

Jeremiah 3:1-25 **Backsliding Israel called to Repent**

Israel Is Shameless

1 "They say, 'If a man divorces his wife, And she goes from him And becomes another man's, May he return to her again?' Would not that land be greatly polluted? But you have played the harlot with many lovers; Yet return to Me," says the Lord.

2 "Lift up your eyes to the desolate heights and see: Where have you not lain with men? By the road you have sat for them Like an Arabian in the wilderness; And you have polluted the land With your harlotries and your wickedness.

3 Therefore the showers have been withheld, And there has been no latter rain. You have had a harlot's forehead; You refuse to be ashamed.

4 Will you not from this time cry to Me, 'My Father, You are the guide of my youth?

5 Will He remain angry forever? Will He keep it to the end? 'Behold, you have spoken and done evil things, As you were able."

A Call to Repentance

6 The Lord said also to me in the days of Josiah the king: "Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot.

7 And I said, after she had done all these things, 'Return to Me.' But she did not return. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it.

8 Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also.

9 So it came to pass, through her casual harlotry, that she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees.

10 And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah has not turned to Me with her whole heart, but in pretense," says the Lord.

11 Then the Lord said to me, "Backsliding Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah.

12 Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say:

'Return, backsliding Israel,' says the Lord; 'I will not cause My anger to fall on you. For I am merciful,' says the Lord; 'I will not remain angry forever.

13 Only acknowledge your iniquity, That you have transgressed against the Lord your God, And have scattered your charms To alien deities under every green tree, And you have not obeyed My voice,' says the Lord.

14 "Return, O backsliding children," says the Lord; "for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.

15 And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.

16 "Then it shall come to pass, when you are multiplied and increased in the land in those days," says the Lord, "that they will say no more, 'The ark of the covenant of the Lord.' It shall not come to

mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they visit it, nor shall it be made anymore.

Looking to the Kingdom

17 "At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem. No more shall they follow the dictates of their evil hearts.

18 "In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given as an inheritance to your fathers.

19 "But I said:

'How can I put you among the children And give you a pleasant land, A beautiful heritage of the hosts of nations?'

"And I said:

'You shall call Me, "My Father," And not turn away from Me.'

Present treachery of Israel

20 Surely, as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, So have you dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel," says the Lord.

Acknowledging God in Repentance

21 A voice was heard on the desolate heights, Weeping and supplications of the children of Israel. For they have perverted their way; They have forgotten the Lord their God.

22 "Return, you backsliding children, And I will heal your backslidings."

"Indeed we do come to You, For You are the Lord our God.

23 Truly, in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, And from the multitude of mountains; Truly, in the Lord our God Is the salvation of Israel.

24 For shame has devoured The labor of our fathers from our youth — Their flocks and their herds, Their sons and their daughters.

25 We lie down in our shame, And our reproach covers us. For we have sinned against the Lord our God, We and our fathers, From our youth even to this day, And have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God."

NKJV

Facts Revealed:

Israel's Shameless Sinfulness Defiled the Land Causing Rain to be Withheld

☆ "They say, 'If a man divorces his wife, And she goes from him And becomes another man's, May he return to her again?' Would not that land be greatly polluted? But you have played the harlot with many lovers; Yet return to Me," says the Lord.

"Lift up your eyes to the desolate heights and see: Where have you not lain with men? By the road you have sat for them Like an Arabian in the wilderness; And you have polluted the land With your harlotries and your wickedness.

Therefore the showers have been withheld, And there has been no latter rain. You have had a harlot's forehead; You refuse to be ashamed.

Will you not from this time cry to Me, 'My Father, You are the guide of my youth?

Will He remain angry forever? Will He keep it to the end? 'Behold, you have spoken and done evil things, As you were able." [\[Jeremiah 3:1-5\]](#)

- ✧ Divorce and return defiles the land. [\[Deuteronomy 24:1-4, Isaiah 50:1\]](#)
- ✧ Though Israel has openly played the harlot in unfaithfulness toward Yahweh, still He calls her to repent and return to Him.
- ✧ The consequence of their unfaithfulness has been the deprivation of rain.
- ✧ Even so, Israel continues to shamelessly play the harlot with her idols.
- ✧ Yahweh calls Israel to acknowledge Him as their Father and Guide.
- ✧ The questions are asked, "Will Yahweh remain angry forever?" And "Will He keep His anger to the end?"
- ✧ The answer is, "You have spoken and done evil things as much as you are able."
- ✧ In other words, the people's sins are the cause of Yahweh's anger which will turn away upon their repentance in fully turning back to their God.

A Call to Repentance

- ☆ Yahweh (The Lord) said also to me in the days of Josiah the king: "Have you seen what backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot.
And I said, after she had done all these things, 'Return to Me.' But she did not return. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. [\[Jeremiah 3:6-7\]](#)
- ✧ Jeremiah began his ministry in the days of Josiah King of Judah.
- ✧ The Northern kingdom of Israel has been carried away captive by the Assyrians and is no longer around.
- ✧ The kingdom of Judah witnessed the sinfulness of Israel and the resulting punishment as they fell to the Assyrians.
- ✧ The kingdom of Judah witnessed God's call for Israel to repent, and their refusal to do so.
- ☆ Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also.
So it came to pass, through her casual harlotry, that she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees.
And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah has not turned to Me with her whole heart, but in pretense," says Yahweh (the Lord). [\[Jeremiah 3:8-10\]](#)
- ✧ Judah was well aware of the sinfulness that caused Yahweh to cast Israel from His sight. But instead of taking warning from the fall of Israel, Judah followed their example and turned to Idolatry.
- ✧ Because of Judah's unfaithfulness her land is defiled and Yahweh in His faithfulness is calling Judah to repentance.
- ✧ Judah's response is to return hypocritically in pretense while their heart is far from true repentance being tied to their own idolatry.
- ☆ Then Yahweh (the Lord) said to me, "Backsliding Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah.
Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say:
'Return, backsliding Israel,' says the Lord; 'I will not cause My anger to fall on you. For I am merciful,' says Yahweh (the Lord); 'I will not remain angry forever.
Only acknowledge your iniquity, That you have transgressed against Yahweh Eloheyk (the Lord your God), And have scattered your charms To alien deities under every green tree, And you have not obeyed My voice,' says Yahweh (the Lord). [\[Jeremiah 3:11-13\]](#)
- ✧ Yahweh calls Israel to acknowledge their sin and to return to Him, proving His mercy and willingness to forgive on the basis of their confession and repentance.

- ☆ "Return, O backsliding children," says Yahweh (the Lord); "for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. "Then it shall come to pass, when you are multiplied and increased in the land in those days," says Yahweh (the Lord), "that they will say no more, 'The ark of the covenant of Yahweh (the Lord).' It shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they visit it, nor shall it be made anymore. [\[Jeremiah 3:14-16\]](#)
- ✧ Yahweh looks forward to the **Kingdom age** and calls His people both Israel and Judah to return because He considers Himself married to them.
- ✧ The promise is that Yahweh will take a remnant to Himself in Zion, one from a city and two from a family.
- ✧ Then Yahweh will provide leaders who will impart knowledge and understanding to His remnant people.
- ✧ During the Kingdom age when Yeshua is reigning for a thousand years from His throne at Zion where all the world may come and see Him personally, the ark of the covenant will not be sought or of any use, because the King of kings and Lord of lords is reigning.

Looking to the Kingdom

- ☆ "At that time Jerusalem shall be called **The Throne of Yahweh (the Lord)**, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of Yahweh (the Lord), to Jerusalem. No more shall they follow the dictates of their evil hearts.

"In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given as an inheritance to your fathers. [\[Jeremiah 3:17-18\]](#)

- ✧ During the Kingdom age, Jerusalem will be called the Throne of Yahweh Tsebavta and all nations will come to Him in Jerusalem.
- ✧ The entire world will perfectly follow the righteous teachings of Yahweh.
- ✧ Judah and Israel will be united as one people in harmony.
- ✧ They will all be brought home from around the world to the land of Israel the Promised Land.
- ☆ "But I said:
'How can I put you among the children And give you a pleasant land, A beautiful heritage of the hosts of nations?'
"And I said:
'You shall call Me, "My Father," And not turn away from Me.' [\[Jeremiah 3:19\]](#)
- ✧ Yahweh asked, How can He bring them back and give them the pleasant land.
- ✧ His answer is that there will be a change of heart and when they see Him face to face they will call Him "My Father" and no more will they turn away from Him.

Present treachery of Israel

- ☆ Surely, as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, So have you dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel," says Yahweh (the Lord).

A voice was heard on the desolate heights, Weeping and supplications of the children of Israel. For they have perverted their way; They have forgotten Yahweh Eloheym (the Lord their God). [\[Jeremiah 3:20-21\]](#)

- ✧ Presently Israel has departed from her husband, perverted her way and forgotten their God.

Acknowledging God in Repentance

- ☆ "Return, you backsliding children, And I will heal your backslidings."
"Indeed we do come to You, For You are Yahweh Eloheynu (the Lord our God).

Truly, in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, And from the multitude of mountains;
Truly, in Yahweh Eloheynu (the Lord our God) Is the salvation of Israel.

For shame has devoured The labor of our fathers from our youth — Their flocks and their herds, Their sons and their daughters.

We lie down in our shame, And our reproach covers us. For we have sinned against Yahweh Eloheynu (the Lord our God), We and our fathers, From our youth even to this day, And have not obeyed the voice of Yahweh Eloheynu (the Lord our God)." [\[Jeremiah 3:22-25\]](#)

- ✧ Yahweh again called for repentance with a promise to heal their backslidings.
- ✧ Israel replied, that they do come to Yahweh and acknowledge Him as their God.
- ✧ Then they acknowledge that to seek salvation from the hills and mountains is vain.

This is the same thinking of David in the Psalm when he said:

I will lift up my eyes to the hills —
From whence comes my help?
My help comes from Yahweh (the Lord),
Who made heaven and earth.

Psalms 121:1-2 NKJV

- ✧ Repentance must be accompanied by confession of sins. In this case they confess their own sins and the sins of the fathers that have caused the present troubles the chastisement of God has brought upon them.
- ✧ Coming face to face with the consequence of sin brings deep shame and reproach.