



Jeremiah: Torn Down to Build Up

A Bible Study with the Francis Asbury Society

SESSION 3

Jeremiah 3–4

Background: One of the metaphors most used to express the relationship with God and people in the Old Testament is a walk. Another is marriage. In a real sense God views the Sinai Covenant as a marriage covenant. It is not a legal arrangement in which the two parties agree to give certain services to each other withing certain limits, a contract. Rather, it is a giving of themselves to each other without limits. Thus, to worship other gods is not to break a contract, it to break a heart—God’s.

The Judeans clearly thought they were better than the Israelites (with their golden calves).

1. What does Israel think she can do religiously speaking, as indicated in Jeremiah 3:1–5? What is the problem with this? How does the marriage metaphor apply?
2. What effect did God hope that Israel’s destruction in 722 BC would have on the Judeans (Jer 3:6–10)? What does Jeremiah 3:16 suggest is one reason why that destruction did not have that effect? How does this relate to us?
3. Why would God say that the Judeans were worse than the Israelites (Jer 3:11)? Again, how does this relate to us?
4. What does Jeremiah 3:19–4:2 tell us about the heart of God?
5. Notice that a “circumcised heart” is not a New Testament idea (Jer 4:4). What did circumcision indicate for the Jew? Why does the human heart need to be circumcised?
6. Is God fickle (Jer 4:10) if he offers peace (Jer 3:19–4:11) and then turns around and pronounces judgment (Jer 4:5–9)?

7. How does Jeremiah 4:18 relate to the previous question?
8. Notice the difficulty of defining the precise subject of the statements in Jeremiah 4:18–21. Is it the people, Jeremiah, God? What does this difficulty suggest?
9. Why do we humans persist in the characteristics described in Jeremiah 4:22?
10. What is the “affect” of the poem in Jeremiah 4:23–29?
11. What is the point of the contrast in Jeremiah 4:33–34?