

Jeremiah 2

Read Jeremiah verses 2:1-3 This chapter opens with the honeymoon between the children of Israel and Jehovah. It describes a period of time when the nation/she had a loving-desire and a tenderness towards her husband/ God. When did this happen?

It happened in the wilderness. That means at some point in their forty-year period of wandering through the desert. Did it happen when they crossed the Red Sea? Israel was born as a nation during their time of affliction in the iron furnace/Egypt. The overall conclusion from Stephen on the forty year wilderness wandering period was about rebellion; not loving God.

-This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush. -He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years. -This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. -This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spoke to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: -To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt. -Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. -And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. -Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? -Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon. (Acts 7:35-43)

What about a short-term honeymoon after crossing the Red Sea; when the children of Israel first escaped out of Egypt? Was there a brief month-long honeymoon when they adored God? Israel sang praises immediately after crossing the Red Sea.

-And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses. (Exodus 14:31)

Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spoke, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him. (Exodus 15:1)

And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. -So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. -And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. (Exodus 15:21-23)

Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: -When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. -Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. (Hebrews 3:8-10)

The time between Miriam's song of praise; and the bitter complaining at Marah was brief.

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It was only a 10 mile hike to Marah (22 km). That is a half-day's walk. That would be a short honeymoon!

The attentiveness of the children of Israel towards God may have been closer to the end of the wilderness experience; during the time just before Joshua's conquests. Numbers 16 & 17 was about Korah's rebellion and the earth opening up and devouring those who tried to overthrow Moses and God's appointed leaders. Numbers 20 is about Edom's refusal to provide water- and threats to destroy the Jews; and the resulting long detour around Edom. This is when the water gushed out of the rock; when Moses struck it in anger. Numbers 21 was about the pride and anger of the Jews causing God to send fiery serpents to kill many. After all of that dramatic cleansing, it was a period of continual warfare. Interestingly; there is no mention of any broad-based rebellion once war begins. Isn't that interesting? The

scriptures say that the children of Israel could not have merely made the three-week march to Canaan, and began the conquest. They would have turned tail and ran. In other words; the spiritual training was the long-term tough-love method. That really should put our life journey in perspective. Perhaps the periods of our greatest pride and resisting God were also precursors to God's tough methods and transformation to us. There is also a comment about their first fruits being holy. That would not happen until they actually entered the land of Canaan.

-Understand therefore, that the LORD thy God gave thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiff necked people. -Remember, and forget not, how thou provoked the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the LORD. (Deuteronomy 9:6-7)

Read Jeremiah 2 Verse 5: This verse shows up elsewhere in scripture. God asks like a faithful husband whose wife left him: "Where did I fail you?"

-From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. -Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will you also go away? (John 6:66-67)

God puts us in positions requiring faith for deliverance. There are military and financial examples of the children of Israel running to Egypt or Assyria for deliverance. When that happens; the faith-building process is aborted.

And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now. -For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal. (Hosea 2:7-8)

-For they are gone up to Assyria, a wild ass alone by himself: Ephraim hath hired lovers. (Hosea 8:9)

-And they committed whoredoms in Egypt; they committed whoredoms in their youth: -And Aholah played the harlot when she was mine; and she doted on her lovers, on the Assyrians her neighbors, -Which were clothed with blue, captains and rulers, all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding upon horses. (Ezekiel 23:3,5-6)

Read Jeremiah 2: verses 6-13: The descriptions of the former state of God's people were all dire. He bettered their situation. Words describing their harsh predicaments were:

Egypt, wilderness, desert, pit, shadow of death, drought, a place where no man passes or lives. We latch on to God to escape the pain; but we let go of him when things go well. God brought them into a plentiful and fruitful place of goodness. Perhaps we can draw conclusions about our spiritual formation and growth from these desert wanderers. These rescued souls forgot about the one who saved them. I also have a huge capacity to take things for granted. Forgetfulness gives way to indifference. People and priests were just playing church. You have to re-connect to God daily to remain committed to God. Otherwise we can only be restored with additional tragedies. Their attentiveness for God faded between disasters. That's not faith. What is this amnesia all about? We don't mentally unlearn what God has shown us. What is going on? Is it a spiritual disease that affects our brain? We have a battle between our heart and brain. Our heart is not our friend. It is a betraying free loader. It sells out, leaving the brain and body in depression. We must master our own sinful nature that comes in our imagination, feelings and desires. We need to be in the word all of the time.

-The great God that formed all things both rewards the fool, and rewards transgressors. -As a dog returns to his vomit, so a fool returns to his folly. -Do you See thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him. (Proverbs 26:10-12)

He, that being often reproved hardens his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. (Proverbs 29:1)

What can we do in the USA today? We are slipping down into the same sins; yet with greater accountability. Some are involving themselves in: protesting abortion, fighting homosexual activism, helping food ministries, helping at orphanages, and other things. These things may be a good response to God's directing; but it is far more important to work on your daily relationship-building with God. At times; they can be a waste of resources. God sends all things based on our relationship to him.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. -I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

(John 15:4-5)

Once you are reading from God's page of music you can be used mightily.

-And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. -Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? -And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. (Matthew 17:18-20)

Read Jeremiah 2:14-19: The ancient Jews came upon hardships commensurate with their behavior. Shouldn't knowing this make our life strategies easier?

-Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy. If you are corrected for the name of Christ, happy are you; for the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer

as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? (1 Peter 4:12-18)

Judgment begins at the house of the LORD. We too will be corrected before unbelievers. God's family matters take priority over legal disputes with the neighbors. The Jews have a horrible history of destruction and hardship. Their plight is also our warning.

-What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. -(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. -And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: -Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway. -I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. -Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? -For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: -If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them. -For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? -For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. -And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; -Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. (Romans 11:7-18)

Read verse Jeremiah 2:20: Since the beginning man has made verbal commitments to honor and follow God. We also have fought to rid God's control over our lives as well. For example:

The Freedom From Religion Foundation and 19 other plaintiffs mounted a lawsuit against the U.S. Treasury Department and other government officials this week, claiming that they are discriminating against nonbelievers by including the phrase "In God We Trust" on the nation's currency.

"Our government is prohibited from endorsing one religion over another but also prohibited from endorsing religion over nonreligion. The placement of a monotheistic ideal on our nation's currency violates this stricture and is therefore unconstitutional," FFRF Co-President Dan Barker said in a statement.

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, -Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. (Psalm 2:1-3)

Read Jeremiah 2:21: God put us in place to flourish and be blessed. Somehow we reject his care; and become something that is no longer useful.

Now will I sing to my well beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well beloved has a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: -And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. -And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard. -What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? -And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: -And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. -For the vineyard

of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry. (Isaiah 5:1-7)

What do all of these wine grape grower metaphors mean?

- It begins with a fruitful hill to plant his people. This all about Israel; but it applies in some ways to the church as well.
 - This soil is not the same as the soil of men's hearts being referred to in this context. It is a blessed setting offered to us to build fruitful lives that lies before us to partake in.
- The fence around his vineyard is our hedge of protecting angels
- The stones are encumbrances and unproductive things that hold back our full usage and potential. Not everything that is not godly is a sin. Many things are just time wasters.
- The tower was a place of safety to watch for evil. Prophecy is like a tower. The trumpet blast at first sign of invasion is like the words of repentance from a prophet in a decaying society.
- The wine press are the hardships of life that cause our true contents to flow out. We normally refer to these as tests and trials. When we are harmed and curse others we are producing vinegar; not God's desirable wine.

Read Jeremiah 2:22-25: We conclude that there is no hope and no solution in our tests. So we run to a comfort of one type or another. Who can stop a wild donkey in heat as she trots across the desert? We refuse to put ourselves in a vulnerable position as we wait for God.

Read Jeremiah 2:26-37: It is so sad when God breaks us down; and we lose our children to the world, and we lose a lifetime of blessings...and we still miss the whole point. It is like we are his ADD children whom he holds by the arm. We just don't hear him as he tries to correct us. We are anxiously scurrying to our solutions.