

Message Three

The Two Evils of God's People and God's Faithfulness in Fulfilling His Economy

Hymns:

Scripture Reading: Jer. 2:13; Psa. 36:8-9; John 4:10, 14; 7:37-39; 1 Cor. 10:4; 12:13

- Jer. 2:13 For My people have committed two evils: / They have forsaken Me, / The fountain of living waters, / To hew out for themselves cisterns, / Broken cisterns, / Which hold no water.
- Psa. 36:8 They are saturated with the fatness of Your house, / And You cause them to drink of the river of Your pleasures.
- Psa. 36:9 For with You is the fountain of life; / In Your light we see light.
- John 4:10 Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.
- John 4:14 But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life.
- John 7:37 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.
- John 7:38 He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.
- John 7:39 But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.
- 1 Cor. 10:4 And all drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank of a spiritual rock which followed them, and the rock was Christ.
- 1 Cor. 12:13 For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit.

OUTLINE

- I. Jeremiah, a book full of speaking concerning Israel's sin and God's wrath, chastisement, and punishment, reveals that God's intention in His economy is to be the fountain, the source, of living waters to dispense Himself into His chosen people for their satisfaction and enjoyment with the goal of producing the church, God's counterpart, as God's increase, God's enlargement, to be God's fullness for His expression; the kernel of the divine revelation is that God created us and redeemed us for the purpose of working Himself into us to be our life and our everything—2:13; Psa. 36:8-9; John 3:29-30; 4:10, 14; 7:37-39; Rev. 7:17; Eph. 3:16-19:**

- Jer. 2:13 For My people have committed two evils: / They have forsaken Me, / The fountain of living waters, / To hew out for themselves cisterns, / Broken cisterns, / Which hold no water.
- Psa. 36:8 They are saturated with the fatness of Your house, / And You cause them to drink of the river of Your pleasures.
- Psa. 36:9 For with You is the fountain of life; / In Your light we see light.
- John 3:29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and

hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This joy of mine therefore is made full.

- John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.
- John 4:10 Jesus answered and said to her, If you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.
- John 4:14 But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life.
- John 7:37 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.
- John 7:38 He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.
- John 7:39 But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.
- Rev. 7:17 For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and guide them to springs of waters of life; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.
- Eph. 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,
- Eph. 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
- Eph. 3:18 May be full of strength to apprehend with all the saints what the breadth and length and height and depth are
- Eph. 3:19 And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

- A. Christ as the living, spiritual rock was smitten by the authority of God's law so that the water of life in resurrection could flow out of Him and into His redeemed people for them to drink—Exo. 17:6; 1 Cor. 10:4.

Exo. 17:6 I will be standing before you there upon the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it so that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

1 Cor. 10:4 And all drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank of a spiritual rock which followed them, and the rock was Christ.

- B. Our drinking of the one Spirit in resurrection makes us members of the Body, builds us up as the Body, and prepares us to be the bride of Christ—12:13; Rev. 22:17.

1 Cor. 12:13 For also in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and were all given to drink one Spirit.

Rev. 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who is thirsty come; let him who wills take the water of life freely.

II. **“My people have committed two evils: / They have forsaken Me, / The fountain of living waters, / To hew out for themselves cisterns, / Broken cisterns, / Which hold no water”—Jer. 2:13:**

Jer. 2:13 For My people have committed two evils: / They have forsaken Me, / The fountain of living waters, / To hew out for themselves cisterns, / Broken cisterns, / Which hold no water.

- A. Israel should have drunk of God as the fountain of living waters that they might become His increase as His expression, but instead they committed two evils:

1. They forsook God as their fountain, their source, and they turned to a source other than

God; these two evils govern the entire book of Jeremiah.

2. The hewing out of cisterns portrays Israel's toil in their human labor to make something (idols) to replace God.
3. That the cisterns were broken and could hold no water indicates that apart from God Himself dispensed into us as living water, nothing can quench our thirst and make us God's increase for His expression—John 4:13-14.

John 4:13 Jesus answered and said to her, Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again,
John 4:14 But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life.

- B. In the eyes of God, the wicked one, the evildoer, is the one who does not come to drink of Him (Isa. 55:7); the evil condition of the wicked is that they do not come to the Lord to eat, drink, and enjoy the Lord; they do many things, but they do not come to contact the Lord, to take Him, to receive Him, to taste Him, and to enjoy Him; in the sight of God, nothing is more evil than this (57:20-21; cf. 55:1-2).

Isa. 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way, / And the evildoer, his thoughts; / And let him return to Jehovah, and He will have compassion on him; / And to our God, for He will pardon abundantly.

Isa. 57:20 But the wicked are like the tossed sea, / For it cannot be calm, / And its waters toss up mire and mud.

Isa. 57:21 There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked.

Isa. 55:1 Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, / And you who have no money; / Come, buy and eat; / Yes, come, buy wine and milk / Without money and without price.

Isa. 55:2 Why do you spend money for what is not bread, / And the result of your labor for what does not satisfy? / Hear Me attentively, and eat what is good, / And let your soul delight itself in fatness.

- C. God intended to dispense Himself into man as man's satisfaction so that He might be enlarged, but man became unfaithful and unchaste and forsook God for idols:

1. An idol in our heart (Ezek. 14:3) is anything within us that we love and treasure more than the Lord and that replaces the Lord in our life (1 John 5:21):

Ezek. 14:3 Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts and have put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. Should I be inquired of at all by them?

1 John 5:21 Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

- a. Those who set up idols in their hearts are estranged from the Lord through their idols (Ezek. 14:5).

Ezek. 14:5 That I may lay hold of the house of Israel in their heart, who have become estranged from Me because of all their idols.

- b. All who have idols within them yet seek God in an outward way cannot find Him (v. 3; cf. Jer. 29:13).

Ezek. 14:3 Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts and have put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. Should I be inquired of at all by them?

Jer. 29:13 And you will seek Me and find Me if you search for Me with all your heart;

2. By worshipping idols, Israel made themselves vain, nothing; they had so many idols that the number of them was according to the number of their cities (2:5, 28; 11:13); Israel

exchanged the reality of their God, their glory, for the vanity of idols (2:11; Psa. 106:20; Rom. 1:23).

- Jer. 2:5 Thus says Jehovah: / What iniquity did your fathers find in Me / That they went far away from Me / And walked after vanity / And became vain?
- Jer. 2:28 But where are your gods, whom you made for yourselves? / Let them arise, if they can save you in the time of your trouble; / For according to the number of your cities / Are your gods, O Judah.
- Jer. 11:13 For according to the number of your cities are your gods, O Judah, and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem you have set up altars to that shameful thing, altars to burn incense to Baal.
- Jer. 2:11 Has a nation ever exchanged its gods, / Even though they are no gods? / But My people have exchanged their glory / For that which does not benefit them.
- Psa. 106:20 Thus they exchanged their glory / For the image of an ox that eats grass.
- Rom. 1:23 And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of an image of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and reptiles.

3. Apostasy is a matter of leaving the way of God and taking another way to follow things other than God; it is to forsake God and turn to idols—Jer. 2:19.

- Jer. 2:19 Your own wickedness will correct you, / And your apostasies will reprove you. / Know therefore and see that it is an evil and bitter thing, / That you have forsaken Jehovah your God / And that My fear is not in you, / Declares the Lord Jehovah of hosts.

4. When Israel was captured by the Babylonians, God's people still would not give up their idols and had to carry them from the good land to Babylon; anything that replaces God or occupies the position of God is an idol that becomes a burden to the worshipper—Isa. 46:1.

- Isa. 46:1 Bel has bowed down; Nebo stoops; / Their idols are on beasts and cattle; / The things which you carry are a burden, / A load for a weary beast.

5. The dumb, voiceless idols (1 Cor. 12:2; Hab. 2:18-20) make their worshippers dumb and voiceless, but the living God causes His worshippers to speak in His Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3b; Psa. 115:4-8; 2 Cor. 4:13; Psa. 116:12-13):

- 1 Cor. 12:2 You know that when you were Gentiles, you were always being led away to dumb idols, whenever and however you were led.
- Hab. 2:18 What profit is the graven idol that its maker should engrave it, / Or the molten idol, even the teacher of lies, / That he who forms its form depends on it / To make dumb idols?
- Hab. 2:19 Woe to him who says to wood, Awake! / And, Arise! to silent stone. / Will it teach him? / Behold, it is set in gold and silver, / And there is no breath at all within it.
- Hab. 2:20 But Jehovah is in His holy temple: / Be silent before Him, all the earth!
- 1 Cor. 12:3 Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking in the Spirit of God says, Jesus is accursed; and no one can say, Jesus is Lord! except in the Holy Spirit.
- Psa. 115:4 Their idols are mere silver and gold, / The work of human hands.
- Psa. 115:5 They have mouths, but they do not speak; / They have eyes, but they do not see.
- Psa. 115:6 They have ears, but they do not hear; / They have noses, but they do not smell.
- Psa. 115:7 They have hands, but they do not feel; / They have feet, but they do not walk; / They make no sound in their throat.
- Psa. 115:8 Those who make them, / All who trust in them, / Are like them.
- 2 Cor. 4:13 And having the same spirit of faith according to that which is written, "I believed, therefore I spoke," we also believe, therefore we also speak,
- Psa. 116:12 What shall I return to Jehovah / For all His benefits toward me?
- Psa. 116:13 I will take up the cup of salvation / And call upon the name of Jehovah.

- a. No worshippers of God should be silent; all should use their voices to speak forth “Jesus is Lord!” in the Spirit of God.
 - b. This—to speak “Jesus is Lord”—is the main function of all the spiritual gifts; to call on the Lord’s name with a proper spirit is the way to participate in, to enjoy, and to experience the Holy Spirit—1 Cor. 12:3b; cf. Rom. 14:17.
 - 1 Cor. 12:3 Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking in the Spirit of God says, Jesus is accursed; and no one can say, Jesus is Lord! except in the Holy Spirit.
 - Rom. 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
 - c. “The dead do not praise Jehovah, / Nor do any that go down into silence. / But we will bless Jehovah / From now and to eternity. / Hallelujah”—Psa. 115:17-18.
 - Psa. 115:17 The dead do not praise Jehovah, / Nor do any that go down into silence.
 - Psa. 115:18 But we will bless Jehovah / From now and to eternity. / Hallelujah.
6. Whatever we possess and even whatever we are can become an idol; Israel was evil and unfaithful to God in forsaking God for idols; in the matter of such unfaithfulness to God, we are the same as Israel.

III. We need to see God’s faithfulness in fulfilling His economy—cf. 37:3:

Psa. 37:3 Trust in Jehovah, and do good; / Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.

- A. Although we are unfaithful, God is faithful (Lam. 3:23b); the chorus of a well-known hymn (Hymns, #19) says, “Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness! / Morning by morning new mercies I see. / All I have needed Thy hand hath provided; / Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!”:

Lam. 3:23 They are new every morning; / Great is Your faithfulness.

- 1. We may understand what the Bible says and what this hymn says about God’s faithfulness either in a natural way or in a spiritual way.
- 2. If we understand God’s faithfulness in a natural way, we may think that He is faithful primarily in the matter of material provisions or physical blessings, but God’s faithfulness is not according to our natural understanding; 1 Corinthians 1:9 says that God is faithful in calling us into the fellowship of His Son, but to our natural understanding He may not seem to be faithful in caring for our welfare.

1 Cor. 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

- 3. “Consider the sufferings of the apostle Paul. He was called, commissioned, burdened, and sent by God, but wherever he went, he had troubles. For example, as soon as he began to preach Christ, he began to suffer persecution. He even had to escape from Damascus by being lowered down the wall in a basket. Does this mean that God was not faithful to Paul? No, it means that God’s faithfulness is not according to our natural understanding” (Life-study of Jeremiah, p. 28)—Acts 9:15-16, 23-25; 2 Cor. 11:30-33; Col. 1:24; 2 Cor. 1:5; Phil. 3:10; Rev. 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:10; 3:12.

Acts 9:15 But the Lord said to him, Go, for this man is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before both the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;

Acts 9:16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer on behalf of My name.

Acts 9:23 And as a considerable number of days were being fulfilled, the Jews took counsel together to do away with him;

- Acts 9:24 But their plot was made known to Saul. And they also watched the gates closely, both day and night, so that they might do away with him.
- Acts 9:25 But his disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket.
- 2 Cor. 11:30 If I must boast, I will boast of the things of my weakness.
- 2 Cor. 11:31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.
- 2 Cor. 11:32 In Damascus, the governor under Aretas the king guarded the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me;
- 2 Cor. 11:33 And in a basket I was lowered through a window, through the wall, and escaped his hands.
- Col. 1:24 I now rejoice in my sufferings on your behalf and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body, which is the church;
- 2 Cor. 1:5 For even as the sufferings of the Christ abound unto us, so through the Christ our comfort also abounds.
- Phil. 3:10 To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,
- Rev. 1:9 I John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.
- 2 Tim. 2:10 Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the chosen ones, that they themselves also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.
- 2 Tim. 3:12 And indeed all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.
4. When we believed into the Lord Jesus, we might have expected to have outward peace and blessing, but instead, we might have had many troubles, and we might have lost our security, our health, or our possessions; when some Christians experience such things, they may question God's faithfulness and ask why He did not prevent hardships from happening to them—Acts 14:22; 1 Thes. 3:2-5.
- Acts 14:22 Establishing the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith and saying that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.
- 1 Thes. 3:2 And we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and encourage you for the sake of your faith,
- 1 Thes. 3:3 That no one would be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed for this.
- 1 Thes. 3:4 For even when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we are to be afflicted, even as it also came to pass and you know.
- 1 Thes. 3:5 Because of this, when I also could bear it no longer, I sent to find out concerning your faith, lest perhaps the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain.
5. We need to realize that in allowing us to have troubles, God is faithful in His purpose to turn us from idols and bring us back to Himself; our peace, safety, health, and possessions may become idols to us, but God is faithful to take these things away so that we may drink of Him as the fountain of living waters.
6. For example, if our house or our possessions become idols to us, we drink of them and not of God; God's faithfulness is a matter of dealing with these idols and causing us to drink of Him—Psa. 36:8.
- Psa. 36:8 They are saturated with the fatness of Your house, / And You cause them to drink of the river of Your pleasures.
7. God is faithful in leading us into His economy (1 Cor. 1:9; 1 Thes. 5:23-24), and His economy is for us to drink Christ, to eat Christ, to enjoy Christ, to absorb Christ, and to

assimilate Christ so that God may have His increase with us to fulfill His economy.

1 Cor. 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Thes. 5:23 And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thes. 5:24 Faithful is He who calls you, who also will do it.

8. We need to see that we are not better than Israel; anything can become an idol to us, but God is faithful in fulfilling His economy; in His faithfulness He deals with our idols so that we may drink of Him; we all need to drink of God as the fountain of living waters, receiving Christ into us and assimilating Him so that He may increase for the fulfillment of God's economy to have His expression through us as His counterpart—John 3:29-30.

John 3:29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This joy of mine therefore is made full.

John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

- B. If we realize that we have been unfaithful to God, we may repent and weep, but then we should begin to drink of the living waters, praising God, giving thanks to Him for everything, and enjoying Him (1 Thes. 5:16-18); this is what God wants; God is not interested in anything other than our enjoyment of Christ:

1 Thes. 5:16 Always rejoice,

1 Thes. 5:17 Unceasingly pray,

1 Thes. 5:18 In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1. We may think that because of our failure, we are hopeless; surely, the people of Israel must have felt that God had given them up and that they were finished, but God's compassions do not fail; rather, they are new every morning—Lam. 3:22-23.

Lam. 3:22 It is Jehovah's lovingkindness that we are not consumed, / For His compassions do not fail;

Lam. 3:23 They are new every morning; / Great is Your faithfulness.

2. Jeremiah could even declare that Jehovah was his portion and that he hoped in Him, for He is good to those who wait on Him; there is hope in God because with God there is no disappointment—vv. 24-25; cf. Psa. 16:5; 73:25-26.

Lam. 3:24 Jehovah is my portion, says my soul; / Therefore I hope in Him.

Lam. 3:25 Jehovah is good to those who wait on Him, / To the soul that seeks Him.

Psa. 16:5 Jehovah is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup; / You maintain my lot.

Psa. 73:25 Whom do I have in heaven but You? / And besides You there is nothing I desire on earth.

Psa. 73:26 My flesh and my heart fail, / But God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever.

3. Our failure opens the way for Christ to come in to be our righteousness and our redemption and also to dispense Himself into us to be our life and life law with its capacity to know God and to live God; in other words, our failure simply prepares and opens the way for Christ to come in so that He may be exalted in and through us to be our centrality and universality—Jer. 23:5-6; 31:33-34; Col. 1:17b, 18b.

Jer. 23:5 Indeed, days are coming, / Declares Jehovah, / When I will raise up to David a righteous Shoot; / And He will reign as King and act prudently / And will execute justice and righteousness in the land.

Jer. 23:6 In His days Judah will be saved, / And Israel will dwell securely; / And this is His name by which He will be called, / Jehovah our righteousness.

- Jer. 31:33 But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares Jehovah: I will put My law in their inward parts and write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they will be My people.
- Jer. 31:34 And they will no longer teach, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for all of them will know Me, from the little one among them even to the great one among them, declares Jehovah, for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.
- Col. 1:17 And He is before all things, and all things cohere in Him;
- Col. 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

4. If we fail God today, we should not be disappointed; God has a way to deal with us and cause us to mature and become the New Jerusalem, either as His overcoming bride in the next age or as His wife for eternity—Heb. 6:1a.

- Heb. 6:1 Therefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us be brought on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith in God,

5. There is no need for us to worry about our situation; God is patient, sympathetic, and compassionate, and He will take the time to make us mature:

a. Every believer, whether presently weak or strong, will be a constituent of the New Jerusalem, and everyone there will be mature—Rev. 19:7-9; 21:2.

- Rev. 19:7 Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.
- Rev. 19:8 And it was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints.
- Rev. 19:9 And he said to me, Write, Blessed are they who are called to the marriage dinner of the Lamb. And he said to me, These are the true words of God.
- Rev. 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

b. Therefore, we should not be dismayed or discouraged; rather, we should be encouraged and comforted with the God of all comfort and encouragement—2 Cor. 1:3-4; Rom. 15:5.

- 2 Cor. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassions and God of all comfort,
- 2 Cor. 1:4 Who comforts us in all our affliction that we may be able to comfort those who are in every affliction through the comforting with which we ourselves are comforted by God.
- Rom. 15:5 Now the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind toward one another according to Christ Jesus,

c. We should be the true worshippers of God, who is the fountain of living waters, by drinking Him so that He can be the reality within us, which eventually becomes our genuineness and sincerity in which we worship God with the worship that He seeks—John 4:23-24.

- John 4:23 But an hour is coming, and it is now, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truthfulness, for the Father also seeks such to worship Him.
- John 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.