

# (Through the Bible) Jeremiah 3-5

by Chuck Smith

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*God calls the people of Judah to return to Him, acknowledging their iniquity and turning away from evil, and promises to give them pastors after His own heart and bring them to Zion.*

**Duration:** 40:04

**Scripture:** Genesis 1:1-2, Deuteronomy 24:1-4, Jeremiah 3:1-3, Jeremiah 3:6-7, Jeremiah 3:21-22, Jeremiah 5:6

**Topics:** "Repentance", "Gods Judgment"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need for people to turn away from worldly distractions and dedicate themselves fully to God and spiritual matters. He quotes from the book of Jeremiah, where God warns of impending destruction and judgment upon the people of Jerusalem. The preacher expresses his astonishment at the corruption and lack of fear for God among the rulers and the people. He questions why the people continue to support and vote for corrupt leaders instead of rising up against them. The sermon highlights the rebelliousness of the people and their refusal to acknowledge God's authority.

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## Transcript

Now, they say, that is, in quoting the law, and in speaking of the law of Deuteronomy, if a man puts away his wife, and she goes from him, and becomes another man's wife, shall he return to her again? Shall not the land be greatly polluted? Now, under the law, if you divorced your wife and she married another man, then you could not marry her again. That was under the law in Deuteronomy, chapter 24, I think it is. Yet, God said, even so, you have played the harlot with many lovers, but return again unto me, saith the Lord.

I'll take you back. Oh, the patience of God, the love of God, it's just so amazing to me. Though you've become a harlot, and you've had many lovers, yet turn back to me, saith the Lord.

Come on back. Lift up your eyes unto the high places, and just find a place that you haven't committed spiritual adultery. In the ways hast thou sat for them as the Arabian in the wilderness, that is, the robbers in the wilderness, you've just lurked and waited.

And thou hast polluted the land with your whoredoms, and with your wickedness. Therefore, because of this, the showers, the rain has been withheld, and there has been no latter rain. And you had a horse for it, and you refused to be ashamed.

Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of My youth? Will He reserve His anger forever? Will He keep it to the end? Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things, as evil as you could. Now, that is the end of the first message that the Lord gave to Jeremiah. And verse 6 starts the second message that the Lord gave to Jeremiah concerning the backsliding of Judah.

The Lord said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, you see, introduces this second message with that phrase. Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? She has gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. As I said, the places of worship were established on the high mountains, and then in these groves.

And the worship, of course, God speaks of it as playing the harlot. And most of the worship was involved with the goddess of fertility, and thus they were fertility rites. And the worship of the gods involved sexual intercourse in various fertility rites and all.

And I said, after she has done all of these things, turn unto me, but she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. Now, you've seen what happened to Israel.

You saw how that they went into idolatry, how that they worshiped all of these gods, and I called them to return to me, but they didn't. And you saw them, treacherous sister Judah down there, she saw what happened to Israel, her sister Israel. And I saw when for all of the causes whereby the backsliding Israel committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a bill of divorce, yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went out and played the harlot also.

In other words, they should have learned from what happened to the northern kingdom. They should have learned the lesson when the northern kingdom was carried away captive by Assyria. And they should have returned to God with a whole heart and completely, but they didn't learn from it.

But they themselves persisted in the same kind of actions that brought the judgment of God upon the northern kingdom. And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom that she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and with stocks, that is with the little idols made of stone and of wood. And yet for all of this, her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto Me with her whole heart, but only faintedly, saith the Lord.

It was only a surface revival that was going on. It wasn't really down deep affecting the heart of the nation. It was just something that was taking place on the surface.

Somewhat like what is happening in the United States as churches are reporting increased attendance and Gallup poll is reporting, you know, 50% Christians versus 60% born again in the United States. That's just a surface thing. It hasn't really affected the real life of the individual.

There is a lack of real commitment to God and to Jesus Christ. People mouth the words. It's a popular movement.

They're using born again for everything now. Shampoos or anything else, you know, it's just... It's a term that has been picked up and become popularized in the worldly jargon. But it is without meaning or significance in so many cases.

Let us examine ourselves. Is it meaningful with me? Have I really made a true commitment to God? Is my love divided? Do I love God partially? Am I committed partly? Or is there a total full commitment of myself

unto God and to Jesus Christ and the things of the Spirit? Or am I still desiring and lusting after the things of my flesh? And do I have a divided heart? Now, God is calling us for a full commitment of ourselves to Him. God is calling us away from the idolatry, the things of the world, the love of the world, and the things that are in the world.

Come ye apart from them and be ye separate, saith the Lord. Touch not the unclean thing, and I will be a father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters. So many are being enticed by the things of the world.

They're being drawn and attracted by the excitement of the things of the world. But love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, for he that hath the love of the world in his heart hath not the love of the Father. And many of you are like treacherous Judah.

Oh, your love for God is only a fainted, it's only a surface thing. It really isn't a full, true commitment of your life to Him. You go through the motions, you say the words, but God is looking at your heart, and He sees a heart that is divided.

He sees a heart that is lusting after the world. And God knows your heart, and it is breaking God's heart. What iniquity, God said, have I done that you should turn from Me? I can remember that day when your commitment was so fervent, when you were singing praises unto Me all day long, when all you could think of was Me, and you were in this beautiful harmony and communion with Me.

What happened? Why is it that you've turned away and you're drawn after the things of the world? And God said, I'm calling to you, listen, wake up, come back. And the Lord said unto me, the backsliding Israel has justified herself more than the treacherous Judah. Now, Judah is more to blame because she saw the example of Israel and what happened.

And yet, she did not turn. Go and proclaim these words towards the north and say, return, backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep my anger forever. Only acknowledge your iniquity.

That's what God asks you to do. Acknowledge your iniquity. If we confess our sins, then He is faithful and just.

But if you cover it and say, well, you know, it's alright, I'm not too bad, I still love the Lord, I still do this and that, and you're justifying yourself, then God can't do anything with you. Acknowledge your iniquity. And your transgressions against the Lord thy God.

Acknowledge the things that you've done, how that you've turned to the strangers under every green tree, and you've not obeyed my voice. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married to you, and I will take you, one of the city, two of the family, and I will bring you to Zion, and I will give you pastors according to my heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. God gave me this passage of scripture several years ago.

And He said, this is the kind of a pastor I want you to be. This is a pastor after God's heart. The pastor who will feed the people with knowledge and understanding of God.

That's the pastor after God's heart. And I said, Lord, I want to be a pastor after your heart. To feed the people with the knowledge and the understanding of God.

And God is speaking of this day that is coming, when He gives them these kind of pastors. It shall come to pass, when you are multiplied and increased in the land in those days, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord. Neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember, neither shall they visit it, neither shall that be done anymore.

Talking about the glorious kingdom age, you won't be talking about the Ark of the Covenant, because you'll have the New Covenant, Jesus Christ dwelling with us. You'll not be thinking about the laws and the tables of stone and all that were in that Ark of the Covenant that God made with Israel. Whereas if you keep these laws, I will be a God unto thee.

That will be taken away for God, Jesus said, This blood is a New Covenant in my blood, which is shed for the remission of sins. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord, for Jesus is coming and He will reign over the earth from Jerusalem. And all of the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem.

Neither shall they walk anymore after the imaginations of their own 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 for an inheritance unto your fathers. But I said, How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the host of nations? And I said, Thou shalt call me my father, and shalt not turn away from me.

Surely as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, so have you dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the Lord. A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping in supplication of the children of Israel, for they have perverted their way, they have forgotten the Lord their God. Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.

Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God. This is the response of the people in that day. Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, that is, those that are worshipping on the tops of the mountains, and from the multitude of mountains.

Truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel. You won't find salvation in any of the cisterns that you may have hewed out. Salvation only lies through Jesus Christ.

For shame has devoured the labor of our fathers. And from our youth, their flocks, and their herds, and their sons, and their daughters, we lie down in our shame, and in our confusion we are covered, for we have sinned against the Lord our God, and we and our fathers from our youth even unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God. But if you will return, O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto me, and if you will put away your abominations out of my sight, then you will no longer be moved, or removed, and thou shalt swear the Lord liveth in truth.

It won't just be saying it as a phrase, and the people were still saying, Oh, the Lord lives, you know, praise the Lord, the Lord lives. But it was meaningless. Just like a lot of people today go around saying, Oh, praise the Lord, praise the Lord, you know, it's meaningless, it's just mouthing words.

But you'll say in truth, it'll be from your heart, and in judgment, and in righteousness. And the nations shall bless themselves in Him, and in Him shall they glory. For thus saith the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, sow not among thorns.

That fallow ground, break it up, in order that God might bring His rain, and plant it, and bring forth fruit. Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, but cut away the foreskin of the heart, the fleshly heart, the heart that is after the flesh. Paul refers to this in Romans, the true circumcision is of the heart, not of the flesh.

Ye men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings. Cut away a heart that is after your flesh, and after things of the flesh. Cut that away, that you might be dedicated, totally to God and the things of the Spirit.

Declare ye in Judah, publish in Jerusalem, and say, blow ye the trumpet in the land, cry, gather together and say, assemble yourselves and let us go to the defense cities. Set up the standard toward Zion, retire, stay not, for I will bring evil from the north, and great destruction. The lion has come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way.

Babylon is moving toward you. He has gone forth from his place to make thy land desolate, and thy cities shall be laid waste and without inhabitants. For this gird you up with sackcloth.

Lament and howl, for the fierce anger of the Lord is not turned back from us. And it shall come to pass that that day, saith the Lord, that the heart of the king shall perish and the heart of the princess, and the priests shall be astonished, and the prophets shall wonder. Then said I, Ah, Lord God! Jeremiah is responding.

When God said all these things, you know, the judgment is coming, these men are all going to be... Then I said, Oh, Lord God! Surely, you have greatly deceived this people in Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have peace, whereas the sword is reaching to their soul. Because the prophets were going around saying, peace, peace, peace and safety, you know. Babylon shall not come to this place.

Babylon shall never cast a trench around this place. At that time it shall be said to this people and to Jerusalem, A dry wind of the high places in the wilderness toward the daughter of my people, not to fan nor to cleanse. Even a full wind from those places shall come unto me.

Now also will I give sentence against them. Behold, he shall come up as the clouds and his chariot shall be as a whirlwind. His horses are swifter than eagles.

Woe unto us, for we have been spoiled, destroyed. O Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness that you may be saved. How long shall your vain thoughts remain in your minds? For a voice declares from Dan, Publish the affliction from Mount Ephraim.

Make ye mention of the nations. Behold, publish against Jerusalem that watchers are coming from a far country and give out their voice against the cities of Judah. As keepers of a field are they against her round about because she hath been rebellious against me, saith the Lord.

Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee. You've brought it upon yourself. This is thy wickedness because it is bitter because it reaches into your hearts.

My bowels, my bowels, I am pained at my very heart. My heart makes a noise in me. I cannot hold my peace because you have heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet and the alarm of war.

Destruction upon destruction is cried for the whole land is spoiled. Suddenly are my tents spoiled and my curtains in a moment. How long shall I see the standard and hear the sound of the trumpet? For my

people is foolish.

They have not known me. They are sottish children. They have no understanding.

They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. Paul said we ought to be simple concerning evil things. A lot of people like to dabble into the evil things.

Well, I just want to understand about the evil. Let's go down to the nude show so that we'll know what to preach against. The Bible says be simple concerning evil.

Better that you be dumb about evil things. Of course, it's good that you pick up the lingo so that you won't be using some of the corrupted words that they use. But it's good to just be simple about evil.

And Jeremiah says much the same thing here. The people were wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. Now the Lord speaks.

Now there are some who think that Jeremiah is here going back, but contextually it's hard to really see it that way. But he uses the same phraseology that is used in Genesis 1. And therefore those who adhere to the gap theory, and that is that between verses 1 and 2 of Genesis there is a gap of indeterminate time. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Period. When that was we don't know. Billions, trillions of years ago we don't know.

Verse 2, and the earth was without form and void can also be translated, but the earth became wasted and desolate. So they see the possibility of a great gap of time indeterminate existing between verses 1 and 2 of Genesis. And they see the earth that was originally created by God as being destroyed by God's fierce anger in a rebellion that preceded man's existence upon this planet.

And one of the scriptures that they use as a proof for the gap theory is this particular passage that we come to here in Jeremiah where he makes a reference, I beheld the earth and lo, it was without form and void. The same terminology that you find in verse 2 of Genesis 1. And the heavens, they had no light. Remember the first thing God said was, let there be light.

I beheld the mountains and lo they trembled and all of the hills moved lightly. I beheld and lo there was no man. And all of the birds of heavens were fled.

I beheld and lo the fruitful place was as a wilderness. And all the cities were broken down by the presence of the Lord and by His fierce anger. For thus hath the Lord said the whole land shall be desolate yet I will not make a full end.

And so those who subscribe to the gap theory see this as a proof of the gap theory as Jeremiah they say is looking back and he sees the earth prior to God's reconstruction of the earth for placing man upon it and sees earth in perhaps the state it was before God began to reconstruct the earth to put man upon it sees it in the last ice age when there was no light shining down upon the earth when the earth was enshrouded in darkness and the birds the life that had existed was gone the cities that were once here were destroyed and so they explain the fossils prehistoric man and so forth through this gap theory there is much that can be said for the gap theory there are problems also with the gap theory but it is one of the common theories of creation and especially of Genesis that gap theory

and as I say there is merit to it there are problems but there is merit to it for thus hath the Lord said the whole land shall be desolate yet I will not make a full end for this shall the earth mourn and the heavens above be black because I have spoken I have purposed and I will not change neither will I turn back from it the whole city shall flee for the noise of the horsemen and the bowmen they shall go into the thickets and climb up on the rocks every city shall be forsaken and not a man dwell therein and when you are spoiled what will you do though you clothe yourself with crimson though you deck yourself with ornaments of gold though you retest your face with painting in vain you will make yourself beautiful for your lovers will despise thee they will seek thy life for I have heard

a voice as of a woman in travail and the anguish as of her that is bringing forth her first child and the voice of the daughter of Zion that is wailing she is spreading forth her hands she is saying woe is me now for my soul is weary because of the murderers run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem see now and know and seek in the broad places if you can find a man if there be any that is executing judgment and that is seeking truth and I will pardon if you can find one man you remember when the angels were going down to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah Abraham said hey Lord shall not the God of the earth be fair would you destroy the righteous with the people what if there are 50 righteous people in that city the Lord said I'll spare it for 50 righteous well Lord what if there's 40 what

if there's 30 what if there's 20 what if there's 10 Lord said I'll spare it for 10 now God is saying of Jerusalem just search search through the whole city find one man one man that is seeking to execute judgment that is seeking the truth and though they say the Lord liveth they swear falsely people were still mouthing the right words but it wasn't coming from their hearts the Lord liveth a popular phrase in those days oh the Lord liveth you remember when Elisha healed Naaman of his leprosy the Syrian general and he tried to give Naaman a lot of reward a lot of silver and changes of clothes and so forth because of his health and Elisha said I'll keep your stuff I don't want any of it I don't need it you keep it well Gehazi the servant of Elisha saw the loot and he thought oh man if I just

had a little bit of that I could buy a field and I could plant a vineyard and I could have servants and I could plant some olive trees man I could retire that would be nice so as Naaman was going back he got on his little donkey and he headed out after him and they said to Naaman hey looks like someone's chasing us they said well let's stop and see who it is well it looks like the servant of the prophet and so as old Gehazi came up you know on his little donkey he said everything okay oh yeah everything's okay except that my master Elisha had some sudden company come in some young men and they needed some help so he said he'll take just a little bit of your silver and a few changes of garments and so forth so Naaman gladly gave him the stuff and he got back on his donkey and went back and

he hid all the stuff and came whistling in you know and the prophet said as the Lord liveth you see it was a common term spiritual term it signified you know that you had it going spiritually as the Lord liveth where have you been as the Lord liveth I haven't been anywhere you see all of the deceit and lying but he was couching it in spiritual terms in order to sort of deceive and I'm afraid that many times people do couch themselves in spiritual terms for the purpose of deceiving yeah I'm right on brother praise the Lord bless God man you know and we use this spiritual jargon to deceive and so he said as the Lord liveth I didn't go anywhere oh wait a minute and then the prophet began to read his mind is this the time to buy fields and to plant vineyards and olive trees and to hire

servants that's just what he was thinking you see he said did not my heart go with you when you chased after that man and took those things and now because of that the leprosy that was upon him is going to

come upon you and the guy turned white with leprosy and went out from the sight of the prophet but yet he was using this and God says hey they use the term as the Lord liveth but in that day though they say the Lord liveth surely they swear falsely Jeremiah responds oh Lord are not your eyes upon the truth you have stricken them but they have not grieved you have consumed them but they have refused to receive correction they have made their faces harder than a rock they have refused to return therefore I said surely these are poor they are foolish for they know not the way of the Lord

nor the judgment of their God I will get unto the great men I will speak to them for they have known the way of the Lord and the judgment of their God but these have altogether broken the yoke and they burst the bonds wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them and a wolf of the evening shall spoil them and the leopard shall watch over their cities and everyone that goeth out from there shall be torn in pieces because of their transgressions are many and their backsliding is increased how shall I pardon thee for this God cries thy children have forsaken me and they have sworn by them that are not gods when I fed them to the full they committed adultery and assembled themselves by troops in the harlot's houses they were as fed horses in the morning and everyone was neighing after

his neighbor's wife shall I not visit for these things saith the Lord and shall not my soul be avenged on such nation as this go ye up upon her walls and destroy but make not a full end take away her battlements for they are not the Lord's for the house of Israel and the house of Judah have dealt very treacherously against me saith the Lord they have belied the Lord and said it is not he neither shall evil come upon us neither shall we see the sword or famine and it won't happen here and the prophets shall become wind and the word is not in them wherefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts because you speak this word behold I will make my words in thy mouth like fire and the people like wood and it will devour them lo I will bring a nation upon you from far O house of Israel saith the Lord

it is a mighty nation it's an ancient nation a nation whose language you do not know neither understand what they say and their quiver is an open sepulcher and they are all mighty men and they shall eat up your harvest and your bread which your sons and daughters should be eating and they shall eat up your flocks and your herds and they shall eat up your vines and your figs and they shall impoverish your cities wherein you have trusted with the sword nevertheless in those days saith the Lord I will not make a full end with you God promises he's not going to cut the people off completely for it shall come to pass when you will say wherefore does the Lord our God all of these things against us then shall you answer them like as you have forsaken me and serve strange gods in your land so

shall ye serve strangers in a land that is not yours declare this in the house of Jacob publish it in Judah saying hear now this O foolish people you that are without understanding which have eyes but you see not which have ears but you hear not do you not fear me saith the Lord will you not tremble at my presence for I have placed the sand for the boundaries of the sea by a perpetual decree that it cannot pass over it and though the ways thereof toss themselves against it and they roar they will not prevail but this people has revolted and they have a rebellious heart they have revolted and gone away neither say any of them in their heart let us now reverence the Lord our God who gives us the rain both the former and the latter in its season he reserves unto us the appointed weeks of the

harvest your iniquities have turned these away these things and your sins have withheld good things from you oh the good things that God wants to do for you but he is hindered because of your sins Jude says keep yourself in the love of God what does he mean he means to keep yourself in the place where God can do all of the good things he wants to do for you because he loves you it doesn't mean keep yourself so

sweet and beautiful that God can't help but love you because God's love for you is uncaused it's in his nature God loves you good or bad that's just God's nature but because God loves you he wants to bless you he wants to do good things for you but as with Judah your sins have withheld the good things from you those good things God wants to do for you for among my people there are

wicked they lie and wait as he that sets a trap and they set a trap for men to catch them as a cage is full of birds so are the houses full of deceit therefore they are become great and they have become very rich they have become fat they shine they overpass the deeds of the wicked they judge not the cause the cause of the fatherless and yet they prosper and the right of the needy they do not take care of shall I not visit for these things saith the Lord shall not my soul be avenged on a nation like this a awesome wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land wonderful in the sense that it causes wonder and amazement an amazing and horrible thing is committed in the land for the prophets are prophesying falsely and the priest are bearing rule by their wealth and my people love to

have it that way what will you do in the end of such things you see there's corruption those that are ruling are ruling corruptly but the people love it that way they'll vote for them at the next election every election amazes me when I see the people that are elected into office those kind of things absolutely well as God said you can't believe it it's awesome it's horrible the priest are bearing rule by their own wealth but the people love to have it that way rather than being shocked and arising in righteous indignation people just seem to go along with it and love to have it that way I can't understand it and God himself couldn't understand it God speaks of it in it's just how can you believe it how can you understand it it's just horrible but as we read Jeremiah the real value of

Jeremiah comes as you see a nation that is about to die and you observe the symptoms of that nation and the disease that has brought it's death and it will help you to understand very much as you look at the nation in which we live today and what's happening so we pray Lord help us that we shall not go the way of the world God that we would stand for righteousness for truth for justice oh God help us that we would not turn away from thee or that we would draw away from thee in any wise to worship our own idols and the things of our flesh but oh God may thy love fill our hearts that our songs might be unto thee day by day that we will be praising thee and worshiping you and thinking about you Lord through the day as our love for thee increases and grows help us Lord not to wane in our

devotion help us Lord that our love will not grow cold keep us from that lukewarm state lest you spew us out of your mouth in Jesus name Father, Amen May the Lord bless and give you a beautiful week may his hand be upon your life and may the flame of love really begin to burn in your hearts towards God that this will be a week in which you're really in tune in harmony with him and that love and commitment is restored and it's just a glorious week of thinking of him worshiping him, serving him loving him may God be pleased with you by your commitment and devotion to him in Jesus name

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