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Isra'el Forsakes God
2: 14-19

Isra'el forsakes God DIG: In what ways was the nation backsliding? What roles does Assyria and Egypt (44:1) play in humiliating and destroying Isra'el? Why were terrible things happening to God's people (2:17)? What attitude did the people of Judah fail to have toward the LORD in verse nineteen? What role does ADONAI play in sealing Isra'el's fate (2:36-37)?

REFLECT: Think about this statement, "The greatest judgment Ha'Shem can send to disobedient people is to let them have their own way and reap the sad, painful consequences of their sins." How was this true in the book of Jeremiah? What evidence do we have that this is still true today?

616 BC during the reign of Josiah

When the marriage relationship with **God** was going well, **Isra'el** was protected from invaders. **All who devoured her were held guilty, and disaster overtook them (2:3)**. But no longer, as **Ha'Shem's five rhetorical questions** demonstrate. Yet, **Isra'el** had become **plunder** (the spoils of war) to the nations around **her**. **Her** declaration that **she** would not serve **YHVH** had resulted in **her** serving those very nations – a new kind of bondage.[36]

For a long time **Isra'el** had been in bondage. **First:** The northern kingdom of **Isra'el** had fallen to Assyria in 722 BC. **Is Isra'el a servant, a slave by birth? The expected answer is negative. A different explanation accounted for their lowly state. Slaves** were normally bought, but **their** children belonged to the same master. It seemed to **Jeremiah** that some freeborn **Israelites** were already **slaves** and others were about to become **slaves. Second:** If that were not so, **why then had [she] become plunder (2:14)? Isra'el** had been **YHVH's** own possession, a willing partner in the covenant, and a witness to the victories over all **her** enemies by **the LORD** (**Jeremiah** does not use the terms **Isra'el** and **Judah** consistently because sometimes **he** uses the terms interchangeably and sometimes **he** uses them distinctly. There is no pattern). But **Jeremiah's** original readers were

sitting in Babylon, exiled from **the Land** and from **the Temple**. To **them**, the unthinkable had happened – **they** had been reduced to **slavery** once again, carried off as **plunder**. How did this come about? **They** had committed spiritual adultery until **she** was **plundered**.

Lions have roared; they have growled at [her]. Judah had not merely been threatened **she** had been caught. This wasn't a warning, but reality. The **lions** in this scroll and the other prophets symbolize nations **(Hosea 5:1-15)**. But who are **they**? **Jeremiah** was coming out against political alliances between **Egypt** and **Assyria**. **They have laid waste her land; her towns are burned and deserted. Also, the men of Memphis and Tahpanhes have cracked her skull**, causing **Judah's** destruction **(2:15-16).** At this point in **Judah's** history, **Egypt** was especially guilty. **Egypt merely exploited Judah for her own benefit, and would not hesitate to rob the Jews when it suited her convenience.** An unreliable ally, **she** would turn around and attack **Judah** within a few years in 609 BC. **Memphis** is the ancient capital of lower-**Egypt** (about 13 miles south of modern Cairo), and **Tahpanhes** (an important fortress is on the Eastern branch of the Nile Delta) was a **city** that controlled the entrance to **Egypt** from the land of Canaan. Later, both of these cities would become centers of Jewish exile after Jerusalem was destroyed **(Hosea 9:6)**.



The real cause of **Judah's** trouble was plainly that **she** walked away from **ADONAI, the Living Water (2:13),** who led **her** safely through **the wilderness**. **Jeremiah** reminded **them** of this. **Third: Have you not brought this on yourselves by forsaking ADONAI your God when He led you in the way** of the wilderness **(2:17)?** This answers the question of **verse 14.** This is a theme to which **the prophet** returned to again and again. And in addition to **forsaking the LORD** for false gods, **Judah** had also **forsaken Him** for false alliances. **Judah** vainly went back and forth between **Egypt** and **Assyria** trying to forge treaties that would guarantee **her** safety **(Jeremiah 2:36; Ezekiel 23:1-48; Hosea 7:11).**

But no alliance could protect **Judah** from **her** sin. **And fourth: Now** (Hebrew: *we'atta,* is an important rhetorical participle signaling a shift from the past to the present) **why go to Egypt to drink water from the Nile? And fifth: Why go to Assyria to drink water from the Euphrates** River **(2:18)?** What would **she** gain? Historically, **Jeremiah's** point is sharp and painful. Menahem, king of the northern kingdom of **Isra'el**, sought **Assyrian** aid against **Egypt**; Hoshea sought **Egyptian** aid against **Assyria**; Josiah died while fighting **Egypt** in support of Assyria. Obviously, none of those alliances had been helpful.[37] **Judah** then sought help from broken cisterns that could not hold **water (2:13)**. Ironically, **the nations** that **she** sought protection from would eventually enslave **her**.

Consequently, **Yirmeyahu** prophesied: **Your wickedness will punish you, and your apostatizing will rebuke you.** But **she** would realize that too late, as **she** was exiled in Babylon. **Consider and realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the LORD your God and have no awe of Me,** declares **ADONAI-Tzva'ot (2:19,** also see **4:18** and **5:25). Isra'el's apostasies** had turned back on **her** and made **her** the victim of **plundering** neighbors. The irony is that by forsaking **Elohim** and seeking after the gods of other nations, they were thrown into exile among those very nations.[38] **Isra'el**, a much-loved heir, did not need to have this happen. The original readers of **Jeremiah's** scroll would realize that **God** was speaking directly to **them**, saying, in effect, "Don't blame others for these events. **You** have **brought this upon yourself**." **The bitter results of these acts would show them the folly of their ways.**

We can fall into the same trap today by seeking security in *anything* but **Jesus**. **Simon Peter** said: **Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that You are the Holy One of God (Yochanan 6:68). This is why the Bible** says: **Look, I am laying in Tziyon a stone, a chosen and precious cornerstone; and whoever rests their trust on it will certainly not be humiliated (Fist Kefa 2:6 CJB). ADONAI is my Rock, my fortress and deliverer, my God, my Rock, in whom I find shelter, my shield, the power that saves me, my stronghold (Psalm 18:2). Jesus** tells us to build our **house on the Rock** and not **the sand** of this world (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ, to see link click Dy – The Wise and Foolish Builders**). **The sand** is composed of human opinions, attitudes, and wills, which are always shifting and always unstable. To build on **sand** is to build on self-will, self-satisfaction, and self-righteousness. To build on **sand** is to be unteachable, to be **always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth**

(Second Timothy 3:7).[39]