

A GIRDLE, A BOTTLE OF WINE AND THE GLORY OF GOD

Jeremiah 13:1-17

Introduction: Sometimes we need a little help in understanding things so an illustration or object lesson is needed. God chooses to do so with the people of Judah in trying to get the message to them they need. Jeremiah has been preaching and doing so in a very pointed way. His preaching has been very graphic and not hard to understand, yet the people still fail to heed the message and the warnings associated with his messages. He is trying to tell the people that the patience of God is running thin and He is going to make things very difficult for the people who refuse to listen to His words and heed His commands. Still they turn a deaf ear to the messages. This is when God starts a new strategy. He gives some unusual instructions to Jeremiah who has been faithful in delivering the messages God had delivered to him. There is another way to try and get the attention of the people. It is by what we would call an “object lesson” which is defined as “a striking practical example of some principle or idea.” This is a message of using a physical object or visual aid to deliver a clear demonstration of what is to be learned. This is what God does here in Jeremiah.

It is interesting to me that when you read some of the comments on this passage there are all kinds of unusual explanations and unusual applications. For example, some expositors try to say that this was not an object that was carried out as the text describes but a *vision* Jeremiah had. We are told nowhere that this is a *vision* and that Jeremiah did not do what was instructed by God. These are direct instructions from the statement in **Jeremiah 13:1 (KJV) Thus saith the LORD unto me, Go and get thee a linen girdle, and put it upon thy loins, and put it not in water.** This was a direct communication in some form by God to the prophet. It is evident that Jeremiah carried out the instructions as God had given them to him.

We need to remember some points that we have explored before and that is the role Jeremiah has in this prophecy. We saw early in our study of this book that Jeremiah is of the priestly tribe of Levi. He lived in the city of Anathoth that was one of the cities given to the tribe of Levi seeing they did not receive a land grant as the other tribes did. Jeremiah could have carried out some of the

duties of a priest in ministering before the Lord in the Temple which was in Jerusalem. This was not difficult since Anathoth was a close suburb of the city of Jerusalem where the Temple stood. Jeremiah was familiar with the clothing worn by a priest and one of those was a “linen girdle” (**Jeremiah 13:1**). In the Law of Moses it was called a “curious girdle of the ephod” (**Exodus 28:8, 27-28**). It was worn around the waist and was a visible part of the clothing. There is a possibility it was designed to be worn in such a way as to hold the breastplate in place since it was connected in a sense with it (see **Exodus 28:28**). The people were familiar with the clothing of the priest and high priest and would understand the “linen girdle.” Thus God decides to use an object lesson and give an explanation what the significance was of the lesson. Now let’s see if there might be some spiritual lessons in this passage for us as well.

1. THE GIRDLE ANALOGY, Jeremiah 13:1-7.

The girdle was a symbol of service and one’s relationship with God, Jeremiah 13:1-7. The material of linen is a picture of the righteousness that is needed to have a relationship with God. We get our righteousness by being “in Christ.” This is taught clearly in several passages in the New Testament. Note **Philippians 1:11 (KJV) Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.** The girdle was a part of the Priestly wardrobe which was to be worn in the matriculation of the duties associated with service in the Tabernacle and eventually in the Temple. The picture presented here is very graphic. Jeremiah was given instructions to take the linen girdle and gird it around himself and wear it so it would be visible by the people of Judah. This was a *visible* illustration to try and get the attention of the people who refused to hear the word of God thus the visible illustration. The symbolism is somewhat difficult but this is the way I see it.

God was wanting the people to see the problem with their relationship with Him and this was a way to demonstrate that once the linen cloth, a symbol of the service and relationship with God, was taken by Jeremiah and hidden in a “hole of the rock” (**Jeremiah 13:4**). There are some things that are very suggestive here. The visual was to demonstrate that the linen

girdle used in the worship and service of the Lord was set aside in a place where it was not protected. The priesthood had the privilege of being close to God in the Tabernacle and the Temple. They had a close relationship with God and their activity was to bring the people into a close relationship with God. The problem in this part of the story is that the result was that it became “marred” and “profitable for nothing” (**Jeremiah 13:7**). This has a definite application to the people Jeremiah was preaching to. In addition it has a definite application to us who live in the New Testament period of history. Now note with me God’s application.

2. GOD’S APPLICATION, Jeremiah 13:8-11. God gives the commentary on the meaning of the linen girdle in the verses to follow, **Jeremiah 13:9-11**. The meaning is very clear. God had drawn Israel/Judah into a relationship with the creator of the universe, a privilege the nations did not have. They were to *cleave* to God and allow Him to be their source of strength, safety and substance. Notice the last part of **Jeremiah 13:11 (KJV)** For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith the LORD; **that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory:** but they would not hear. There was a rebellious attitude among the people. They had thrown off the girdle and allowed it to be marred having no value. This is the main application of the passage.

Our relationship cannot be hidden. When it is hidden it will deteriorate and decay. This is one of the suggestions found in the illustration. Israel had allowed their relationship to go in a direction where it was no longer useful and helpful to them. They had done three things.

- a. **They had failed to listen to the “word of God.”**
- b. **They had found other gods.**
- c. **They forsook the instructions of the Law of Moses.**

This is the same thing that happens to us when we leave God out of our life. We are able to deceive ourselves into thinking that because we watch Billy Graham or Joel Osteen on television then we have fulfilled our responsibility in maintaining a relationship with God. We leave out the importance of reading

the Bible, praying, witnessing, attending church and fellowshiping with other believers. After all the Bible still has in it the responsibility stated in **Hebrews 10:25 (KJV) Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together**, as the manner of some is; but exhorting *one another*. and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. Our fellowship with God is built on two premises. One is that our fellowship with God is through Jesus Christ (**1John 1;7-9**). The other is our fellowship with others. When we neglect either of these we will find our spiritual life much like the “linen girdle,” marred and of no value in the service of God. The relationship with God was the first step in what God wants in our life. The whole purpose of God in sending Jesus Christ to this earth is to reverse the effects of the fall of Adam, who walked with God in the cool of the day. God desires to have fellowship with his creation/creatures. Yet many of us are negligent of that relationship. There is a cause/effect application here that we dare not overlook.

3. GREAT DELUSIONS, Jeremiah 13:12-14.

God has a desire for us to have a relationship with Him and there is a reason for that. God wants to put joy in our lives and many never learn this. Note **Nehemiah 8:10 (KJV) Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.** God wants to bring joy to those who have a relationship with Him. Is it any wonder that we find the word “rejoice” or a form of the word over 219 times? Life has enough downs that God wants to be the source of our joy and happiness. In fact He does not just wish to be the source but the very center of our joy. That is why God designed wine in the way that he did. **It was designed as a symbol for joy. Psalm 104:15 (KJV) And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart.** God is not authorizing drunkenness or the drinking of alcoholic beverages. God is making a statement about the source of our joy and rejoicing. We need to realize that the wine is a symbol of joy (just as the girdle was a symbol of our relationship with God). The problems with man is that he takes something that is to be a

benefit for us and makes it something else completely. Instead of bringing joy it brings heartache in the lives of those who have allowed their over indulgence in the fermented brand of wine to destroy their life. Man takes what God designed to be a benefit and turns it into a burden. Man uses it to find a false joy and happiness. Drinking alcoholic beverages has been and always be a means of man to try and fabricate a false joy and happiness. What God had intended for the benefit of man has been use by man to bring about drunkenness. Look at **Jeremiah 13:13 (KJV)** *Then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings that sit upon David's throne, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with drunkenness.* They want to abuse the purpose of wine, then God will release them to their folly.

- 4. GLORY BELONGS TO GOD, Jeremiah 13;15-21.** God will not be second to any false god or any other god for that matter. **The glory of God is the goal of every believer. 1 Corinthians 10:31 (KJV)** *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* It is interesting that the phrase “glory of God” occurs only two times in the Old Testament and the resto of the seventeen (15) occur in the New Testament.
- Our sin causes us to fall short of the glory of God (**Romans 3:23**).
 - Every tongue should and will confess Jesus as Lord. **Philippians 2:11 (KJV)** *And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*
 - All the promises of God have a ultimate purpose, the glory of God. **2 Corinthians 1:20 (KJV)** *For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.*
 - Some sickness/infirmity is for the glory of God. Lazarus’ sickness that brought death yet it came to bring glory to God. **John 11:4 (KJV)** *When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.*