

Jeremiah 4

part 1

The end of the last chapter God implores backsliding Israel to return to Him. The shame of the people, though, was only "skin" deep. It was a false repentance and not a heart-felt return to the LORD. The real condition of Israel (and Judah) is seen in 3:11: "And the LORD said unto me, The backsliding Israel hath justified herself more than treacherous Judah."

In the first four verses Israel is once again told to return to God and that the major issue was a hard, uncircumcised heart. They needed to turn to God in "truth, in judgement, and in righteousness" and then the LORD would circumcise their heart, bringing about a true relationship with God.

The first two verses concern the nation of Israel and their returning to the LORD will bring blessings to the nations (this will be fulfilled in the millennial kingdom. Verses 3-4 address the individuals in the nation and their need to accept the Lord.

- 1 If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the LORD, return unto me: and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight, then shalt thou not remove.**
- 2 And thou shalt swear, The LORD liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory.**

Vs. 1 Israel is implored to return to God, putting away their abominations.

Vs. 2 **And thou shalt swear** is the hallmark of their commitment, swearing 4 things:

1. The LORD lives

Hebrews 11:6

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

2. The LORD lives in truth

Psalm 138:2

I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

3. The LORD lives in judgment (משפט mish-pawt' - Strong's Hebrew 4941: A verdict, a sentence, formal decree, divine law, penalty, justice)

1 Peter 4:17

For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

Hebrews 9:27

And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.

4. The LORD lives in righteousness

Romans 10:3-4

For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

When the above is done by the nation the result is:

the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory.

When Israel does return to the LORD, the result will be blessing to the nations.

"It becomes clear that true repentance on Israel's part would have far-reaching consequences not merely for Israel, but also for mankind in general."

Expositors Bible Commentary, Jeremiah, page 12

Ezekiel 36:23 And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.

Romans 11: 12 Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?
 13 For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:
 14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.
 15 For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?

Although Jeremiah 4:1-2 is addressed to the nation it is still applicable for individuals. And the next two verses speak to the individuals in the nation.

3 For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.

4 Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.

Vs. 3 The people of Judah (and Jerusalem) are now addressed using a common agriculture illustration found in the scripture and a spiritual application of circumcision.

Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns.

The heart of the people was hard and needed to be plowed, ready to receive the seed

Isaiah 55 10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:
 11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Matthew 13: 1 The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.
 2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.
 3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;
 4 And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:
 5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:
 6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.
 7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:
 8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.
 9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.
 18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.
 19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.
 20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;
 21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.
 22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.
 23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Hebrews 6: 7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:
 8 But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart

- Deut. 30: 1 And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee,
2 And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul;
3 That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee.
4 If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee:
5 And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.
6 And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.
- Jeremiah 31: 31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:
32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:
33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.
34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.
- Ezekiel 18: 30 Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.
31 Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?
32 For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye
- Romans 2: 28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:
29 But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.
- Colossians 2: 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:
11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.

The judgment of God will only be altered by the nation turning to Him. There is the need for a circumcised heart for God's judgment to be prevented.

This is true for the nation as well as individuals.

John 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.