.](#) The Lord realized that Israel had come short and even denied Him the glory He deserved, and yet He sought them out. He was still pleading for them to come unto Him. His longsuffering would even be extended to future generations.

- I don't know about you, but I sure am thankful for His longsuffering. God would have been just to have left me in my sin and allowed me to die lost. He didn't have to come by time and again to speak to my soul. There are times now when He would be just to let me have my way and

wander in my sin and failures, but thank God He is longsuffering. Aren't you glad He loves us too much to give us what we deserve? [2 Pet.3:9- The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.](#) We serve a God who is patient and merciful toward sinful men.

**III. A Call for Repentance** – Finally God calls for repentance. He loves us too much to leave us in our sin. He addresses three areas that needed repentance. Notice:

**A. They had Defiled their Inheritance** (7b-8) – [but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination. <sup>\[8\]</sup> 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\*.](#) He had brought them into an abundant land and blessed them with His presence and yet the people rejected the Lord. They had defiled the land as well as the Temple. The priest had defiled the office of handling the Word. The pastors had led the people into apostasy. The prophets had prophesied a false message under the influence of Baal. All the beauty Israel enjoyed was now tainted by sinful defilement.

- We need to examine what we have done with God's heritage. Are we carrying out the commission we've been given? Are we living for God as those before us did? Is He pleased with what He sees as He looks upon our church and lives? I don't want to be a reproach upon my blessed Lord!

**B. They had Distorted their Testimony** (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. <sup>\[11\]</sup> Hath a nation changed \*their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.\*](#) They were instructed to consider those around them, look from Chittim (Cyprus) to Kedar (Arab lands,) from the east to the west. Had the heathen nations abandoned their gods? No, and yet Israel had abandoned the living God. The testimony Israel once held for the Lord had vanished due to their sinful ways and unbelief.

- Does our light shine as brightly as it once did? Are we a good representation of the God we serve? The Muslims and Jehovah Witnesses are adamant about their religion, and many times we are careless about our relationship. America, especially this area, has been blessed of God. We live in what is known as the "Bible belt" and it seems as if many have forsaken the Lord. I want to have a respectable testimony among those who are watching my life!

**C. They had Departed from the Truth** (13) – 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. Israel had abandoned God and His truth for their lusts that would profit nothing and end in loss. They had rejected the Living Fountain for broken cisterns, those holes dug in the earth to catch rain water and runoff. These broken cisterns couldn't even hold the dirty water they received.

- Many in our day have rejected the truth of God for the “runoff” of the world. They seem to be more interested in what the world can provide, a stagnant drink, rather than the refreshing flow of His living water! We need to build our lives and this church upon the living waters of God's truth. There is no reason to settle for what this world offers when we can have God's best.

**Conclusion:** Was there a time when you walked closer to the Lord than you do today? Do our lives represent the Savior we serve? He continues to offer a compassionate call to a promised people, but we must heed His call. If you are unsaved, the Lord stands ready to save!