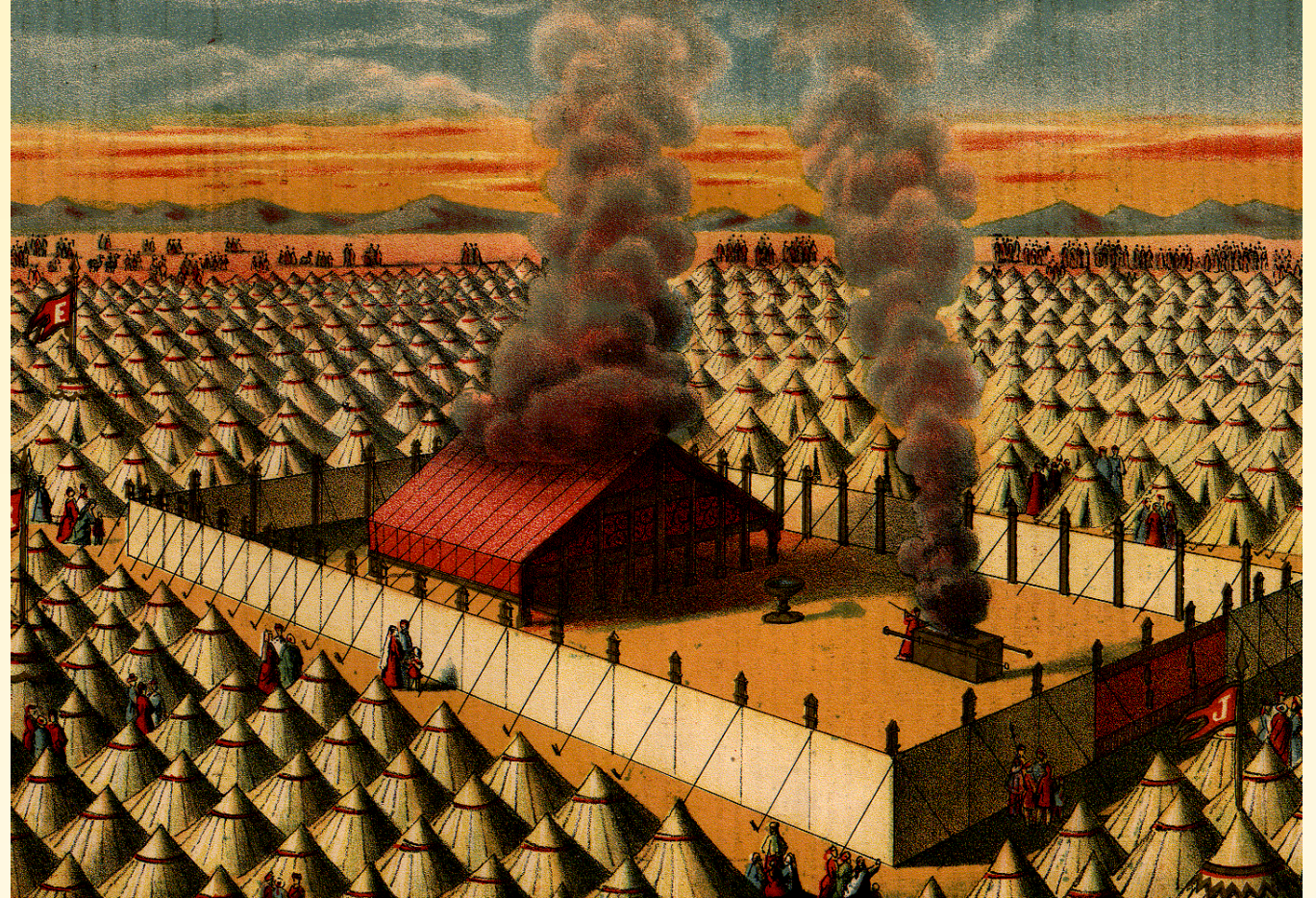


The Crisis (Within and Without)

Jeremiah 2: 3.



'Israel was holiness to the Lord. The firstfruits of His increase. All that devour him will offend; disaster will come upon them,' says the Lord."
Jeremiah 2: 3.



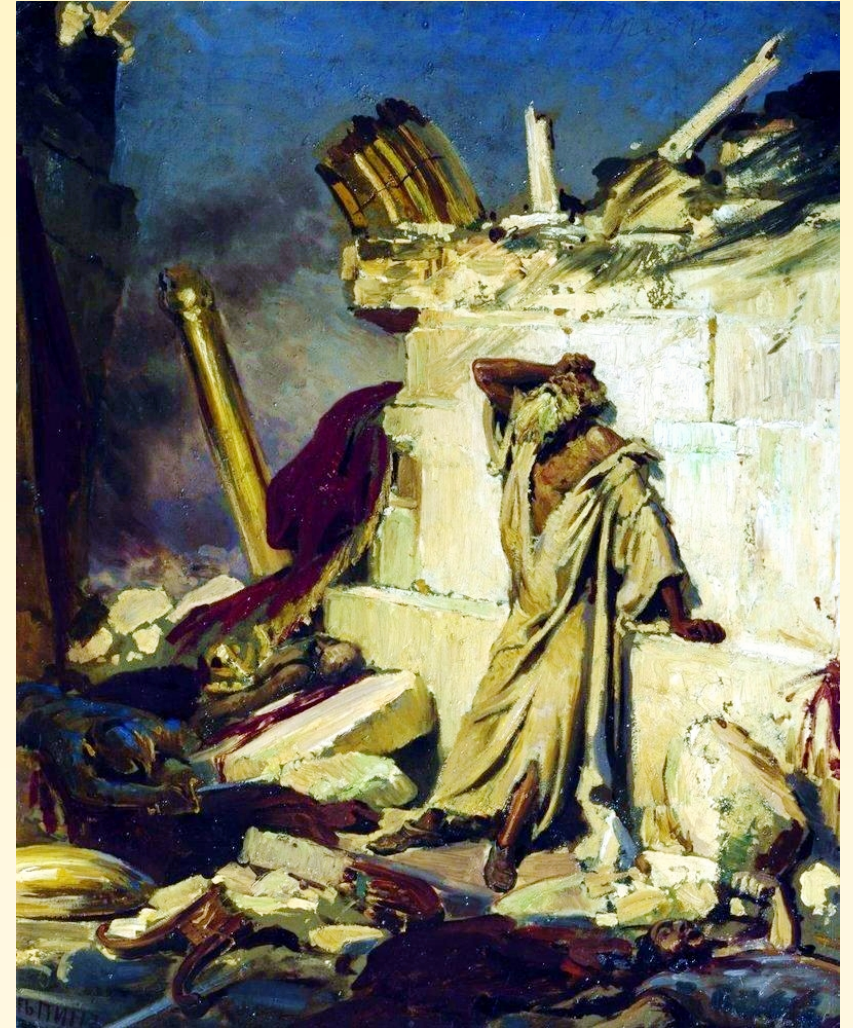
I. Introduction

It is obvious that the people of Israel was unfaithful to God during the ministry of the prophet Jeremiah. In His love, God called His chosen people to repentance, again and again. There is no limit to the love of our heavenly Father.



"Jeremiah's message is that Yahweh will replant His people in the land after uprooting them in judgment (1:10; 12:14-17; 18:7, 9; 24:6; 31:28, 40; 42:10; 45:4), and the two halves of the book reflect the movement from judgment (chaps. 1-25) to salvation (chaps. 26-52)."

Gary E. Yates, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 167, April-June 2010. p. 144-65.



"Israel had been chosen and loved by God yet had been unfaithful to Him by way of idolatry. Just as Hosea redeemed his estranged wife and sought to continue his relationship with her, God promised to redeem Israel and renew their relationship with Him."
S. Michael Houdmann



“Return, faithless Israel”. This call that comes regularly in the book of the prophet Jeremiah uses our keyword (shuv, return) twice in a poignant rhythm, that is hard to express in English (Shuba, Meshuba): “Turn back, turning away Israel”. “Come back”, pleads the Lord. “Come back to me, come back home.” The appeal rests on a truth about God, sets a single condition for the people, and makes a promise for the future.”

Christopher, J. H. Wright, *The Message of Jeremiah, against Wind and Tide*, Intervarsity Press, 2014, p. 82.



“For forty years Jeremiah was to stand before the nation as a witness for truth and righteousness. In a time of unparalleled apostasy he was to exemplify in life and character the worship of the only true God. During the terrible sieges of Jerusalem he was to be the mouthpiece of Jehovah. He was to predict the downfall of the house of David and the destruction of the beautiful temple built by Solomon. And when imprisoned because of his fearless utterances, he was still to speak plainly against sin in high places. Despised, hated, rejected of men, he was finally to witness the literal fulfillment of his own prophecies of impending doom, and share in the sorrow and woe that should follow the destruction of the fated city. Yet amid the general ruin into which the nation was rapidly passing, Jeremiah was often permitted to look beyond the distressing scenes of the present to the glorious prospects of the future, when God’s people should be ransomed from the land of the enemy and planted again in Zion. He foresaw the time when the Lord would renew His covenant relationship with them.”
Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 408.

"Jeremiah lived among people who were obsessed with their idols. They pursued foreign gods like fanatics who run until their shoes wear out... People who are addicted to idols are prisoners of their own idols. One of the great messages of the Bible is that the Lord desires to set prisoners free and give them significant lives. A believer's maturing relationship with the Lord is the most effective way to break free of idolatrous addictions."

David C. Coldwell, *Jeremiah's God*,
Lancaster Pennsylvania, Interact
Publications, 2014, p. 28.



"The major prophets convey the following concerning the nature of forgiveness: (1) The possibility of forgiveness is questioned or denied because of the worship of foreign gods (Jer. 5:7); (2) Forgiveness is an essential feature of the new covenant and the days of restoration (Jer 31:34; 33:8; 50:20); (3) Forgiveness is a matter in which God takes the initiative. He wants to break the vicious cycle of sin and punishment; (4) Forgiveness is dependent upon the grace of God."

Daniel F. O'Kennedy, *Divine Forgiveness in the Major Prophets*, Old Testament Essays, 24/3, 2011, p. 743.



“God does with us individually as He was willing to do with Israel and Judea as nations. He says, “Yes, you've committed these unfaithful sins, but if you'll just return to Me, I'll still accept you as my wife.” He is willing to forgive. The condition, however, is repentance – real change in attitude and behavior.”

John W. Ritenbaugh



II. Context



The first text after the vocation of Jeremiah (2:1 – 3: 5) confirms the essential problem of Israel: they forsook the Lord. This is the center of our text. (2: 18 – 19)
All other negative consequences originate in the distance existing between God and his people.



The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapter 2: Structure

A	2: 1 – 3	I remember the kindness of your youth
B	2: 4 – 6	Where is the Lord who brought us out of Egypt?
C	2: 7 – 9	I will bring charges against you, says the Lord
D	2: 10 – 13	My people have changed their glory
E	2: 14 – 17	The young lions
F	2: 18 – 19	Your own wickedness will correct you
E'	2: 20 – 29	Swift dromedary and wild donkey
D'	2: 30 – 32	My people have forgotten Me
C'	2: 33 - 35	I will bring charges against you, says the Lord
B'	2: 36 - 37	Why going back to Egypt?
A'	3: 1 - 5	You are the guide of my youth

It is very curious to see that God gave freedom to Israel by bringing him out of Egypt. The alienation of Israel produces the necessity for the people to go back to Egypt, in order to find there security and protection. Unfortunately God confirms that the security cannot be found through human strength. (v. 4 – 5; 2: 35 – 37)



The picture used in this chapter is depicting the transformation of people since the time of Moses until the time of the prophet Jeremiah.

At the time of the Exodus, Israel was BIKRA KALA, young fiancée. Unfortunately, in Hebrew there is a wordplay with the same pronunciation, but with a different meaning. BIKRA KALA is also 'the swift dromedary'.

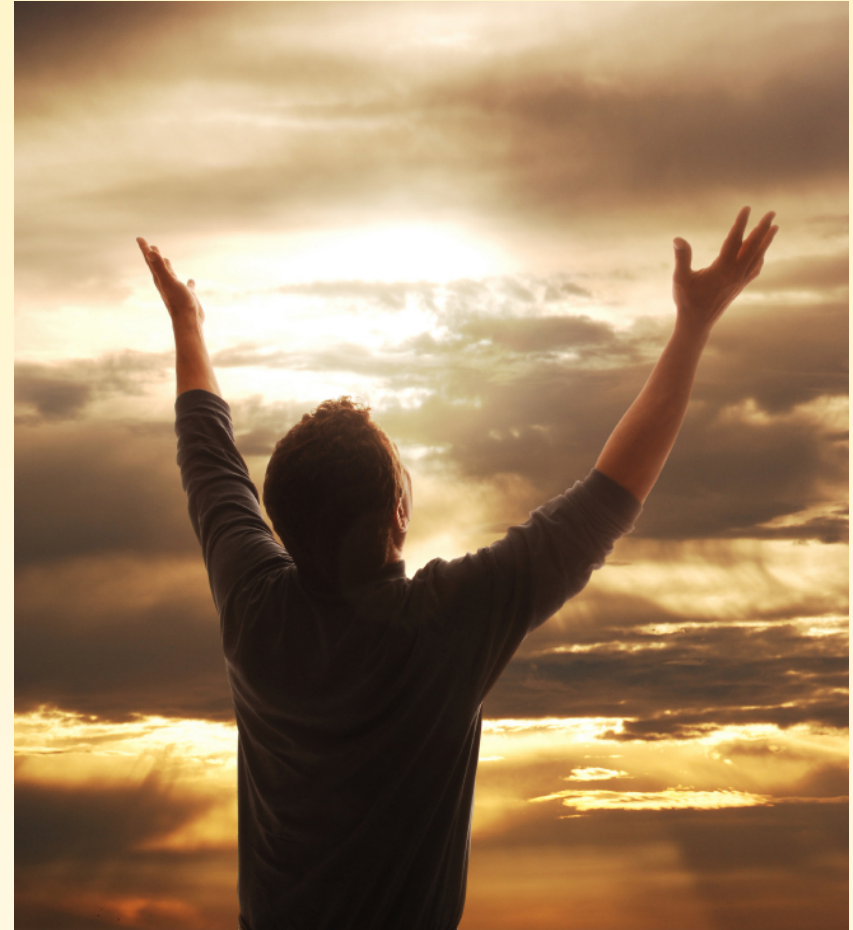
The true question is: how it is possible that Israel, the holiness to the Lord, became the swift dromedary? There is only one answer: by forsaking God.



The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah: Structure

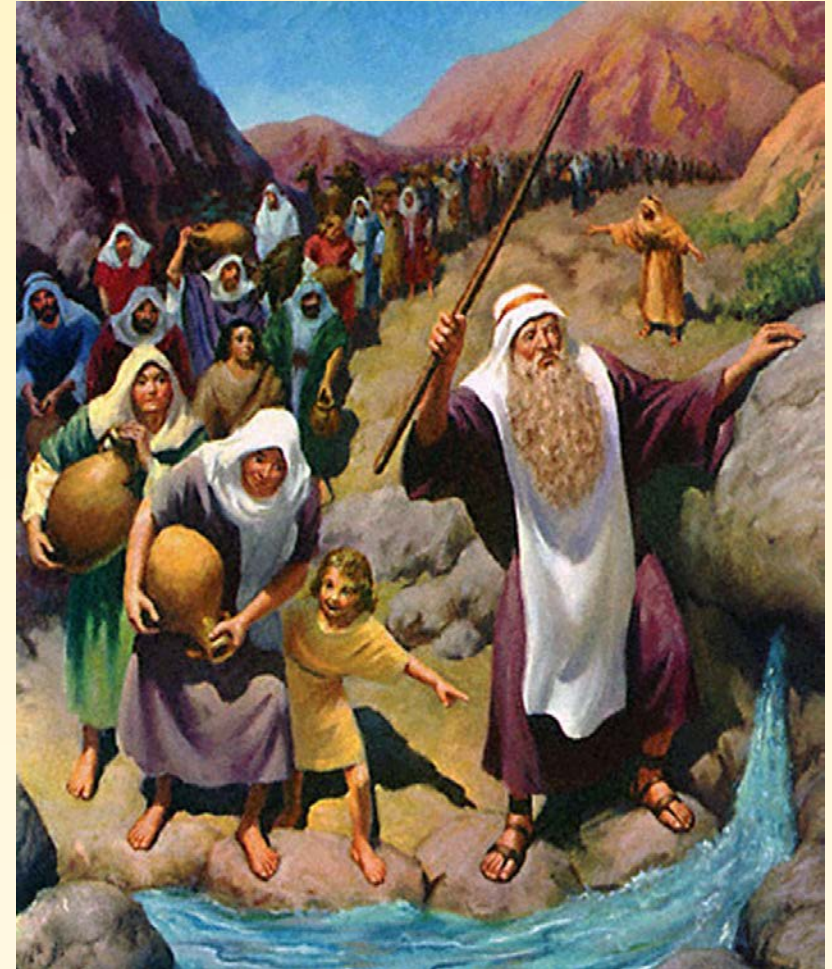
A	Ch. 1	Prologue: Vocation of Jeremiah and prediction about Babylon
B	Ch. 2 - 10	Prophecies regarding Judah
C	Ch. 11 - 20	Confessions of Jeremiah
D	Ch. 21 - 29	Nebuchadnezzar punishing the king Zedekiah and Jerusalem
E	Ch. 30 - 33	The New Covenant and the new Consolation
D'	Ch. 34 - 35	Sin of the king Zedekiah
C'	Ch. 36 - 45	Suffering of Jeremiah
B'	Ch. 46 - 51	Prophecies regarding the Nations
A	Ch. 52	Epilogue: Fall of Jerusalem and fulfillment of the prophecy about Babylon

III. We are special in God's eyes. This is why we are protected by Him, instructed, and saved, in order to accomplish His mission.



1. The holiness makes us special

'Israel was holiness to the Lord.'



“Holiness, as taught in the Scriptures, is not based upon knowledge on our part. Rather, it is based upon the resurrected Christ in-dwelling us and changing us into His likeness.”
A.W. Tozer, Preparing for Jesus' Return: Daily Live the Blessed Hope



“When God is our Holy Father, sovereignty, holiness, omniscience, and immutability do not terrify us; they leave us full of awe and gratitude. Sovereignty is only tyrannical if it is unbounded by goodness; holiness is only terrifying if it is untempered by grace; omniscience is only taunting if it is unaccompanied by mercy; and immutability is only torturous if there is no guarantee of goodwill.”
Ravi Zacharias



"Loving a holy God is beyond our moral power. The only kind of God we can love by our sinful nature is an unholy god, an idol made by our own hands. Unless we are born of the Spirit of God, unless God sheds His holy love in our hearts, unless He stoops in His grace to change our hearts, we will not love Him... To love a holy God requires grace, grace strong enough to pierce our hardened hearts and awaken our moribund souls."
R. C. Sproul, The Holiness of God.



“Keep in mind that when sin is viewed superficially, it is dealt with superficially.”
Erwin W. Lutzer, When You've Been Wronged: Moving From Bitterness to Forgiveness

2. People of God is
precious in His eyes
"The firstfruits of His increase."



"We as a "kind of firstfruits" among His creatures share this distinction with Christ Who is the "firstborn over all creation" (Colossians 1:15). We labor with Him to implore all people to be reconciled with God (2nd Corinthians 5:20). We are the firstfruits - the priests and kings who will judge the world and intercede for the ungodly (lost)... Note, we are not "exclusive" fruits. We are only "first" fruits among many to come."

Gerry Beauchemin



“Once we deeply trust
that we ourselves are
precious in God’s eyes,
we are able to
recognize the
preciousness of others
and their unique places
in God’s heart.
Henri Nouwen



“Both in religious history and in the Old Testament the firstfruits are the guarantee of the fruitfulness of all that is still to come.”
Hendrikus Berkhof, Christian Faith



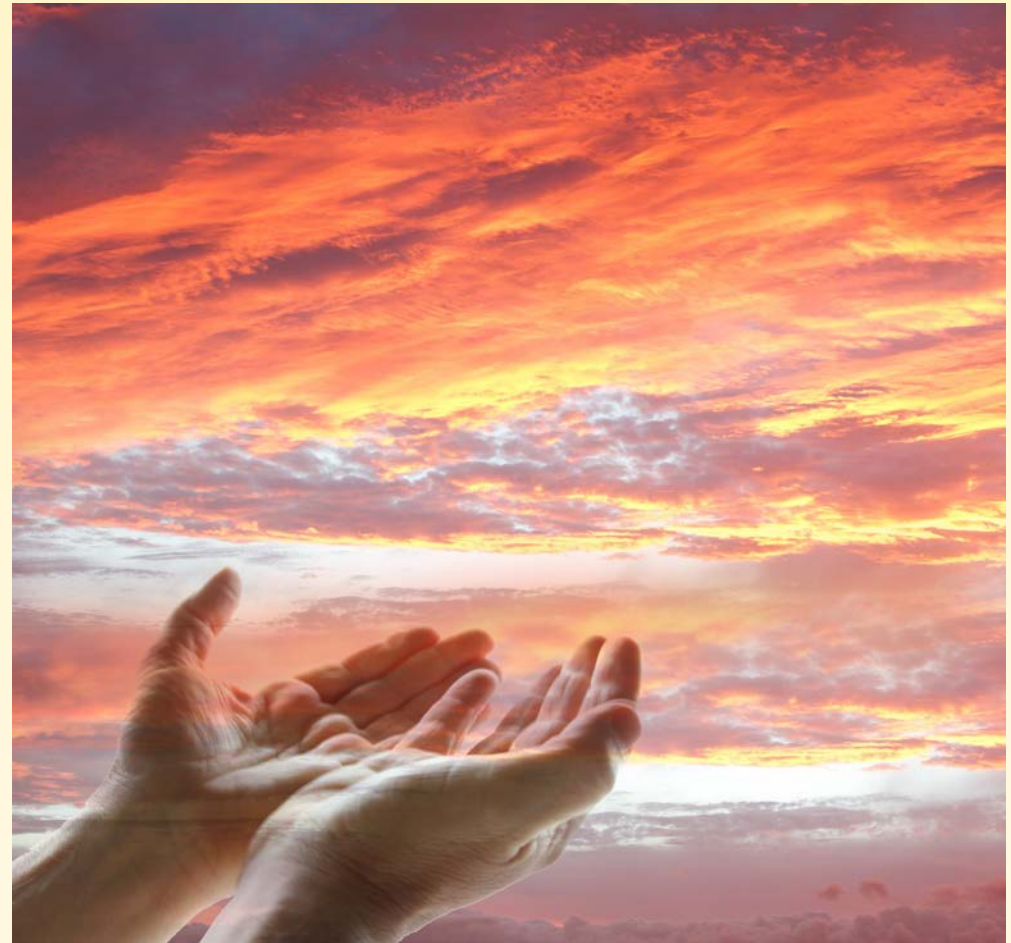
3. God is always ready to intervene in favor of His people

All that devour him will offend;
“Disaster will come upon them”



"Safety comes in our nearness
to God, not in our distance
from our enemies."

Dillon Burroughs, Hunger No
More: A 1-Year Devotional
Journey Through the Psalms



“I am nothing but an imperfect being, who is residing on earth with a perfect God as my guidance and protection.”
Edmond Mbiaka



"If the Lord be with us, we have
no cause of fear. His eye is upon
us, His arm over us, His ear
open to our prayer, His grace
sufficient, His promises
unchangeable."

John Newton (1725-1807)



V. Conclusion



The rainbow of promise encircling the throne on high is an everlasting testimony that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. It testifies to the universe that God will never forsake His children in the struggle with evil. It is an assurance to us of strength and protection as long as the throne itself shall endure."

Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 94.



“It is by beholding that we become changed. And as those sacred precepts in which God has opened to men the perfection and holiness of His character are neglected, and the minds of the people are attracted to human teachings and theories, what marvel that there has followed a decline of living piety in the church. Saith the Lord: “They have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” (Jeremiah 2:13.)”

Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*,
p. 478.



The Crisis (Within and Without)

Jeremiah 2: 3.

