

JEREMIAH, PART 1 (RETURN TO ME)
PROGRAM 9 (#912009)
WEEK 2 (912302)
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SERIES: Jeremiah, Part 1 (Return To Me)

TITLE: Program 9 – No Lasting Peace

THURSDAY

OPEN

How well do you know the Old Testament? How well do you know what God has to say about Israel? Sometimes I'm amazed, and other times I'm amused as I watch the presidents and the heads of other countries try to achieve peace in the Middle East. Believe me, Beloved, according to the Word of God it will never be lasting peace until Israel itself returns to God. He says, **“Return [to Me]...[and] I will heal your faithlessness.”(Jeremiah 3:22)**

PART ONE

Our study this week is focused on Jeremiah chapter 3 and chapter 4. And in Jeremiah, He cries to them, “Return to Me.” Over and over again He says, **“Return [to Me] O faithless sons, [and] I will heal your faithlessness....” (Jeremiah 3:22)** We're looking at eight precepts for returning to the Lord. I've given you one of them. We're going to pick them

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up as I take you through Jeremiah chapter 3, where I left off, all the way through Jeremiah chapter 4 because that's our procedure. Our procedure is not to just bring you a message from Jeremiah, but rather to take you through a book of the Bible verse-by-verse so that you see exactly for yourself what God is saying. And as we do that, you need to remember that [His Word is truth, and His Word sanctifies them.] (PARAPHRASE, John 17:17) As you go through the Word of God like this, Jesus' prayer for you is being answered because He prayed for all of those who would believe on Him, not that God would take us out of the world, but that He would keep us from the evil one.] (PARAPHRASE, John 17:15) He says this in John chapter 17. And then He says, [Father, sanctify them, set them apart consecrate them through Thy truth Thy word is truth.] (PARAPHRASE, John 17:17) Jesus also said when the devil tempted Him in Matthew chapter 4—He turned to the devil, and He said, **“It is written, ‘Man... [doesn’t] live [by] bread alone, but...,’”** now listen carefully, **“...[by] every word that [comes] out of the mouth of God.”**(Matthew 4:4) And so as we go through a book, I want you to hear every word that has come out of the mouth of God because it's important. As we do this then we pick up these eight precepts. Now the first precept of the eight about returning to God is to recognize that God wants you to return. It's not that, “If I come back to Him, will He take me?” Oh no. He is the one that wants you to return. So as you go through Jeremiah 3 and Jeremiah chapter 4, you are instructed—if you've got your study guide and you're studying along with us—you are instructed to mark every reference to “return.” So I can look down at my Bible immediately and see every time He says return. Now if you have not gotten a study guide you really need to do this. You need to go online to preceptsforlife.com, and get our study guide. Also you need to go on there and e-mail me. I love to get your e-mails; they just absolutely thrill me and encourage me. And I want to know what God is doing in your life, but I also want to know the questions that you have. So that, it is really a wonderful

relationship that you and I can develop through the internet in talking to one another as we do a study. So I want to thank all of you that have e-mailed me. I piled up in bed; I read 2,000 of 'em. And just was praying and thanking God, and rejoicing, and feeling like I got to know you better. So that is just wonderful, absolutely wonderful, and I thank you. Just know I want it to be a two-way relationship even as God wanted a two-way relationship with Israel. Well, I left you in verse 10. And if you will remember what I said, after Solomon had sinned and his heart turned away from God, God divided the kingdom into two parts: the Northern Kingdom called Israel, the Southern Kingdom called Judah. Israel played the harlot. The Northern Kingdom played the harlot from the very beginning. (See 1 Kings 11:1-13) They started with an idol that Jeroboam set up, a golden calf, in Bethel and in Dan. (See 1 Kings 12:25-33) And they never had a good king. They never had a godly king. God sent them prophet after prophet, Hosea, others, but they would not listen. And so God took them into captivity under the Assyrians because they played the harlot. They turned to Assyria; they turned to Egypt for help instead of turning to God. Just like, in a sense, Israel does today. I know, because I know some members of the Knesset. I have friend in Israel. We have a ministry in Israel. I go to Israel every single year—you don't have to be afraid. I mean, they'll let you know if you're not to come, but you don't have to be afraid. So anyway, I go, and one of the things that as I go I hear, is that Israel is afraid of what the United States is going to think. Israel is afraid of how the nations are going to respond. How are the nations going to respond when they went into Gaza? Because all the press that comes against Israel makes Israel really look like the enemy. If an Israeli is killed you hardly see it, but if a Palestinian is killed then it is all over the place. Now what's going on? We're trying to get peace in the Middle East, but it's not going to happen until Israel returns to the Lord. Israel is walking in unfaithfulness. They are seeking the favor of the nations. And so He says this, **“Because of the lightness of [our]**

harlotry...,” verse 9 of chapter 3, “**...she polluted the land and committed adultery with stones and trees. Yet in spite of all this her treacherous sister Judah did not return to Me with all her heart, but rather in deception,**’ [says] **the LORD.**” (Jeremiah 3:9-10) They acted like it, but they really didn’t do it. I thought, “Oh my goodness, what would happen if Benny Elon would stand before the Knesset. What would happen if he would say, ‘We must repent. We must return’? That is his heart, but his people won’t listen to him. His people won’t listen to him. He says, **“And the LORD said to me, ‘Faithless Israel has proved herself more righteous than treacherous Judah. Go and proclaim these words toward the north...,”** it says, **“...and say, “Return faithless Israel....”** (Jeremiah 3:11-12) Now why would He say, “Go and turn to the North?” Well, think of the map of Israel. And, and as you look at Israel, and you go to the north, and that’s the way you have to go because if you went to the east there is a desert. So any enemy that is going to come into Israel is either going to come from the south, like Egypt, or they’re going to come from the north. And so He says, **“Go and proclaim...toward the north....”** (Jeremiah 3:12) All right, Assyria is to the north. It was Assyria that took them captive. And He says, **“...Return, faithless Israel...I will not look [on] you in anger. For I am gracious,**’ [says] **the Lord; ‘I will not be angry forever.’”** (Jeremiah 3:12) I will not be angry forever, so I want you to return. All right, now how does He want her to return? This is the second principle that I want you to see, the second precept for returning to the Lord, you have to do it with your whole heart. You have to do it with your whole heart. You cannot say, “Okay, I’ll return. I’ll return.” No. You’ve got to do it with your whole heart. It’s just like 2 Corinthians chapter 7. If you will go to 2 Corinthians chapter 7, in that chapter what God is doing through the apostle Paul is He’s talking about two kinds of sorrow. He’s talking about a godly sorrow, and then he’s talking about a worldly sorrow. A worldly sorrow is this, he says, “[Now I] **rejoice....**,” he says, **“...not that you were**

made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance...;” repentance is a returning. It is a turning from evil and turning to good, **“...for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything.... For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret...,”** a turning around, **“...leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.” (2 Corinthians 7:9-10)** And so if you’re going to return it can’t be a half-hearted thing. It has to be a whole heart. So He says, “She did not return to Me with her whole heart.” And that’s why He’s saying, “Listen, faithless Israel is better off than faithless Judah.” So the third thing that I want you to see is found in verse 13. And this is what He says, **““Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the LORD your God and [you] have scattered your favors to the strangers under every green tree...,”” (Jeremiah 3:13)** If you are going to return to God and be healed of your faithlessness you have to number, know, number one, that God wants you to return. Number two, you have to learn that it is a matter of the whole heart. It can’t be this worldly sorrow; it’s got to be brokenness. So number three, you’ve got to acknowledge your sin. If Israel would stop right now and get on their faces and acknowledge their sin, I mean, God would move on their behalf. You know what? I’ve written a novel called “Israel, My Beloved.” It’s a true story in novel form. And in that book you see what it finally takes to bring Israel back to their knees, and to true and godly sorrow, and to repentance. When you pray for the peace of Jerusalem, you’re praying for the return of the Messiah. You’re returning—you’re praying for His return, for His coming, His second coming because that’s when they are going to repent. But that’s another story we’ll have to look at later. But right now, you’ve got to take a break, and I don’t want you to miss this message. And I’ll be right back.

PART TWO

Acknowledge your evil. This is the way that you return to God. He says, [If you return to Me, I will heal your faithlessness.] (PARAPHRASE, Jeremiah 3:22) All you have to do is come that way, but when you come you must do what He tells Israel to do. Now watch what happens, **““Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the LORD your God... [You’ve] scattered your favors to strangers under every green tree, and you have not obeyed My voice’....” (Jeremiah 3:13)** Doesn’t that remind you of 1 John chapter 1, verse 9? That if we confess our sins. If we name them for what they are, if we say, “I’ve transgressed against You,” then God will heal us. God will heal us. God will accept us. So **“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive... our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9, KJV)** He says, **““Return, O faithless sons,’ declares the Lord; ‘for I am a master to you, and I will take you from [one] city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.”” (Jeremiah 3:14)** Now what He’s doing is He’s pointing to the future. He says, **“Then I will give you shepherds after My own heart, who will feed you on knowledge and understanding. ‘It shall be in those days when you are multiplied and increased in the land,’ declares the Lord, ‘[that] they will no longer say, ‘the ark of the covenant...,’ And it will not come to mind, nor will they remember it, nor will they miss it, nor will it be made again.”” (Jeremiah 3:15-16)** This verse makes me even wonder if they are ever going to find the Ark of the Covenant. But I can assure you from this passage that at the end of time, when Jesus Christ comes back, they’re not going to need the Ark of the Covenant. Why? Because Jesus is going to sit on the throne of David, and the Ark of Covenant represented the throne of God, the presence of God with them. And Jesus is going to be with them, the Messiah, Mashiah, is going to be there with them. Now what is this going to bring? This is going to bring peace. Listen to what He says, **“At that time they will call**

Jerusalem ‘The Throne of the LORD,’ and all the nations will be gathered to it, to Jerusalem, for the name of the LORD; nor will they walk anymore....”(Jeremiah 3:17) They’re not going to walk after the stubbornness out of their own heart. Not anymore because we’ll have returned, and He will heal their unfaithfulness. Because at that point they will acknowledge their sin, they will weep, and they will mourn over their sin. Zechariah tells us this. (See Zechariah 12:10) And then He says, **“In those days the house of Judah will walk with the house of Israel, and they will come together from the land of the north to the land that I gave your fathers as an inheritance.”** (Jeremiah 3:18) In other words, when Jesus comes back then what’s going to happen is the people are going to come out of the land of the north, the Jewish people, and they’re going to return to their own inheritance. It will not just be the people of Judah, but it will be the people of Israel. And this is what Ezekiel teaches. Ezekiel talks about two sticks, two sticks that represent the North and the South and how they come together. (See Ezekiel 37:15-23) God is a restorer, a restorer of His people and that’s why He says, **“Return, O faithless sons, [and] I will hear your faithlessness....”** (Jeremiah 3:22) **“Then I said, “How I would set you among My sons and give you a pleasant land, the most beautiful inheritance of the nations!” And I said, “You shall call Me, My father, and [will] not turn away from following Me.””** (Jeremiah 3:19) You’ll never walk again away from Me. You’ll never roam again. You’ve got to know this, Precious One, that as His children we are not free to roam from Him. We are to be faithful; and this is why He is saying, “Return to Me.” So He’s pointing them to the future, a future that they want now, a future that they desire now. They want peace in the Middle East. The nations talk about it. The United States of America sends over secretaries of state to say, “Hey, peace in the Middle East.” It would really be a coup for us if we could get it. But I want to tell you something, if you study the Scriptures you know that peace in the Middle East, lasting peace, is not

going happen until Israel returns to God. And when they return to God, and Messiah comes, then He is going to take away their sins in one single day. All right, now listen to what He says, **“Surely, as a woman treacherously departs from her lover, so you have dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel...” (Jeremiah 3:20)** There is a deceit. There is a wickedness. There is a treacherousness about their behavior. And, you see, we need to see that to turn away from God is to deal treacherously with God. In verse 21 it says, **“A voice is heard on the bare heights, the weeping and the supplication of the sons of Israel; because they have perverted their way, they have forgotten the LORD their God.” (Jeremiah 3:21)** Why are they weeping? Why are they wailing? Why are they crying out on the bare heights? Bare heights that could be lush, and full, and have lots of trees. It’s because of their sin. And then He says in verse 22, **“Return, O faithless sons...”** I’ve quoted it to you over and over again, **“...I will heal your faithlessness.” (Jeremiah 3:22)** What is God saying to you today, Precious One? “Return. Return. I don’t care where you’ve been. I don’t care what you’ve done. You come to Me the way you are right now. You hear My call, humble yourself before Me. You confess your sin. I want you to come with your whole heart, and I will meet you there. And I will heal your faithlessness.” He says, **“...Behold, we come to You; for You are the LORD our God.”** We come to you. For You are the Lord our God. **“Surely, the hills are a deception, a tumult on the mountains. Surely in the LORD our God is the salvation of Israel.” (Jeremiah 3:22-23)** The salvation of Israel is not going to be in any covenants, in any treaties with any nations. It is only going to be in returning to God. And I want you to know that no matter the deals you make, no matter the things that you do, if you don’t return to God there will be no healing. Which brings me to number four; the fourth precept for returning to God and that’s this, you come to Him not to anyone else. Not to a church, not to a denomination, not to anyone else, not to the arm of flesh, you come to Him because in God

alone is salvation. There is salvation in no other. As it says in Acts chapter 4,
“...There is [no] other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12, KJV) And that is the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And Jesus means, “Yehshua,” and our Savior and Christ means, “the Promised One.” It says, **“But the shameful thing has consumed the labor of our fathers since our youth, their flocks...their herds, their sons...their daughters. Let us lie down in our shame, and let our humiliation cover us; for we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth [until] this day...we have not obeyed the voice of the LORD Our God.” (Jeremiah 3:24-25)** And that’s why there is shame, humiliation, pain, death, devastation, crying and tears, and loss because they wouldn’t return to the only One that could heal their faithlessness. Don’t be like Israel.