

Jeremiah 13

Read Jeremiah 13:1- 11: God is telling Jeremiah that Judah is only a holy and beautiful people if they cling to God. We are like uncut and unpolished diamonds in the dirt; and are not too interesting to look at.

We are healthy and interesting and useful if we are in the right place doing the right thing. Judah is being compared to a decorative and functional priestly sash (waist tie or cloth belt). Apart from the rest of the uniform, and in place around the priest's waist, it is just ordinary material. Once the components of the priest's uniform separate from God's service, they are unclean and worthless. Wearing a priest's turban to a Halloween party is embarrassing.

There is something in all of us that desires to be identified with God...and yet, to do it our own way. God tells Jeremiah to take a carefully made priestly sash (belt) and put it on. The priestly sash is supposed to be well made of twisted linen in blue and purple and scarlet colors. It is specially handcrafted and embroidered. It is made to wrap around the waist of the priest for glory and beauty. It is a beautiful piece of clothing when it is worn according to its purpose.

There is a comparison being made between a sash and God's people. We were designed to wrap around God, cling to him and hold-to our designated place. The girdle or belt or sash represents **faithfulness**. A big part of faith is clinging to God. God provides the faith, but faith entails effort and continuity. When a man's belt loosens and falls, it causes problems. When we let go of God we eventually trip and fall, and we become an eyesore and an irritation to those around us.

The wardrobe of the priest is supposed to be unique and special, or holy. The belt is part of this **holiness**. The world pulls on us; and tries to get us to loosen our grip on God.

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" (Genesis 3:1)

The Jews sought to become righteous apart from God (which is not possible). They were like a sash that refused to wrap around the priest. They did not want to conform to God's ways. They just wanted to be admired on their own. They were like a clothing display. They were sort of trying to out-do God in some sort of stand-alone holiness...while excusing themselves to carry on any wickedness that was in their heart. What a strange thing to imagine. There is something in our nature that wants to call the shots, and not be judged for it. To accomplish that imaginary state, they have to

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. (Romans 10:1-3)

We share one of the downfalls of Satan. We desire (in the flesh) to be admired on our own merits. Satan is described as the one who became disconnected from God to do his own thing. He wanted to set up his own shop, and reap some glory.

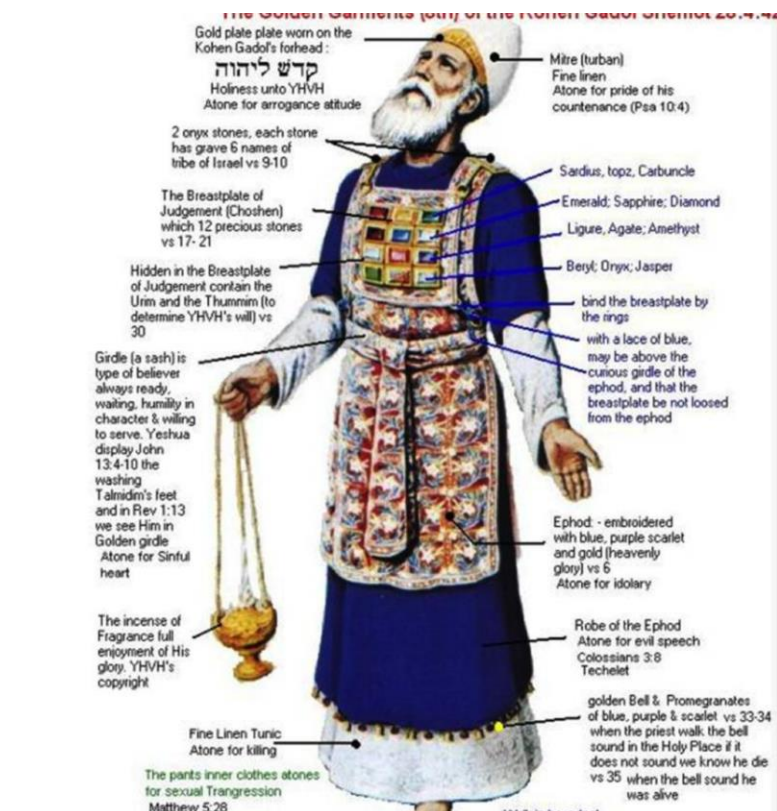
For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'.... But you are cast out of your grave Like an abominable branch, The idea of bowing in prayer and sacrificing to God is to yield or bend (maybe against our will). The Jews would not bend towards God and deny themselves where it counted. (Isaiah 14)

God can just become a gold standard to achieve status, if he is not truly your god.

Tell My people their transgression, And the house of Jacob their sins. ² Yet they seek Me daily, And delight to know My ways, As a nation that did righteousness, And did not forsake the ordinance of their God. They ask of Me the ordinances of justice; They take delight in approaching God. ³ 'Why have we fasted,' they say, 'and You have not seen? Why have we afflicted our souls, and You take no notice?' "In fact, in the day of your fast you find pleasure, And exploit all your laborers. ⁴ Indeed you fast for strife and debate, And to strike with the fist of wickedness. You will not fast as you do this day, To make your voice heard on high. ⁵ Is it a fast that I have chosen, A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, And to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Would you call this a fast, And an acceptable day to the LORD? ⁶ "Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke? ⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh? (Isaiah 58)

The analogy is that belt was trying to be beautiful apart from the wearer...without executing the function of holding together all of the priestly garments. God told Jeremiah to take off the sash, and bury it in a riverside hole for a while in Babylon, along the Euphrates. The Babylonian lifestyle was appealing to the Jews. You could say it is like Brittany Spears, who was an attractive young girl. She decided that she would become even more interesting if she spiced it up and used her wholesome body to sell her popularity. She ruined the whole platform of her life...and lost her appeal in the process.

In other words, how pretty is the sash without its context? Linen was the chosen material, because the priest was not supposed to sweat. It is not about personal accomplishments. God told Jeremiah to return to inspect the sash; after soaking up mud and being exposed for an extended period. We do not look so good after the world rubs off on us. We get stained from past errors and associations. The sash was ruined, and unusable. The point is that Judah wanted to partake of the Babylonian life, and still claimed to be holy and beautiful. God is showing them that apart from being wrapped around their god, and clinging to him they were filthy and worthless. Judah and Jerusalem is not a pretty place to vacation and be proud of without the context of the sacrifices God has ordained there. Without God, the Jews were just filthy and worthless.



Perhaps we do not see ourselves as God sees us apart from God's grace.



We were made of mud to begin with. Adam is the clayey color of mud. Only God can turn a mudball into something beautiful.

Read Jeremiah 13:12-14: Another analogy is how mankind is like an ancient wine bottle. We are made of clay. The value of a wine bottle is not as an empty container. It is in its contents. When the wine is consumed the bottle is thrown away. Wine compares to two things in the bible. It is positively compared to happiness, or in judgement as drunkenness.



The underlying theme here again is holiness and purpose. A wine bottle is specifically and purposefully made to hold wine. We were made to hold the Holy Spirit. We become useful and beautiful as we fulfill our purpose in life. We become disgusting and unhealthy as we use our

lives for something contrary to God's will. Some clay containers were used to hold unclean things. We have a clear choice what we allow inside of our mind.

But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. (2 Timothy 2:20-21)

Wine is to be used to celebrate. The misuse of wine is for drunkenness. It is a state of confusion and poor judgement and error and presents danger to yourself and all of those who are near you. The Jews abandoned God for idols. God is a spirit of organization and understanding and clarity. Idolatry is imaginary and false security in something that is non-existent or greatly inflated.

There are happy drunks, who imagine that the whole world is their friend. There are abusive drunks who become self-appointed experts who imagine that they are authorized to control other people's lives. A drunk has little regard for what other people are experiencing. A drunk in the household essentially ruins their own family and finances. God is done with this abusive and self-congratulating lifestyle the Jews have adopted. They are so motivated to keep sinning; they are like a drunk stumbling through everything to obtain more experiences. Anyone who is sober should stop them before more damage is done. But they won't stop; so they have to be broken.

A whip for the horse, A bridle for the donkey, And a rod for the fool's back. Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Lest you also be like him. Answer a fool according to his folly, Lest he be wise in his own eyes. He who sends a message by the hand of a fool Cuts off his own feet and drinks violence. (Proverbs 26:3-6)

Read Jeremiah 13:15-27: We are built for the Kingdom of Light. This entails added awareness and truth. Confusion and darkness is a byproduct of ignoring God's compass. Man's ideas apart from God seem right; but they are misdirected and infectious. The verses describe stumbling in the dark and confusion and self-harm.

The Tower of Babel is the original definition of babbling and muttering confusing directions. It was the epicenter of dizziness and confusion. That project was used as an illustration of satanic control and manipulation and anarchy.

Jesus is called the stumbling stone, because he will cause men to fall if they ignore his presence. Men who do not follow God are said to be walking in darkness. After a while, the stumbling stone will become the rock who crushes. He is the cornerstone of our life and giver of direction. He holds our blueprint for direction and alignment. If we build without the right plans, it will all be demolished.

“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.” (Matthew 21:43-44)

This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’ (Acts 4:11)

“The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,” and “A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense.” They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. (1 Peter 2)

Living in darkness, living apart from our God-appointed function, and trying to be noteworthy apart from God is what has been causing men to stumble since the beginning. A misused waist sash, or a wine bottle, or stumbling in the dark are all means of comparison to life according to God’s purposes and life according to what appeals to us. The scriptures tell us that every man thinks he is right in his own mind.