

Jeremiah Chapters 13-14

Bible Study Notes - Chapter 13

A Linen Belt - Verses 1-11

1 This is what the LORD said to me: "Go and buy a linen belt and put it around your waist, but do not let it touch water." 2 So I bought a belt, as the LORD directed, and put it around my waist. 3 Then the word of the LORD came to me a second time: 4 "Take the belt you bought and are wearing around your waist, and go now to Perath and hide it there in a crevice in the rocks." 5 So I went and hid it at Perath, as the LORD told me. 6 Many days later the LORD said to me, "Go now to Perath and get the belt I told you to hide there." 7 So I went to Perath and dug up the belt and took it from the place where I had hidden it, but now it was ruined and completely useless. 8 Then the word of the LORD came to me: 9 "This is what the LORD says: 'In the same way I will ruin the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem. 10 These wicked people, who refuse to listen to my words, who follow the stubbornness of their hearts and go after other gods to serve and worship them, will be like this belt--completely useless! 11 For as a belt is bound around a man's waist, so I bound the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah to me,' declares the LORD, 'to be my people for my renown and praise and honor. But they have not listened.'

13:1 A linen belt (or loincloth) was one of the more intimate pieces of clothing, clinging close to the body. It was like underwear. Jeremiah's action showed how God would ruin Judah just as Jeremiah had ruined the linen belt.

13:1-11 Actions speak louder than words. Jeremiah often used vivid object lessons to arouse the people's curiosity and get his point across. This lesson of the linen belt (or loincloth) illustrated Judah's destiny. Although the people had once been close to God, their pride had made them useless. Proud people may look important, but God says their pride makes them good for nothing, completely useless. Pride rots our hearts until we lose our usefulness to God.

Wineskins - Verses 12-14

12 "Say to them: 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Every wineskin should be filled with wine.' And if they say to you, 'Don't we know that every wineskin should be filled with wine?' 13 then tell them, 'This is what the LORD says: I am going to fill with drunkenness all who live in this land, including the kings who sit on David's throne, the priests, the prophets and all those living in Jerusalem. 14 I will smash them one against the other, fathers and sons alike, declares the LORD. I will allow no pity or mercy or compassion to keep me from destroying them.'
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Threat of Captivity - Verses 15-27

15 Hear and pay attention, do not be arrogant, for the LORD has spoken. 16 Give glory to the LORD your God before he brings the darkness, before your feet stumble on the darkening hills. You hope for light, but he will turn it to thick darkness and change it to deep gloom. 17 But if you do not listen, I will weep in secret because of your pride; my eyes will weep bitterly, overflowing with tears, because the LORD's flock will be taken captive. 18 Say to the king and to the queen mother, "Come down from your thrones, for your glorious crowns will fall from your heads." 19 The

cities in the Negev will be shut up, and there will be no one to open them. All Judah will be carried into exile, carried completely away. 20 Lift up your eyes and see those who are coming from the north. Where is the flock that was entrusted to you, the sheep of which you boasted?

21 What will you say when [the LORD] sets over you those you cultivated as your special allies? Will not pain grip you like that of a woman in labor? 22 And if you ask yourself, "Why has this happened to me?"-- it is because of your many sins that your skirts have been torn off and your body mistreated. 23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil. 24 "I will scatter you like chaff driven by the desert wind. 25 This is your lot, the portion I have decreed for you," declares the LORD, "because you have forgotten me and trusted in false gods. 26 I will pull up your skirts over your face that your shame may be seen-- 27 your adulteries and lustful neighings, your shameless prostitution! I have seen your detestable acts on the hills and in the fields. Woe to you, O Jerusalem! How long will you be unclean?"

13:15 While it is good to respect our country and our church, our loyalties always carry a hidden danger—arrogance. When is pride harmful? When it causes us to (1) look down on others; (2) be selfish with our resources; (3) force our solutions on others' problems; (4) think God is blessing us because of our own merits; (5) be content with our plans rather than seeking God's plans.

13:18 The king was Jehoiachin, and his mother was Nehushta. The king's father, Jehoiakim, had surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar but later rebelled. During Jehoiachin's reign, Nebuchadnezzar's armies besieged Jerusalem, and both Jehoiachin and Nehushta surrendered. Jehoiachin was sent to Babylon and imprisoned (2 Kings 24:1-15). Jeremiah's prophecy came true.

13:19 The Negev region is the dry wasteland stretching southward from Beersheba. The towns in this area would be closed to any refugees fleeing the invading army.

13:23 Not even the threat of captivity could move the people to repent. The people had become so accustomed to doing evil that they had lost their ability to change. God never rejects those who sincerely turn to him. God was warning his people to repent before it became impossible to change. We must never put off until tomorrow those changes God wants us to make. Our attitudes and patterns for living can become so set that we will lose all desire to change and will no longer fear the consequences.

Bible Study Notes - Chapter 14

Drought, Famine, Sword - Verses 1-13

1 This is the word of the LORD to Jeremiah concerning the drought: 2 "Judah mourns, her cities languish; they wail for the land, and a cry goes up from Jerusalem. 3 The nobles send their servants for water; they go to the cisterns but find no water. They return with their jars unfilled; dismayed and despairing, they cover their heads. 4 The ground is cracked because there is no rain in the land; the farmers are dismayed and cover their heads. 5 Even the doe in the field deserts her newborn fawn because there is no grass. 6 Wild donkeys stand on the barren heights and pant like jackals; their eyesight fails for lack of pasture." 7 Although our sins testify against us, O LORD, do something for the sake of your name. For our backsliding is great; we have sinned against you. 8 O Hope of Israel, its Savior in times of distress, why are you like a stranger in the land, like a traveler who stays only a night? 9 Why are you like a man taken by surprise, like a warrior powerless to save? You are among us, O LORD, and we bear your name; do not forsake us! 10 This is what the LORD says about this people: "They greatly love to wander; they do not

restrain their feet. So the LORD does not accept them; he will now remember their wickedness and punish them for their sins." 11 Then the LORD said to me, "Do not pray for the well-being of this people. 12 Although they fast, I will not listen to their cry; though they offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Instead, I will destroy them with the sword, famine and plague." 13 But I said, "Ah, Sovereign LORD, the prophets keep telling them, 'You will not see the sword or suffer famine. Indeed, I will give you lasting peace in this place.'

14:1 This section opens with God sending a drought on Judah and refusing to answer their prayers for rain. It continues with Jeremiah's description of judgment to come.

14:1-22 Drought was a judgment with devastating consequences. As usual, when their backs were to the wall, the people cried out to God. But God rejected their plea because they did not repent; they merely wanted his rescue. Not even Jeremiah's prayers on their behalf would help. Their only hope was to turn to God.

Verses 14-22

" 14 Then the LORD said to me, "The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I have not sent them or appointed them or spoken to them. They are prophesying to you false visions, divinations, idolatries and the delusions of their own minds. 15 Therefore, this is what the LORD says about the prophets who are prophesying in my name: I did not send them, yet they are saying, 'No sword or famine will touch this land.' Those same prophets will perish by sword and famine. 16 And the people they are prophesying to will be thrown out into the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and sword. There will be no one to bury them or their wives, their sons or their daughters. I will pour out on them the calamity they deserve. 17 "Speak this word to them: " 'Let my eyes overflow with tears night and day without ceasing; for my virgin daughter--my people-- has suffered a grievous wound, a crushing blow. 18 If I go into the country, I see those slain by the sword; if I go into the city, I see the ravages of famine. Both prophet and priest have gone to a land they know not.' " 19 Have you rejected Judah completely? Do you despise Zion? Why have you afflicted us so that we cannot be healed? We hoped for peace but no good has come, for a time of healing but there is only terror. 20 O LORD, we acknowledge our wickedness and the guilt of our fathers; we have indeed sinned against you. 21 For the sake of your name do not despise us; do not dishonor your glorious throne. Remember your covenant with us and do not break it. 22 Do any of the worthless idols of the nations bring rain? Do the skies themselves send down showers? No, it is you, O LORD our God. Therefore our hope is in you, for you are the one who does all this.

14:14 What made the people listen to and support the false prophets? These "prophets" said what the people wanted to hear. False teachers earn fame and money by telling people what they want to hear, but they lead people away from God. If we encourage false teachers, we are as guilty as they are.

14:19-22 Interceding for the people, Jeremiah asked God if Judah's repentance would bring his help. But God refused to come to their aid (15:1) because the people were insincere, wicked, and stubborn. They knew he wanted to bless them, and they knew what they needed to do to receive that blessing. They wanted God to do his part, but they did not want to do theirs. It's easy to express sorrow for wrong actions, especially when we want something, but we must be willing to stop doing what is wrong. God will forgive those who are truly repentant, but hypocrites will be severely punished.