

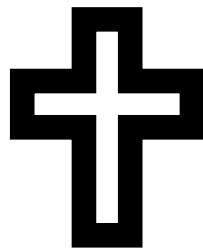
**Twelve Lessons**

*on*

***Jeremiah***

*by*

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## **SOMETHING WORSE THAN BACKSLIDING – LESSON 1**

### **Jer. 3:6-11**

**Introduction:** Here we have a prime example of “symbolism over substance.” An image or a picture of something is not the real thing. God was saying, “Judah is not the real thing.”

1. After the death of Solomon, the kingdom divided in two countries. 10 tribes were called Israel and 2 tribes went under the name of Judah.
2. Israel went into idolatry changing even the places of worship to Bethel and Dan and even had their own unqualified priests.
3. Judah still had Jerusalem with the Temple and the qualified priests. You might call Judah, the “fundamentalists,” and Israel, the “liberals.”
4. But four times, God said Judah was treacherous, “the fundamentalists.”
5. “Treacherous” means to cover with a garment but figuratively it means “deceitful” or “unfaithful.” ***The Fundamentalists were worse than the Liberals!!!***

### **Lesson Goals:**

1. To examine the concept of idolatry being spiritual whoredom.
2. To learn that history is often repeated.
3. To study how hypocrisy leads to self-justification.

### **Definitions of Important Terms/Phrases:**

1. Jewish divorce – Jewish Law. A legal separation between man and wife by means of a formal process of some sort. As the ordinances respecting marriage have in view the hallowing of that relationship, so also was the Mosaic regulation in respect of divorce (Deut 24:1-4). From this we learn that a man, finding in his wife something shameful or offensive, dismissed her from his house with a certificate of divorce. (The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary).
2. Forehead – The practice of veiling the face in public for women of the higher classes-especially married women-in the East, stigmatizes with reproach the unveiled faces of women of bad character (Gen 24:65; Jer 3:3). (The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary).
3. Godliness – Piety or reverence toward God (1 Tim 2:2). Godliness means more than religious profession and a godly conduct; it also means the reality and power of a vital union with God. (Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary).

## **I. THE BACKSLIDING OF ISRAEL** – Jer. 3:1-5

### **A. Iniquity** – Jer 3:1

1. It was ever understood, by the law and practice of the country, that if a woman were divorced by her husband, and became the wife of another man, the first husband could never take her again.
2. Now Israel had been married unto the Lord; joined in solemn covenant to him to worship and serve him only. Israel turned from following him, and became idolatrous.
3. On this ground, considering idolatry as a spiritual whoredom, and the precept and practice of the law to illustrate this case, Israel could never more be restored to the divine favour:
4. But God, this first husband, in the plenitude of his mercy, is willing to receive this adulterous spouse, if she will abandon her idolatries and return unto him.

**B. Intentions** – Jer 3:2 – They were as fully intent on the practice of their idolatry as the Arab in the desert is in lying in wait to plunder the caravans.

### **C. Impressions** – Jer 3:3

1. The former rain, which prepared the earth for tillage, fell in the beginning of November, or a little sooner; and the latter rain fell in the middle of April, after which there was scarcely any rain during the summer.
2. No latter rain-essential to the crops in Palestine; withheld in judgment (Lev 26:19, “I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass”).
3. Whore’s forehead – (Jer 8:12 – “*Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush.*”) Illustrate – I’ve seen them in church so brash and bold as to dare the preacher to say anything.

**D. Intercession** – Jer 3:4 – Wilt thou not allow me to be thy Creator and Preserver, and cease thus to acknowledge idols?

## **II. THE BACKSLIDING OF JUDAH** – Jer 3:6-11

**A. The Contrast** – She is called treacherous sister Judah, a sister because she descended from the same common stock, Abraham and Jacob; but, like Israel, had the character of a backslider. *A Fundamentalist who was backslid.*

1. Judah is called treacherous, because, though she professed to keep close to God when Israel had backslidden (she adhered to the kings and priests that were of God's own appointing, and did not withdraw from her allegiance, so that it was expected she should deal faithfully), yet she proved treacherous, and false, and unfaithful to her professions and promises. *Illustrate – We profess to be Independent Baptist, KJB, Separated – Professing TONS but performing OUNCES.*
2. Note, The treachery of *those who pretend to cling to God* will be judged, as well as the apostasy of *those who openly revolt from him.* .
3. *Judah feared not, but thought herself safe because:(False Security).*
  - a. *She had Levites to be her priests and sons of David to be her kings.*
  - b. *She had the Temple. Illustrate – Safe: As long as it was concealed.*

### **B. The Context** – Jer 3:6-11

1. The date of this sermon must be observed, in order to the right understanding of it; it was in the days of Josiah, who set on foot a blessed work of reformation, in which he was hearty. (2 Chron. 34:3).
  - a. The people were *forced to an external compliance* with him, and joined with him in keeping a very solemn passover and in renewing their covenants with God (2 Chron 34:32; 35:17); *but they were not sincere in it, nor were their hearts right with God.*
  - b. *King Religion – “Preacher Religion” – Enduring but not Enjoying; Admiring but not Following; Illustrate – Mt. Pisgah*
  - c. We deceive ourselves if we think to deceive God by a *feigned return* to him. I know no religion without sincerity. Luke 20:20 – “...spies, which should *feign* themselves just men” *Illustrate – “feign” means to “impersonate, pretend.”*
2. *Illustrate – If a man can be arrested for “impersonating an officer of the law,” we ought to arrest people for “impersonating a Christian, a preacher, etc.”*

### **C. The Culpability** – Jer 3:6

1. He takes occasion also to show the Jews how much more culpable they were than the Israelites.
2. Because *they practiced the same iniquities* while they had the punishment and ruin of the others *before their eyes.*
  - a. *Illustrate – I know a preacher who condemned his brother, who was a preacher, for racing go carts and all the time, he was in an adulterous affair. THAT’S AWFUL*
  - b. *What about a member who requests prayer for family and is in adultery.*
  - c. *Give in the offering – But have a gossiping tongue 40’ long.*
  - d. *Sing “Jesus Paid It All” – Won’t pay their bills.*
  - e. *Shout on Sunday – Put on their shorts and halter tops Monday.*
  - f. *Amen on Sunday – Cuss and Tell Dirty Jokes on Monday.*
  - g. *Sit together as a Family on Sunday – Fight & Fuss on Monday.*
  - h. *Attend Church on Sunday – Dance Hall on Saturday.*
  - i. *Faithful on Sunday – Cheat everybody on Monday.*
  - j. *Illustrate – This morning, I learned about a preacher who was one of my heroes, who was arrested on child molestation charges. There are allegations that the church he pastored knew about this for 20 years but “swept it under the rug.”*
  - k. *Illustrate – We can “cuss” people like the above, but I am amazed at pastors, mates, parents, and church members who are “sweeping their sins under the rug.”*
3. Jer 3:7 – “And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. **And** her treacherous sister Judah saw it.” Judah maintains the form only; her secret desires are set upon the orgies of pagan worship.
  - a. 2 Tim 3:5 – “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”
  - b. “Form” – “the rough-sketch, the penciling of the real, the outline or framework, and in 2 Tim 3:5 “the outline without the substance.”
  - c. *Illustrate – Would you rather have a picture of a 2006 Thunderbird or the Car. “We’re settling for the sketch instead of the real.”*
  - d. *Illustrate – “Form” – Schematic or Appearance. Illustrate – The Architectural Plans for this Church was \$32,000, the building is worth \$3 million. STUPID, IGNORANT, DUMB!!!!*

- e. Illustrate – How many glad you’re a member of Bright Light – But you lay out anytime you desire.
  - f. We believe in Missions – AMEN! – You don’t give.
  - g. We believe in Hell-fire and Damnation Preaching – AMEN! – You don’t back the man of God, gossip, and criticize him when he gets on your sins.
  - h. We sing “Rescue the Perishing” – AMEN! – Never come on Soul Winning, Never Witness, Never Bring a Sinner to Church.
  - i. We like Old Time Worship and Shouting – AMEN! – But sit like a wooden Indian.
  - j. We love Bright Light – But never tithes or give in special offerings.
  - k. Illustrate – I saw someone yesterday who bought a 1969 Camaro and I thought, “That Camaro will burn up at the Judgment Seat.”
  - l. We want Revival
4. Jer 3:8 – *“And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.”*
  5. Jer 3:9 – *[The lightness of her whoredom]* The grossness of her idolatry: worshipping objects *the most degrading*, with rites the most impure.
  6. Jer 3:10 – *“And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the LORD.”*

**D. The Charge** – Jer 3:11

1. [Backsliding Israel hath justified herself more] She was less offensive in my eyes, and more excusable, than treacherous Judah.
2. So it is said, Luke 18:14, the humbled publican went down to his house justified rather than the boasting Pharisee. The one was more to be pitied than the other, and more likely to receive the mercy of God.
3. Israel has justified herself more than Judah, that is, she is not so bad as Judah is.
  - a. This comparative justification will stand Israel in little stead; what will it avail us to say, We are not so bad as others, when yet we are not really good ourselves? Illustrate – What’s the difference between a murderer and a mass murderer, they both are guilty.
  - b. But it will serve as an aggravation of the sin of Judah, which was in two respects worse than that of Israel.
  - c. More was expected from Judah than from Israel; so that Judah dealt treacherously, they vilified a more sacred profession, and falsified a more solemn promise, than Israel did.

**CONCLUSION** – Judah was no better than Backsliding Israel. How are we better than the Liberal Churches.

1. They make no bones about their liberalism, their worldliness, their disqualified preachers, their ungodly versions, etc. At least their practice fits their form.
2. We’re claiming to have the REAL THING but are just a “ROUGH SKETCH” OF THE REAL THING.