

Jeremiah 3:12-19 – Three Reassuring Promises to A Straying Bride

Poole, HebrewLexicon, TSK, Gaebelein, Barnes, Armstrong, Geneva, Trapp, Clarke, INT, JFB, Delitzsch, Henry, Calvin,

Beloved in the Lord: It would be an extraordinary thing for a man to take back his wife after she left him and lived with many other men!

If he did take her back, you might expect he did it for some personal benefit—maybe financial—maybe emotional—maybe for the children!

But in the case of God's straying serial-adulterous bride, **he welcomed her back because he loved her**. Surely, he had no need for her. She added nothing to his nature. He just loved her!

That is what makes God's restoration of Judah most extraordinary. God didn't need her!

And even then, even after taking her back, he gave her more promises. You will hear of some of those promises today.

Our headings are:

Come, I will remove your sins

Come, I will restore you to your proper place

Come, I will remain with you forever

Our goals are: **That you will praise God for his promises to his bride, and you will urge his straying bride to repent and be restored to him who cares for her and who sent his Son to die for her.**

Come, I will remove your sins

12 "**Go** and **proclaim** these words **toward the north**, and say: '**Return, backsliding Israel,**' says the LORD; 'I will not cause My anger to fall on you. For I am merciful,' says the LORD; 'I will not remain angry forever.'

1. God called on Jeremiah to prophesy toward Assyria and Babylon where his adulterous bride (Israel and Judah) was enslaved and urged her to repent so he would forgive her.

Israel was enslaved by Assyria 120 years before. In Jeremiah's day, Babylon took Judah.

Both Israel and Judah were guilty of apostasy-backsliding from their marriage.

2. God would forgive her completely if she repented and he would remove his anger from her...forever.

Psalms 86:15 But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.

13 Only acknowledge your iniquity, That you have transgressed against the LORD your God, And have scattered your charms **To alien deities** under every **green tree**, And you have not obeyed My voice,' says the LORD.

3. God's forgiveness would specifically require his bride acknowledge 2 things: her sin and her transgression.

She had to repent of not doing what she should, and she had to repent of doing what she shouldn't.

Proverbs 28:13 **He who covers his sins will not prosper**, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.

4. God's forgiveness required she showed, not just talked, how she was sorry for her sins.

She had to **get rid of all her idols**.

She had to **stop running after other idols**.

14 "Return, O backsliding children," says the LORD; "for **I am married to you**....

5. God made an emotional plea for his bride to return while confirming she had strayed from him.

His emotional plea was **based on his marriage covenant with her**.

There is a play on words here. God's bride had run to **Baals**, idols, now God said he was "married to you," - "**baalti**."

6. Lesson:

a. When God forgives your sins, he stops being angry with you. Guaranteed. You are safe!

b. There is no half-measure with God; he removes all your sins because he is satisfied with the payment Jesus made for you.

c. But you must confess your sins. Go to directly to the Father through his Son. There is no veil to stop you!

d. Don't hold anger and unforgiveness in your heart. God didn't do it. Reflect him to the world. Leviticus 19:18 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor...

Come, I will restore you to your proper place

14...I will take you, **one from a city and two** from a family, and **I will bring you to Zion.** 15 "And I will **give you shepherds** according to My heart, who will **feed you with knowledge** and understanding.

1. God will not only forgive his bride for her sins and transgressions, but he will also restore her to her rightful home in Zion.

Repentance would bring back people from all over Judah, from all clans, and from every village.

2. God's bride, Israel, refused his offer and never returned home to live in freedom, but Judah received the offer and was saved from her enslavement and was restored.

Later on, God instructed Cyrus the Great, King of Medo-Persia, to send them back! History confirmed this. Cyrus confirmed this.

3. God's bride would receive new and better shepherds to protect her in the future in Zion - Jerusalem.

Before captivity the **prophets lied** to the people, the **priest corrupted worship**, and the **kings abused justice and did not enforce godly laws!** But that wouldn't happen anymore.

And what is more helpful than to have good, godly leaders, who wouldn't abuse or wouldn't condone the abuse of God's people? This was God's concern and promise in Ezekiel 34. He knew that with no-good shepherds, the sheep would be scattered and plundered.

But with good shepherds, the bride would learn how to properly behave with her husband.

This promise of a better shepherd is fulfilled in completeness in John 10, where the Good Shepherd came and laid down his life for his sheep! And the Jews – both of Israel and Judah – would come and be included as well – but only through Jesus!

Romans 11:26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;

4. Lessons:

a. God doesn't just rescue his bride who strays from him; he also restores her to her rightful place! He puts her back where she belonged! She is precious to God. She was bought at a great price.

b. God wants his under-shepherds to be just as caring and willing to suffer for his people as the Great Shepherd!

c. Pray for good shepherds for Jesus' flock. There is a dearth of good shepherds. Shepherds are to work in God's pastures and tend his flock. 1 Peter 5:2 *Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly...*

Pray shepherds would feed the flock, not fleece them as in Ezekiel 34.

Because some are shepherds for personal gain, they don't preach like they should, they don't discipline like they should, and don't administer the sacraments like they should. They are afraid of offending the sheep.

Pray they are bold.

d. If you aren't a pastor or elder, support those who are! We're all in this together.

Someone wrote: "The poorest village is an ivory tower if there is a pastor in it!" Why? Because **that is how God brings joy, safety, and prosperity to his people.**

Come, I will remain with you forever

16 "Then it shall come to pass, when you are **multiplied and increased** in the land in those days," says the LORD, "that they will say no more, '**The ark of the covenant of the LORD.**' It shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they visit it, nor shall it be made anymore.

1. God will return his bride, he will restore her to her rightful place, and he will remain and live with her permanently.

It is proven that most women prefer to spend time with their husbands than go shopping – even though their husbands are sinful! How much more won't the church delight to be in the presence of the one who lived and died for her?

And his presence would be productive! This was what he promised to do to Israel before they were taken into captivity.

Hosea 1:10 "Yet the **number of the children of Israel Shall be as the sand of the sea**, Which cannot be measured or numbered. And it shall come to pass In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There it shall be said to them, 'You are sons of the living God.'

2. God's presence with his people would be so permanent, they won't even think about the Ark of the Covenant anymore!

This would have been shocking for a prophet to say, but it was the truth. And we know the Ark was lost in 586BC when the Babylonians came and took the utensils of the temple away. **The Jews would need no visual aids (like the Ark) because God would be with them** and they would know it!

This promised presence was fulfilled in Jesus. He was Immanuel—God with us! The 1st temple was destroyed and God's glory left, but the real 2nd temple would be graced with greater glory – not with a box- but with Jesus himself.

Now the creation ordinance must be fulfilled! The 2nd Adam restored his bride!

17 "At that time Jerusalem shall be called **The Throne of the LORD,** and **all the nations shall be gathered** to it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem. No more shall they follow the **dictates of their evil hearts.**

18 "In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and **they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land** that I have given as an inheritance to your fathers.

3. God's presence with his people would be so permanent, Jerusalem would be called the "Throne of God."

The top of the Ark was called the mercy seat.

Jerusalem was left in ruins by the Babylonians and the northern tribes of Israel were destroyed and polluted by the Assyrians.

But God would be with his returning people (both the Judah and Israel would ultimately return) and he would write his laws on their hearts. Lust for other gods would be gone! The Ark of the Covenant, which was called the throne of God, would be replaced by God's presence in their hearts!

God confirmed this promise after the Babylonian captivity.

Zechariah 2:11 "Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. **And I will dwell in your midst...**

Blessings would come to a united Israel, but not stop there!

This spreading of the kingdom would continue to the world through Jesus. Matthew 28:19-20!

19 "But I said: 'How can I put you among the children And give you a pleasant land, A beautiful heritage of the hosts of nations?' "And I said: 'You shall call Me, "My Father," And not turn away from Me.'

4. God explained this was all of grace, as Israel and Judah could provide no ground for being restored to him.

Ephesians 1:5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.

God had to become their Father. They could only become God's children if they rested in the work of his Son, Jesus!

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God...

What amazing love! The bride did not deserve rescue, but God, who loved her, did it anyway.

5. Lessons:

a. Don't ever view the church as defeated or alone. It might go through difficult times – even seem to be small – even non-existent, but she is never abandoned.

b. You have Jesus in your heart – he is enthroned there; you don't have to wait for once per year! And ultimately, you will have Jesus in a place of no sin! Heaven is rightly called the Land of Great Desire.

c. Wherever God's glory is, the Gentiles are attracted... even from the time of the 1st Joshua – starting with the Gibeonites who wanted to say close. **So raise him up! Raise his glory!**

d. Walk worthy of your calling. Walk in a way to show whose you are! Fulfill the creation of mandate. Let Christ rule in all the world. Walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise...

Conclusion:

God promised, if Israel and Judah repented, he would remove their sins, restore them to their rightful place, and remain with them as they expanded throughout the world.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Call the bride out when she sins – individually and collectively.

Don't worry about losing friends.

Don't worry if people are angry with you.

Don't worry if you are mocked.

The truth is, the church is in big trouble now. She has strayed.

Many **have not only run to other gods**, but have **sacrificed their children to Molech** – turning them over to their enemies to teach them - in order to please their **god of money, prestige, relevance, and fitting in.**

Men have sacrificed their wives in order to please their **god of money** and prestige.

Men have abandoned the true doctrine of creation for the **god of prestige** in universities.

Churches have sacrificed Christo-centric worship to their **god of relevance.**

Many still worship the **god of “fitting in.”** Yes, we're in big trouble!

2. What will motivate you call out the bride? Know what the Lord experienced for you on the cross...know that you belong to him...know that his glory is at stake!

And know this is good for you also!

Finally: If you are not a Christian, God is calling you too! If you hear his voice today, ask him to restore you. Life apart from God is death. Don't spend eternity in hell. He will restore you because Jesus died for sinners.