

PLEASE NOTE WE WILL CONTINUE TO NEED A PASSCODE TO JOIN THE STUDY! NOTES FOR THIS WEEK: 11/30-12/1/2020  
THIS WEEK'S STUDY: *Jeremiah Chapter 3*

**Monday 7pm Bible Study - Time: 07:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)**  
**THE MONDAY NIGHT STUDY HAS RESUMED MEETING IN CLASSROOM HS112, CCCM, AS WELL AS CONTINUING IN ZOOM!!**

**MEETING ID# - 87858644763 Passcode: 087484 - Mon 7 pm!**

Join Zoom Meeting -

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87858644763?pwd=b25tUzhkaTE0UzIrSnpkVmZEWGJVQT09>

**Meeting ID: 878 5864 4763 - Passcode: 087484**

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Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87858644763?pwd=b25tUzhkaTE0UzIrSnpkVmZEWGJVQT09>

**Tuesday 7am Bible Study - Time: 07:00 AM Pacific Time (US and Canada).**

**THE TUESDAY MORNING STUDY HAS RESUMED MEETING IN THE FAMILY ROOM, CCCM, AS WELL AS CONTINUING IN ZOOM!!**

**MEETING ID# - 85309150746 Passcode: 715340 - Tues 7 am!**

Join Zoom Meeting -

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85309150746?pwd=Tk5oVjN0TzdpWjE3UC9Oam05a21uQT09>

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Phil Twente ptwente@gmail.com cell 714 425 9221 For Audio & notes from previous studies-- [www.ptwente.com](http://www.ptwente.com)

## **OPENING PRAYER – Introduction**

### **Jer. 3:16-20 – “In Those Days!” Jesus’ Second Coming**

#### **JOY TO THE WORLD – Isaac Watts – Handel (2:12)**

*1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come. Let earth receive her King. Let every heart prepare Him room. And Heaven and nature sing, And Heaven and nature sing, And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing*

*2 Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ. While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains. Repeat the sounding joy; Repeat the sounding joy; Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy*

*3 He rules the world with truth and grace And makes the nations prove The glories of His righteousness. And wonders of His love, And wonders of His love, And wonders of His love, And wonders, wonders, of His love.*

*4 Joy to the world, the Lord is come. Let earth receive her King. Let every heart prepare Him room. And Heaven and nature sing, And Heaven and nature sing, And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing!*

## **Introduction to Jeremiah 3**

The major theme of this chapter is the word “*return*”, which in some form or another is used nine times in the chapter. The word “*backsliding*” is used seven times. It’s God way of declaring that the only cure to backsliding is to **return to God**. It is to **repent and turn away from my sin and return to the relationship that I once had with Him**.

**Considering our nation – Nine Eleven – 19 years ago!** “*We have sinned against the LORD.*” But rather than turning from sin we are seeing only an increase in sin. Instead of repenting and turning back to God and saying we have sinned we have turned from Him and we are reaping the consequences of our sin, only going deeper into the sin. The study of Jeremiah **seems so relevant** for us today **because of the parallels and the similes** that we see **between Judah before her fall and the United States**. We see the things that brought the fall of the nations and we see them repeated in our nation today!

## **THIS WEEK’S STUDY: Jeremiah 3 – A WORD TO BACKSLIDERS**

***Jer 3:1 "They say, 'If a man divorces his wife, And she goes from him And becomes another man's, May he return (9X) to her again?' Would not that land be greatly polluted?***

- **Under the Law if a man divorced his wife and she married another man, that did not work out**, under the Law she could not come back to the first husband. The making and breaking of the marriage covenant were both holy and important.

***But you have played the harlot with many lovers Yet return to Me," says the LORD.***

- **God declares that Judah has turned from Him, committed** (spiritual) **adultery, she has gone out and worshipped other gods**. You are married to God. Your love and devotion are to be toward Him. The relationship should be like a husband and wife, the fidelity, the faithfulness to each other. For you to worship another god is like having another wife or husband. Judah, though married to God, went out and began to worship Molech, Mammon, Baal, Ashteroth and other gods so God looked at that as spiritual adultery, turning from God, and under the Law you could not come back to your husband but God said to Judah, “***Yet return to Me.***” The LORD was calling for Judah to return unto Him!.

***Jer 3:2 "Lift up your eyes to the desolate heights and see: Where have you not lain with (ravished by) 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. Deu 12:2 You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations which you shall dispossess served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree.***

- ***Lift up your eyes to the desolate heights and see***, God said, of all of the hills you have built altars to the pagan gods, “***By the road you have set for them Like an Arabian*** (huckster, thief) ***in the wilderness***” - ***lain with men***. They are tuning to these false gods. They were waiting as a prostitute waiting to go out after some new god or other god.
- ***You have polluted the land with your harlotries and your wickedness***: Israel considered their idolatry and sacrifice to pagan gods to be of little consequence. Many of them probably told themselves that they were not forsaking the LORD, only adding the worship of these other gods. God saw their sin for what it was and noted that it ***polluted the land***, not just themselves, but tempted others so that the whole ***land*** was ***polluted!***

***Jer 3:3 Therefore the showers have been withheld, And there has been no latter rain. (Lev 26:19) I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze.***

- **...no latter rain:** Spiritually, Israel's idolatry polluted the land – therefore God withheld the rain they needed for crops and food. There are two rains in Israel. The former rains begin in October, necessary to soften up the parched land to allow preparation of the soil for planting. The latter rains, which are essential for the growing to maturity of the crops, are much heavier than the former and continue through May. It is customary each year for Israel to pray that the LORD provide the latter rains for fruitful production. The phrase “*Mashiv Ha'Ruach u'morid Hagashem*” is a praise included in the daily prayers, praising God who causes the wind to blow and the rain to fall, starting on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles.
- **This had special irony, because many of the pagan gods they went after were associated with weather, rain, and fertility** (such as Baal and Ashtoreth). They, Israel, were terribly wrong; their pursuit out of God's will left them less satisfied than before.

***You have had a harlot's forehead; You refuse to be ashamed. Ezz 9:6*** *And I said: "O my God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens. Psa 97:7 Let all be put to shame who serve carved images, Who boast of idols. Worship Him, all you gods. Isa 42:17 They shall be turned back, They shall be greatly ashamed, Who trust in carved images, Who say to the molded images, 'You are our gods.'*

- ***You have a harlot's forehead; you refuse to be ashamed:*** What has happened to the word, “*ashamed*” in the world, our nation, today? The Bible says much about being *ashamed* - numerous verses in Ezra, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others. God observed the lack of shame among Israel for their idol worship. Their conscience was dead to its proper workings. Instead of crying out to the Lord and coming with humble repentance, Israel continued in their evil as they **were able** – hoping to get away with as much as they could.

***Jer 3:4 Will you not from this time cry to Me, 'My Father, You are the guide of my youth? Psa 71:17*** *O God, You have taught me from my youth; And to this day I declare Your wondrous works. Luk 15:21* *And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'*

- **Turn back to me, cry to me, “My father!** It would have indeed been radical for the Jew of that day to address God as My Father! **But note His tenderness and compassion!** Acknowledge God and His profound relationship to you knowing that God guided them at the beginning of the nation, God made them strong, the hand of God was on them, they were seeking God and God gave them His Law and His statutes. So, the call to return was given.
- ***Will you not from this time cry to Me: God expects that they will claim relation to Him, as theirs:*** God told Israel what they should do. They should cry out unto the Lord with urgency and desperation. They should look to Him as their Father and their guide. They should see themselves as those who need guidance and help, as a youth needs guidance and help. They should hope that God would not remain angry with them. **So true with us as well!**

***Jer 3:5 Will He remain angry forever? Will He keep it to the end?' Behold, you have spoken and done evil things, As you were able."*** *Psa 103:9 He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever. Isa 57:16 For I will not contend forever, Nor will I always be angry; For the spirit would fail before Me, And the souls which I have made.*

- **You cannot get any worse than was Judah and yet God is calling them to come back!** The awesome love of God, that stubborn love of God, that just won't let go and **He won't just let you go. He continues to just draw you back to Himself.**
- ***Behold, you have spoken and done evil things, as you were able:*** Instead of crying out to the Lord and coming with humble repentance, Israel continued in their *evil* as they **were able** – hoping to get away with as much as they could.

## ***Faithless Israel Called to Repentance – Backsliders Called to Return***

***Jer 3:6 The LORD said also to me in the days of Josiah the king:***

- ***In the days of Josiah, the king...*** This is another message that came to Jeremiah in the days of Josiah the king. Josiah was king when Jeremiah began his prophecies so this is one of his earlier ones. During Josiah's reign there was an aggressive campaign to purify Israel of idolatry and to return to the LORD. God no doubt used these words from Jeremiah as part of this work

***"Have you seen what backsliding (12x in Bible—9x in Jer.—6x in Chap 3) Israel has done?"***

- The northern kingdom of Israel at this time was already destroyed, having been led away with hooks through their noses on leashes as captives to Assyria where they were dispersed and repopulated through the world at that time. They ceased to exist as a nation. The cities were wasted and desolate.

***She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot.***

- **The reason for her being taken captive** was that *she* had ***gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree and there played the harlot.*** They had worshipped other gods in their high places and groves; and no marvel, when from the first they had worshipped God by the images of the *golden calves* at Dan and Bethel. The way of idolatry is down-hill! Those that are in love with images will have them, soon become in love with other gods, and will have them too.

***Jer 3:7 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. Eze 16:47-48 You did not walk in their ways nor act according to their abominations; but, as if that were too little, you became more corrupt than they in all your ways. [48] "As I live," says the Lord GOD, "neither your sister Sodom nor her daughters have done as you and your daughters have done.***

- ***Return to Me!*** God reminded Jeremiah and those who heard this prophecy that the northern kingdom of Israel was deeply idolatrous, yet God still called to them saying, "***Return to Me.***" Sadly, ***she did not return*** and perished as a kingdom some 100 years before Jeremiah began his prophetic work. In spite of the fact, God was still calling that they would return to God, but they refused, persisting in their idolatries. God keeps account, whether we do or no, how often He has called to us to turn to Him and we have refused.
- ***Her treacherous sister Judah saw it:*** She should have learned from Israel's idolatry, refusal to repent, and their fall but she didn't learn!

***Jer 3:8 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.***

- ***Yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also*** They saw the consequences! They had the advantage of temple worship of the true God; of seeing what idolatry to their relatives to the north, that it brought their destruction. They had the opportunities of seeing the consequences of sin and yet Judah did not turn but followed after the same evil practices. It's easy for us to ask how Judah could have missed such obvious lessons. **Yet we, today, see the modern world, and our nation, repeating the same mistakes and sins as previous fallen empires and cultures.**
- **She is called *treacherous sister Judah***, a sister because descended from the same common stock, Abraham and Jacob; but, as Israel had the character of a ***backslider***, Judah is called ***treacherous***, because, though she professed to keep close to God when Israel had backslidden, adhering to the kings and priests that were of God's own appointing, yet she proved ***treacherous***, and false, and unfaithful to her professions and promises.

***Jer 3:9 So it came to pass, through her casual harlotry, that she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees.***

- ***Through her casual harlotry***, which mattered so little to Judah that she participated in the same evil practices as her sister Israel and ***defiled the land!***
- ***With stones and trees***. The ***stones*** were the little idols that they carved out of stones, the ***trees*** were the little idols that they carved out of wood and so the abundance of these little idols that they worshipped as gods and they would do their whole religious offerings before these wooden and stone idols; whoredom, turning from God to worship other gods. None feared the ruin which Israel by this means had brought upon themselves.

***Jer 3:10 And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah has not turned to Me with her whole heart, but in pretense," says the LORD. Jer 12:2 You have planted them, yes, they have taken root; They grow, yes, they bear fruit. You are near in their mouth But far from their mind.***

- ***Judah has not turned to Me with her whole heart, but in pretense: It was not a whole-hearted return!*** On the surface it would appear that there was a real movement toward God, but He looks at the heart, saying they had not returned to God with their ***whole heart***. It just became the popular thing as there are movements in the world today and a certain thing becomes popular, such as they're going to the temple. Yet it was not with a ***whole heart***. God said that Judah had not ***returned*** with her whole heart, it was just an outward thing. Their "***return***" didn't last! It seemed that Judah had learned nothing from the sin and consequences that came upon the northern kingdom of Israel. Whatever repentance they did offer was not from the whole heart, but only in ***pretense***. The reforms ***did not touch the deepest things in their lives***.
- ***Josiah's spiritual revival*** had ordered that the idols be destroyed. He had ordered that the places of worship be torn down, the alters on the high places that were erected to Baal and Molech and the other gods, he ordered them destroyed, the places of the worship of the pagan gods destroyed.

***Jer 3:11 Then the LORD said to me, "Backsliding Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah. (Rev 3:16) So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.***

- ***Judah is really worse off than Israel who was destroyed because of this halfhearted relationship.*** God ***does not want a half-hearted*** relationship. Jesus said that He would rather that you be either hot or cold. If you are really cold the Lord can deal with you. If you are lukewarm you say, "Oh well, I go to church. I'm okay with God just as I am!" You are hard to reach. ***Judah*** is really worse than backsliding ***Israel***.
- ***Backsliding Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah:*** God tells Jeremiah to invite ***Israel*** to return and find mercy. This is a startling statement, considering how deeply the northern kingdom of ***Israel*** gave themselves to idols. Nevertheless, we can think of several reasons why ***Judah's*** sin was even worse. ***Judah*** had the example of ***Israel*** to ***learn from, and advantage*** that ***Israel*** did not have. Judah was closer to the temple and center of true worship. ***Judah*** had better and more spiritual kings than ***Israel*** had. ***Judah's*** problem was ***treachery and the pretense*** of repentance; ***Israel*** was ***more honest*** in their sin.

***Jer 3:12 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.***

- ***Israel*** was already gone, it was carried away captive, but go and just proclaim these words toward the north because they were carried off to the north through Assyria. If you return, God is saying,

*I will be merciful, I won't be angry forever.* In God's anger they were carried away to Assyria. God is saying, *return, backsliding Israel for I am merciful.*

- **Return, backsliding Israel:** God told Jeremiah to invite *Israel* – though they were scattered in exile throughout the Assyrian empire – to *return* to Him. Their key to their *return* was this: **Only acknowledge your iniquity.** This honesty was what Judah lacked and was the key to Israel's restoration to right relationship. Here **there is no promise that God would restore the northern kingdom to its land and realm. Instead the promise seems to be of restored relationship with Yahweh, their covenant God.** The sense seems to be, "Judah has not repented honestly, only in *pretense*. Perhaps *Israel* will honestly repent if I invite them."

***Jer 3:13 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. 1Jn 1:8-9 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. [9] If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.***

- **They are directed how to return!** *Only acknowledge your iniquity*, own yourself, taking shame to yourself and give glory to God." *I will not remain angry forever*, a previous promise. You shall be delivered from that anger of God which is everlasting, from the wrath to come; but upon very easy and reasonable ones. ***Only acknowledge your iniquity, confess your sins!*** In confessing sin, we must own the corruption, the perverseness and irregularity of our nature. We must own our actual sins: "***That you have transgressed against the Lord your God***, have affronted and offended Him." We must own the multitude of our transgressions: "***And have scattered your charms To alien deities under every green tree.*** The sinfulness of sin is the worst thing: "***You have not obeyed My voice;*** acknowledge that! Let that humble you more than anything else.

***Jer 3:14 "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.***

- ***Return, O backsliding children - For I am married to you. Return and be restored!*** Here God speaks to both Israel and Judah and invites them to *return* to Him. Notice this great depth of feeling. This is not a cold, dispassionate God; this is the Lord **full of warmth and compassion**, pursuing His wayward people. **How warm and compassionate are we, toward wayward people?**
- God is still acknowledging that this marriage exists, and God loves them still. There will be that remnant, ***one from a city and two from a family***, those remnant who are faithful and true to God ***and I will bring you to Zion***; the restoration of the faithful remnant that God will bring back.

***Jer 3:15 And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding. Eph 4:11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,***

- ***I will give you shepherds according to My heart!*** After the blessing of restoration and repatriation, God promised the blessing of good and godly spiritual leadership, giving an instructive description of what leaders among God's people should be. These shepherds should: Be given by God (***I will give you***), not by human ambition or presumed calling; Be given *to* the people of God (***I will give you***) for their care and service unto them; Be caring for the flock of God; Be according to God's ***heart*** in the way they serve and lead God's people; ***Feed*** God's people ***with knowledge and understanding!***
- **David was called the king after God's own heart.** May all the shepherds be pastors after God's ***heart who would feed the flock of God with the knowledge and understanding*** of God, with a real emphasis on teaching of the whole counsel of God, because it is through the Word that we

come to a *knowledge and understanding* of God.

***Jer 3:16 "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. Isa 65:17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.***

- ***The ark of the covenant*** was the symbol of that ***covenant*** that God had made to the nation of Israel whereby they would relate to Him and be His people and He would be their God. In ***the ark of the covenant*** were the two tables of stone upon which the Lord had engraved the Ten Commandments. Within the ***ark*** you were related to God by the Law. But now **God is dwelling with man, God with us, Emmanuel, Jesus is here, Jesus is reigning!** The relationship to God will not be through the old system of the Law but now through Jesus Christ!
- **When Jesus came He said, "A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another even as I have loved you." "Greater love has no man than this that a man will lay down his life for his friends.** When He took the bread and He broke it and gave it to them, He said, "This is My body that is broken for you." When He took the cup he said, "This is a *New Covenant* in My blood which is shed for the remission for sin." For the blood of Jesus God's Son cleanses us from all sin. **We now relate to God** not through the old covenant of the Law **but through the new covenant of Jesus Christ and faith in the sacrifice that Jesus made for our sins!**

***Jer 3:17 "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.***

- **God promises that the gospel church, here called *Jerusalem*,** shall become eminent and conspicuous. First it will be God's special residence and dominion in it. It shall be called, ***The throne of the Lord - the throne of His glory***, for that shines forth in the church.
- **Secondly it will have the access of the Gentiles. *All the nations shall be gathered*** to the church, and shall become subjects to that ***Throne of the LORD*** which is there set up, and devoted to the honor of that ***name of the LORD*** which is there both manifested and called upon.
- **Jesus will be there and will be reigning there.** The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord. Oh God hasten the day, the glorious day of the Lord when Jesus reigns from His throne in Jerusalem! They will no longer walk after the ***dictates of their evil heart***.

***Jer 3:18 "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. Jer 50:4 "In those days and in that time," says the LORD, "The children of Israel shall come, They and the children of Judah together; With continual weeping they shall come, And seek the LORD their God.***

- ***In those days!*** This is now a prophecy of the last days and goes out to the Kingdom Age when the Lord has returned, gathering together His remnant, being there in their midst in Zion. The ***'those days'*** is a common reference in the Old Testament to those days when the Lord comes and is reigning. No longer divided as they were at the time of Jeremiah, that sharp division between the people, but they will walk together.

***Jer 3:19 "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.'***

- **Some of the children of Israel limited the Holy One of Israel by their unbelief.** They limited the things that God wanted to do for them, and they did not inherit the land of promise because of unbelief. Some of you, still drawn after the flesh and after Egypt, are not experiencing overcoming joy and victory and glory but are having a tough time, barely surviving as you are perishing really in the wilderness rather than coming into the fullness of God's blessing.
- **How shall I do it?** This will be done by their turning back to God. There has to be the repentance. God is wanting to do wonderful things for His children. Jude exhorts the church to keep yourself in the love of God, keep yourself in the place where God can demonstrate and manifest His love for you. God was wanting to do wonderful things for Israel as His bride and people, to just lavish His love upon them to bless them. But they turned from God, they did not keep themselves in that place of blessing. Even though God had delivered them out of Egypt, yet they perished in the wilderness.
- **You shall call Me, "my Father," and not turn away from Me:** When there is **that union again, turning to God.** Answering His own question, God pointed to an inner transformation that would take place among His people, despite their past treachery. This inner transformation is another feature of the new covenant.

***Jer 3:20 Surely, as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, So have you dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel," says the LORD.***

- **They have dealt treacherously with God!** What they did was horrible. As the Lord said they have committed two evils; they have **forsaken Me the fountain of living waters** and they have **hewn out cisterns, but they are broken cisterns that can hold no water.**
- **They were joined to God by a marriage-covenant, but they broke that covenant, they dealt treacherously** with God, who had always dealt kindly and faithfully with them. Treacherous dealing with men like ourselves is bad enough, but to deal **treacherously** with God is much, much worse!

***Jer 3:21 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.***

- **On the desolate heights, Weeping and supplications of the children of Israel:** Where they were previously desiring to worship idols, now they weep for their sins, and pray for pardon. Here is the consciousness of sin in its real character, which produces godly sorrow. The distinction between mere remorse and repentance is here already, in the **weeping and supplication.** Jeremiah prophetically saw **Israel** in true repentance, crying out to God from their desolation, necessary because they had **perverted their way** and **forgotten the LORD their God.**
- **Not only have they turned from God but now they have forgotten God.** The Lord calls even to them. The grace of God and the mercies of God and the patience of God are something to be marveled at!

***Jer 3:22 "Return, you backsliding children, And I will heal your backslidings." "Indeed we do come to You, For You are the LORD our God. Hos 6:1 Come, and let us return to the LORD; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up.***

- **Return, you backsliding children... Indeed, we do come to You:** Jeremiah spoke of the day when the children of Israel would respond to God's call to return and be **healed from their backsliding,** recognizing their need and who their God is, **for You are the LORD our God!** This was a contrast to how they had previously forgotten the **LORD their God.**

***Jer 3:23 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.***



*Psa 3:8 Salvation belongs to the LORD. Your blessing is upon Your people.*

- **Truly, in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills.** In vain you look for salvation from the hills and the multitudes of mountains.
- **Truly the LORD our God is the salvation of Israel** and only in Him is there salvation. Only in Him is there hope for the future. This is the kind of condition that was taking place with Israel and Judah. God was dealing with it, but it was the end of the road. They had gone over the line even as often we feel that we have gone over the line. Trusting in their false gods to save them.

***Jer 3:24 For shame has devoured The labor of our fathers from our youth—  
Their flocks and their herds, Their sons and their daughters.***

***Jer 3:25 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."***

- ***We have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers...and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God:*** This is the appropriate expression of broken repentance that should mark God's backsliding children. There is no excuse or explanation given. Our land is being destroyed! How far does it have to go before we wake up and say, "***We have sinned against the LORD.***" But rather than turning from sin we are seeing only an increase in sin. Instead of repenting and turning back to God and saying we have sinned we have turned from Him and we are reaping the consequences of our sin and we are only going deeper into the sin. How can we expect God to bless our nation when we have forsaken Him and turned from Him as we have? The study of Jeremiah seems so relevant for us today because of the parallels and the similes that we see between Judah before her fall and the United States.
- **In the midst of all the bad news there is some glorious, good news.** God is alive and He loves His people and if His people who are called by His name would humble themselves and pray and seek His face, He will hear from heaven, He will heal their land. The Lord is coming again soon to deliver His people. The Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God and we who are alive and remain will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord. **The darker the outlook, the brighter the up look. Just keep looking up, Jesus is coming!**

***Jer 4:1 "If you will return, O Israel," says the LORD, "Return to Me; And if you will put away your abominations out of My sight, Then you shall not be moved.***

***Jer 15:19 Therefore thus says the LORD: "If you return, Then I will bring you back; You shall stand before Me; If you take out the precious from the vile, You shall be as My mouth. Let them return to you, But you must not return to them.***

- ***If you will return, O Israel," says the LORD, "Return to Me;*** Now the judgment of God that is coming has been prophesied. The idea behind it is that you must really return. **If you will return, really return! Return with your whole heart!** You remember that the LORD had complained of the fact that they had not turned to Him with their heart but only feigned and that was not acceptable to the LORD. If you will return, return and the promise of God, I will put away your sin and your abominations out of My sight and you will not be removed.

***Jer 4:2 And you shall swear, 'The LORD lives,' In truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; The nations shall bless themselves in Him, And in Him they shall glory."*** ***Zec 8:8 I will bring them back, And they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. They shall be My people And I will be their God, In truth and righteousness.***

- ***The nations shall bless themselves in Him.*** If you serve the LORD in truth then the nations will see the blessing of God and they also will bless the LORD. God is asking them to **be genuine**

**and honest when they swear by the name of the LORD** that they do so *in truth and in judgment and in righteousness*. One of the worst things in the world is to swear by the LORD and to tell a falsehood, lie when you are under an oath before the LORD.

***Jer 4:3 For thus says the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem: "Break up your fallow ground, And do not sow among thorns. Hos 10:12 Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the LORD, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you.***

- ***Break up your fallow ground:*** They had become hardened to the things of God, the seed, the word of God was no longer penetrating into their hearts. God is saying to ***break up that fallow*** and hardened ***ground*** and then ***not to sow*** your seeds ***among the thorns***. God is looking always for fruit, for much spiritual fruit coming forth from your life -- love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness! That is God's purpose and desire and the ultimate intent of God is that your life should bring forth fruit that is pleasing unto Him, bearing witness of your relationship with God.
- ***And do not sow among thorns:*** Here is the warning! Don't sow your seed among the thorns, because as Jesus said, the thorns will grow up with it but then they will choke it out before it bears fruit. For the thorns are the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches and the lust for other things. ***Break up the fallow ground, don't sow among thorns. How fallow is your ground? Are you sowing among any thorns?***

***Jer 4:4 Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, And take away the foreskins of your hearts, You men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, Lest My fury come forth like fire, And burn so that no one can quench it, Because of the evil of your doings."*** *Rom 2:26 Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?*

- ***Circumcise yourselves to the LORD:*** Jeremiah moves to a baby boy's circumcision, in obedience to the covenant of Abraham. Instead of taking away the literal foreskin, Judah had to remove ***the foreskins of your hearts***, cutting away the flesh in covenant dedication to the LORD. They must do that to their souls which was done to their bodies when they were taken into covenant with God
- ***Church baptism is somewhat similar to circumcision.*** Today, the rite of baptism, which signifies a new life. The old life that, the old nature from Adam, we reckon to be dead, crucified with Christ. In baptism we bury that old life, the life that was governed by the flesh, we renounce it, we reckon it to be dead and we bury it. As we come up out of the water we come up with that newness of life, the life of the Spirit in Christ Jesus. It is a symbol of our renouncing the old life of the flesh that we might now live the life of the Spirit living after the Spirit..
- ***Lest My fury come forth like fire, and burn so that no one can quench it:*** God drew His people with kind words, but also ***told them of the consequences of continued rejection***. If they did not return, judgment was waiting. He is calling on them to make a real turn to the LORD, return then truly return. Put away your abominations. When you swear, let it be in truth. When you swear by the name of LORD then let it be in truth and in justice and all, so let it be the real, from your heart, a denying of the life of the flesh or else His fury like fire will burn and no one will be able to quench it.

## Closing Prayer