

# **Jeremiah 13 - Symbol of the Linen Belt; Symbol of the Wine Bottles; Pride Precedes Captivity**

## **II. Thirteen prophecies of judgment upon Judah (Jer 2:1–25:38)**

**(1) Nine general prophecies of judgment that include offers of repentance (Jer 2:1–19:15)**

**(E) Fifth message: linen waist cloth and wine jugs (13:1-27)**

- (a) Waist cloth (13:1-11)**
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  - (ii) Meaning (13:8-11)**
- (b) Wine jugs (13:12-14)**
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  - (ii) Meaning (13:13-14)**
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  - i) Warning against pride (13:15-17)**
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  - (iii) Sin and punishment (13:20-27)**

## **Jeremiah 13**

**(E) Fifth message: linen waist cloth and wine jugs (13:1-27)**

- (a) Waist cloth (13:1-11)**
  - (i) Action (13:1-7)**

**1** This is what the LORD said to me: "Go and buy yourself a linen undergarment and put it around your waist, but do not put it in water."

**1** Thus the LORD said to me, "Go and buy yourself a linen waistband and put it around your waist, but do not put it in water."

**1** This is what the LORD told me: "Go and buy a linen belt for yourself, and put it around your waist. But don't let it get wet."

**1** 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.

**2** So I bought the undergarment in accordance with the word of the LORD, and put it around my waist.

2 So I bought the waistband in accordance with the word of the LORD and put it around my waist.

2 So I bought the belt according to the LORD's instruction, and put it around my waist.

2 So I got a girdle according to the word of the LORD, and put *it* on my loins.

3 Then the word of the LORD came to me a second time, saying,

3 Then the word of the LORD came to me a second time, saying,

3 Then this message from the LORD came to me a second time:

3 And the word of the LORD came unto me the second time, saying,

4 "Take the undergarment that you bought, which is around your waist, and arise, go to the Euphrates and hide it there in a crevice of the rock."

4 "Take the waistband that you have bought, which is around your waist, and arise, go to the Euphrates and hide it there in a crevice of the rock."

4 Take the belt that you bought and that is around your waist. Get up and go to the Euphrates, and hide it there in a crevice in the rock."

4 Take the girdle that thou hast got, which *is* upon thy loins, and arise, go to Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole of the rock.

5 So I went and hid it by the Euphrates, as the LORD had commanded me.

5 So I went and hid it by the Euphrates, as the LORD had commanded me.

5 So I went and hid it at the Euphrates, just as the LORD had commanded me.

5 So I went, and hid it by Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me.

6 After many days the LORD said to me, "Arise, go to the Euphrates and take from there the undergarment which I commanded you to hide there."

6 After many days the LORD said to me, "Arise, go to the Euphrates and take from there the waistband which I commanded you to hide there."

6 After a long time, the LORD told me, "Arise, go to the Euphrates, and get the belt that I commanded you to hide there."

6 And it came to pass after many days, that the LORD said unto me, Arise, go to Euphrates, and take the girdle from thence, which I commanded thee to hide there.

7 Then I went to the Euphrates and dug, and I took the undergarment from the place where I had hidden it; and behold, the undergarment was ruined, it was completely useless.

7 Then I went to the Euphrates and dug, and I took the waistband from the place where I had hidden it; and lo, the waistband was ruined, it was totally worthless.

7 I went to the Euphrates and dug it up. I got the belt from the place where I had hidden it. The belt was ruined! It was not good for anything.

7 Then I went to Euphrates, and digged, and took the girdle from the place where I had hid it: and, behold, the girdle was marred, it was profitable for nothing.

- Being made out of linen, it was probably mildewed, and the wetness wrecked it. That is the point: it is marred, it is moldy, it is unusable. The translation says linen belt, some scholars believe that this was an intimate undergarment.

*Paroth* is translated "Euphrates" and the first question here is, did he really do this or is it just a vision? In this case I don't feel it really matters. The reason so many scholars have a problem with this is that the Euphrates River is a hundred of miles from Jerusalem. The word is *Paroth*, which is like the *Ephrata* but with an initial letter missing, so we wonder if it really was the Euphrates or not. There are some scholars who feel it is *Para*, which is actually *Watifara*, only three miles northeast of *Anathoth* (only about 6 miles from Jerusalem).

There was a lot of time during Jeremiah's ministry where there wasn't necessarily war. Between the first and third siege of Nebuchadnezzar is 19 years. There are three major sieges and three major deportations and invasions. But there was a lot of time in between in which there was peace. There is some evidence that he went to and from Babylon, and this may have occurred when he was on one of these trips (I think that it was the Euphrates River, but it didn't have to be, but in my mind it is not a big deal.) The whole idea is that that which is going to spoil them did come from Babylon, and the Euphrates is symbolic of Babylon, so that all sort of fits.

Something else about these linen belts or linen undergarments: they were an intimate garment and they were a symbol of service to the priest. (Used symbolically in Luke 12:35; John 13). So it was a symbol of service for the priests, and in this case they are marred and moldy and unusable. This is basically the concept, because of the influence of the Euphrates, ie. Babylon, idolatry. Priestly linen belt in Exodus 19:6. So there seems to be an identity with the Euphrates; if it wasn't the Euphrates, it was a name that looked closely enough that we would look at it closely.

#### (ii) Meaning (13:8-11)

**8** Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

**8** Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

**8** Then this message from the LORD came to me:

**8** Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

9 "This is what the LORD says: 'To the same extent I will destroy the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem.

9 "Thus says the LORD, 'Just so will I destroy the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem.

9 "This is what the LORD says: 'In the same way I'll ruin the pride of Judah and the pride of Jerusalem.

9 Thus saith the LORD, After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem.

10 This wicked people, who refuse to listen to My words, who walk in the stubbornness of their hearts and have followed other gods to serve them and to bow down to them, let them be just like this undergarment which is completely useless.

10 This wicked people, who refuse to listen to My words, who walk in the stubbornness of their hearts and have gone after other gods to serve them and to bow down to them, let them be just like this waistband which is totally worthless.

10 This evil people that refuses to listen to my words, that stubbornly pursues their own desires, and that follows other gods to serve and worship them, will be like this belt that is not good for anything.

10 This evil people, which refuse to hear my words, which walk in the imagination of their heart, and walk after other gods, to serve them, and to worship them, shall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing.

11 For as the undergarment clings to the waist of a man, so I made the entire household of Israel and the entire household of Judah cling to Me,' declares the LORD, 'so that they might be My people, for renown, for praise, and for glory; but they did not listen.'

11 For as the waistband clings to the waist of a man, so I made the whole household of Israel and the whole household of Judah cling to Me,' declares the Lord, 'that they might be for Me a people, for renown, for praise and for glory; but they did not listen.'

11 For just as the belt clings tightly to a person's waist, so I've made all the people of Israel and all the people of Judah cling tightly to me,' declares the LORD. 'I did this so that they would be my people, name, praise, and glory. But they wouldn't listen.'

11 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.

- Four things that the Lord wanted: He wanted for them to be a people, a name, and for praise, and for glory: but they would not hear.

(b) Wine jugs (13:12-14)

(i) Parable (13:12)

**12** "Therefore you are to speak this word to them. 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel says: "Every jug is to be filled with wine.'" And when they say to you, 'Do we not very well know that every jug is to be filled with wine?'

**12** "Therefore you are to speak this word to them, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, "Every jug is to be filled with wine.'" And when they say to you, 'Do we not very well know that every jug is to be filled with wine?'

**12** "This is what you're to tell them: 'This is what the LORD God of Israel says: "Every wineskin is to be filled with wine.'" When they say to you, 'Don't we know very well that every wineskin is to be filled with wine?'

**12** Therefore thou shalt speak unto them this word; Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Every bottle shall be filled with wine: and they shall say unto thee, Do we not certainly know that every bottle shall be filled with wine?

(ii) Meaning (13:13-14)

**13** then say to them, 'This is what the LORD says: "Behold, I am going to fill all the inhabitants of this land—the kings who sit for David on his throne, the priests, the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem—with drunkenness!

**13** then say to them, 'Thus says the LORD, "Behold I am about to fill all the inhabitants of this land—the kings that sit for David on his throne, the priests, the prophets and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem—with drunkenness!'

**13** then say to them, 'This is what the LORD says: "I'm about to make all the inhabitants of this land drunk—the kings who sit on David's throne, the priests, the prophets, and all the residents of Jerusalem.

**13** 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.

- In other words, judgment is coming...

**14** Then I will smash them against each other, both the fathers and the sons together," declares the LORD. "I will not have compassion nor be troubled nor take pity so as to keep from destroying them."'"

**14** I will dash them against each other, both the fathers and the sons together," declares the LORD. "I will not show pity nor be sorry nor have compassion so as not to destroy them."'"

**14** I'll smash them against each other, even fathers against their sons," declares the LORD. "I'll have no pity, mercy, or compassion when I destroy them."'"

14 And I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together, saith the LORD: I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them.

- Verses 12-14 use another idiom. The English says here, wineskins, which is interesting because the best scholars say the actual word used here was a jar, not a wineskin. They were ten-gallon wine containers.

- There are four groups of people singled out: the kings, the priests, the prophets, and the people. This is anticipating what is going to happen in Jer 25:15-28, and 51:7 (Cf. Ps 60:3; Is 51:17-18; Ezek 23:31-34; Rev 16:19; 17:2).

(c) Message (13:15-27)

i) Warning against pride (13:15-17)

15 Listen and pay attention, do not be haughty; For the LORD has spoken.

15 Listen and give heed, do not be haughty, For the LORD has spoken.

15 Listen and pay attention! Don't be proud, for the LORD has spoken.

15 Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the LORD hath spoken.

16 Give glory to the LORD your God Before He brings darkness And before your feet stumble On the mountains in the dark, And while you are hoping for light He makes it into gloom, *And turns it into thick darkness.*

16 Give glory to the LORD your God, Before He brings darkness And before your feet stumble On the dusky mountains, And while you are hoping for light He makes it into deep darkness, *And turns it into gloom.*

16 Give glory to the LORD your God before he brings darkness, before your feet stumble on the mountains at twilight. You hope for light, but he turns it into deep darkness. He changes it into heavy gloom.

16 Give glory to the LORD your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, *and make it gross darkness.*

- The prophet Amos says that he will send them a famine, not of meat, but of the Word at a certain time. There will be a time coming that all but the supernaturally protected elect will be deceived, and God permits it.

17 But if you do not listen to it, My soul will weep in secret for *such* pride; And my eyes will shed And stream down tears, Because the flock of the LORD has been taken captive.

17 But if you will not listen to it, My soul will sob in secret for *such* pride; And my eyes will bitterly weep And flow down with tears, Because the flock of the LORD has been taken captive.

17 If you don't listen, I'll cry secretly because of your pride. My eyes will cry bitterly, flowing tears, because the LORD's flock has been taken captive.

17 But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for *your* pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD'S flock is carried away captive.

- The source of the problem here is pride, and pride leads to darkness. That concept of darkness and light is introduced in Genesis 1 and it is a theme throughout the Scripture.

- There are three kind of darkness: the natural darkness of the unregenerate heart (Eph 4:17-18), a deliberate darkness (John 3:19), and then judicial darkness which we have here (Jer 13:16; 2 Thess 2:11-12).

#### (ii) Prediction of the king and queen's captivity (13:18-19)

18 Say to the king and the queen mother, "Take a lowly seat, For your beautiful crown Has come down from your head."

18 Say to the king and the queen mother, "Take a lowly seat, For your beautiful crown Has come down from your head."

18 Say to the king and the queen mother, "Come take a lowly seat, because your beautiful crowns have fallen off your heads."

18 Say unto the king and to the queen, Humble yourselves, sit down: for your principalities shall come down, even the crown of your glory.

19 The cities of the Negev have been locked up, And there is no one to open *them*; All Judah has been taken into exile, Wholly taken into exile.

19 The cities of the Negev have been locked up, And there is no one to open *them*; All Judah has been carried into exile, Wholly carried into exile.

19 The towns in the Negev will be closed up, and there will be no one to open them. All Judah will be taken into exile and be completely exiled.

19 The cities of the south shall be shut up, and none shall open *them*: Judah shall be carried away captive all of it, it shall be wholly carried away captive.

#### (iii) Sin and punishment (13:20-27)

20 "Raise your eyes and see Those coming from the north. Where is the flock that was given you, Your beautiful sheep?

20 "Lift up your eyes and see Those coming from the north. Where is the flock that was given you, Your beautiful sheep?

20 "Look up and see those who are coming from the north. Where is the flock that was given to you— your beautiful sheep?

20 Lift up your eyes, and behold them that come from the north: where *is* the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?

21 "What will you say when He appoints over you— And you yourself had taught them— Former companions to be head over you? Will sharp pains not take hold of you Like a woman in childbirth?

21 "What will you say when He appoints over you— And you yourself had taught them— Former companions to be head over you? Will not pangs take hold of you Like a woman in childbirth?

21 What will you say when the LORD appoints over you as your head those whom you taught to be your allies? Pain will seize you like that seizing a woman about to give birth, will it not?

21 What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee? for thou hast taught them *to be* captains, *and* as chief over thee: shall not sorrows take thee, as a woman in travail?

- Not necessarily northern enemies. Their enemies always came from the north, that was the only way to get around the Arabian Desert. Babylon is actually eastward, but they always attack them from the north.

- It is interesting how the Lord uses, through these prophets, "like a woman in travail." Even Jesus Christ used the same idiom in Matthew 24.

### **Idolatry as Harlotry**

22 "If you say in your heart, 'Why have these things happened to me?' Because of the magnitude of your wrongdoing Your skirts have been removed And your heels have suffered violence.

22 "If you say in your heart, 'Why have these things happened to me?' Because of the magnitude of your iniquity Your skirts have been removed And your heels have been exposed.

22 When you say to yourselves, 'Why have all these things happened to me?' It's because of your iniquity that your skirt has been lifted up, and your heels have suffered violence.

22 And if thou say in thine heart, Wherefore come these things upon me? For the greatness of thine iniquity are thy skirts discovered, *and* thy heels made bare.

23 "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, Or the leopard his spots? *Then* you as well can do good Who are accustomed to doing evil.

23 "Can the Ethiopian change his skin Or the leopard his spots? *Then* you also can do good Who are accustomed to doing evil.

23 Can an Ethiopian change his skin, or a leopard his spots? Then you who are trained to do evil will also be able to do good.

23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? *then* may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.

-This may sound like contemporary language. It sounds offensive, but it is interesting that Jeremiah uses these. Verse 22 is rather risqué so I won't get into that.

- In v23 he is saying, you guys are so corrupt, so committed to do evil, that your chances to do good is equivalent to a leopard changing his spots.

24 "Therefore I will scatter them like drifting straw To the desert wind.

24 "Therefore I will scatter them like drifting straw To the desert wind.

24 I'll scatter them like chaff blown away by a desert wind.

24 Therefore will I scatter them as the stubble that passeth away by the wind of the wilderness.

25 "This is your lot, the portion measured to you From Me," declares the LORD, "Because you have forgotten Me And trusted in falsehood.

25 "This is your lot, the portion measured to you From Me," declares the LORD, "Because you have forgotten Me And trusted in falsehood.

25 "This is your fate, the portion I've measured out for you," declares the LORD, "because you have forgotten me and have trusted in false gods.

25 This *is* thy lot, the portion of thy measures from me, saith the LORD; because thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood.

26 "So I Myself have stripped your skirts off over your face, So that your shame will be seen.

26 "So I Myself have also stripped your skirts off over your face, That your shame may be seen.

26 I'll also pull your skirt up over your face, so your shame will be seen,

26 Therefore will I discover thy skirts upon thy face, that thy shame may appear.

- This was a mechanism of shaming a prostitute: to raise her skirt. That is what he is saying, figuratively speaking, that Judah is a prostitute; he is going to shame them the same way, figuratively speaking.

27 "As for your adulteries and your *lustful* neighings, The outrageous sin of your prostitution On the hills in the field, I have seen your abominations. Woe to you, Jerusalem! How long will you remain unclean?"

27 "As for your adulteries and your *lustful* neighings, The lewdness of your prostitution On the hills in the field, I have seen your abominations. Woe to you, O Jerusalem! How long will you remain unclean?"

27 I've seen your detestable behavior: your adulteries, your passionate neighing, your lewd immorality on the hills in the field. How terrible it will be for you, Jerusalem! You are unclean. How much longer will this go on?"

27 I have seen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, *and* thine abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? when *shall it* once *be*?

- He is describing idol worship as harlotries. There are two dimensions to that: there is a practical, vivid one—the Canaanite idol worship was involved in orgies and sexual excess of all indescribable kinds; but the other issue is that it is considered spiritual harlotry—they are going whoring after false gods. Neighings is like an overheated stallion or mare.

- The agony of Jeremiah is that he is torn between the certainty of their judgment. He knows it's coming, and he has the hope that it might be averted, if they would just listen and repent.