

READ Jeremiah 2:1-19

What – Jeremiah wrote more than any other biblical author, and he had much to write about. The nation of Judah in Jeremiahs time was in a serious state of sin and disrepair. The great nation of David and Solomon was long forgotten, as was, except for a few brief periods, Gods Word. The nation of Israel (the NORTHERN nation after the split) had 100 years before been carried off into captivity by the brutal Assyrians, and the SOUTHERN nation of Judah was facing the same fate at the hands of Babylon. Jeremiah struggled with the consequences of his people's sin and hard hearts. Why would they not follow God? Why would God allow them to be destroyed? What would become of those few who were still earnestly seeking God? It is easy to see why Jeremiah, faced with the sin of the people and their impending destruction because of it, earned the nickname "the weeping prophet". Chapter two of his book sets the stage for much of his ministry, as Jeremiah is told to remind the people of their disobedience and how much God has loved them despite it. For a thousand years God had been loving them and showing them grace in the face of their disobedience. God says, however, that two things have led to His decision to withdraw His favor from His people. Verse 13 tells us that the people stopped depending on God and started depending on their own strength. Self-worship is the ultimate idolatry, and God will not stand for anything taking His place.

Why – This scripture is important for so many reasons. For the Jews it sealed their fate. They had taken God for granted for far too long. God is THE God of love and grace, but sin must be judged because it is not in God's nature, and eventually an addiction to sin will keep you from hearing God. The choice belonged to the Jews. They decided to chase idols, and they were reaping what they had sown. For us, this scripture drives home two primary points. Because we have a new perspective through Jesus, we see that God used the end of Israel to bring about a new way, a living hope, Jesus the Christ. The Law was not enough, the Jews proved it and God sent His Son. Now the sin could be paid for in full and we could be shown grace beyond even what the Jews experienced. God took the condition of the Jews and used it to show us, and them, that He was even bigger than the Law. His character is love. BUT! We are also reminded by this scripture that while Jesus is a permanent cure for sin, He is only so for each of us if we choose Him. The unfortunate part of the lesson of this scripture is that just as with the story of Israel, sin will be judged in the bigger story of mankind. There will be an end of sin, just as there was an end to the nation of Israel in the Old Testament. God cannot allow sin to continue to ruin His creation. The opportunity for this world to accept Jesus and escape the results of the sin we choose will not last forever. There is an urgency to our mission today just as there was for the weeping prophet 2600 years ago.

WOW – The amazing WOW in this scripture is that Jeremiah describes sin in a way that applies now as well as it did 2600 years ago. As God reminds us through the Jews that we have a limited time to accept the Word, He also pinpoints what is holding us back. Look at verse two. God "remembers the devotion of our youth". How many of us were excited about Jesus when we first knew Him, but have settled into a rut and lost that first love (See Rev 2:1-7)? I can guarantee God has not changed and is not boring! We sin when we stop pursuing Him. Look at verse five. Israel followed worthless idols and became

worthless themselves. How many of us have stopped asking God, “What can I do for you?” and started asking God to serve us? Haven’t we then made ourselves the God? Our desires and our knowledge will never be bigger than God. The church has become weak and powerless ever since it began to depend upon the wisdom of man rather than God. His Word is truth and must be the base for what we believe and how we live. Finally look at verse eight. God says that those who “deal with the law” did not know Him. The result of our self-idolatry is that our teachers and leaders are straying from the Word. How many preachers and churches are teaching health and wealth above sacrifice and obedience? God is a God of love, grace, and blessing, but in His time, by His Word, and for the benefit of HIS kingdom. We fail miserably, just like the Jews, when our teachers and leaders allow the vision of the church to be defined by man rather than God. This may not seem applicable to many of us, but do not forget that we are all leaders to someone, our spouses, our children, and anyone God’s puts in our paths to witness to. These principles apply to our lives, homes, and family. When we look at things from that perspective, each of us is a leader who can redirect God’s kingdom in a small way. Are you ready to lead in your area? God is waiting, but He will not wait forever.