

Jer. 3:11-4:2: Recalling God's Dealings with Israel
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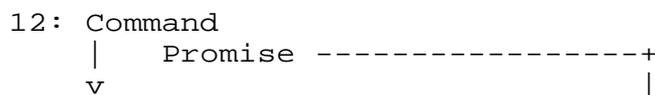
A. Overview of the Book so Far

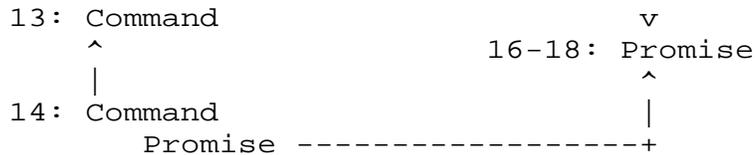
1. ch. 1: Jeremiah's call
2. ch. 2: God's *rebuke* against Judah; formal complaint. Her idolatry and alliances with other nations, turning from the Lord.
3. ch. 3-6: The Coming Judgment.
 - a) 3:6-10, Everyone can see how Judah fails to learn from Israel.
 - b) 3:11-4:2, Recollection of God's dealings with Israel.
 - c) 4:3-6:30, consequences on "men of Judah and Jerusalem" (4:3) for failing to heed Israel's example.
4. Zoom in on 3:11-4:2. God is sharing with Jeremiah his private thoughts about his past dealings with Israel, the northern kingdom. 11b is the theme point, the conclusion of the last paragraph and the point of this detailed exposition of how God has dealt with Israel. The history has three parts:
 - a) God's offer to Israel of salvation, 3:12-18
 - b) His own desire for their return, and their rebellion, 3:19-20
 - c) His persistent engagement with them, 3:21-4:2
 - d) Note the continued play on the two meanings of "turn" in 3:12, 14; 4:1. Israel has turned away from the Lord; he desires her to repent and turn back to him.

B. 3:12-18, God offers Israel salvation.

God sends Jeremiah (v.12) as his messenger toward the NORTH, that is, the kingdom of Israel. The form of the message is a command followed by a promise: "Do this, and then I will do that." The command is phrased in the second person; the promise (except for an opening transition), in the third person. Note what God requires of them, and what he promises in return.

1. 12-15: The command: built around three imperatives, in 12b ("return"), 13 ("acknowledge"), 14 ("turn," same verb as in 12). Thus it is chiasmic, the center section describing what is involved in turning to the Lord. The outer sections also begin to hint at the promises to be unfolded more fully in the next section.
Diagram:





To simplify the presentation, we will consider first the three commands, then the contained within them, and finally move on to the main promise section.

Application: Note that these promises are not expressed as conditions: "If you turn, I will bless you." That is a true statement, and we will find instances of it in the book (cf. 4:2). But the point here is much stronger: "Here are my gracious plans toward you. Therefore turn." (Note the *kiy* in v.14.) God's blessings here are the MOTIVE for their obedience, not the RESULT. Such are God's gracious dealings with us. We come to him as recipients of a gift already given, not manipulators trying to change his mind. The initiative is his, not ours.

a) The commands

- 1) Summarized in 12 and 14. Both passages play on the double meaning of "turn," as brought to a head in 4:1. They have turned from the Lord; now turn back to him.
- 2) Explained in 13: "Acknowledge your iniquity." Literally, "know." The blindness that Satan imposes on us (2 Cor. 4) extends to seeing our own faults. We need a prophet like Jeremiah to point out where we are rebelling against the Lord, and then we need to be willing to see the truth about ourselves. The truth about Israel is in turn expressed as a chiasm, the outer members stating that they have sinned, and the center one emphasizing what the sin is.

a> "It is against the Lord thy God that thou hast transgressed." Hebrew order puts the emphasis on the Lord. Remember: in the Bible, one may sin before men, but only against God (cf. Luke 15:18), since God is the one who makes the laws. Similarly, at the end, "Ye have not obeyed my voice" (plural through attraction to the following verse).

b> "Scattered thy ways." Cf. 2:23 "entwining her ways," 3:21 "perverted their way." Cf. Matt. 7:13,14. Our "way," the course of our life, is of prime importance to the Lord.

Illus: We enjoy hiking, and rely heavily on our maps to keep us from getting lost. The only difference between hiking and wandering is having a sense of direction.

Israel has wandered from the path, and is lost. She has done this by following after "strangers." This refers first of all to strange gods, and then to strange lovers.

In the OT, the "strange woman" is the one you're not married to. Israel's immorality is in the fore here.

- 3) **Application:** Here is the true sense of "confession," to "say with" God what he says about our sin. Cf. 1 John 1:9. The first step is not to weep and wail, but to judge ourselves; to see our sin as God sees it.
- b) The promises. 3:12 tells what God won't do, and why, while 14-15 tells what he will do and why.
- 1) 3:12, the negative.
 - a> What:
 - 1> His anger won't fall on them.
 - 2> He won't hold it against them forever.
 - b> This is completely unexpected. In 3:5, he mocked their presumption in thinking that his anger would go away, and yet persisting in their sin.
 - c> The reason: "for I am merciful," *K.IY-XFSIYD*):ANIY. That is, I keep covenant. It is not for their sakes that his anger will pass, but for the sake of his covenant with them. Cf. Heb. 6: his oath and covenant. In this case, the covenant is that with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them the land of Canaan for an everlasting inheritance, Gen. 13:14,15ff. Especially relevant in these promises, in a time of exile! They will come back.
 - 2) 3:14-15, the positive.
 - a> The reason: "I am married to you." Nothing they do can break or dissolve this union.
 - b> What he will do:
 - 1> Gather them, one or two at a time. This has been the pattern of Israel's restoration during the church age. Not in mass, but a few here and there.
 - 2> Bring them again to Zion, restoring their captivity.
 - 3> Give them good shepherds, in contrast with those who misled them, 2:8,26.
 - 3) **Application:** The motive in both cases rests in God's character, not in us. He is faithful to his covenant; he is married to his people. It's not their goodness that merits his favor, but his own commitment to them that leads him to bless them. Their part is to respond to his authority.
2. 16-18: The promise also has three components, each emphasizing the future time, with a phrase like "in those days" (16,18) or "at that time" (17). The three promises are that the temple cult will end, Gentiles will be brought to salvation, and Israel and Judah will be reunited.
- a) 16, their former magical trust in the ark of the covenant and the temple will end. Cf. the abuse as early as 1 Sam. 4:4. They will not talk about it, think about it, miss it, or even try to make another one! Their trust will be in the

Lord, not in a thing.

Application: Beware a "magical" view of Christianity. The Bible is not a good-luck charm. It is our relationship with the Lord Jesus, not our creed or prayer book, that brings us blessing.

b) 17, Gentile conversion. Instead of the ark, Jerusalem will be called God's throne, and as a result all the gentiles will gather there for worship. Some interpret this of the gathering of gentiles in the church, but that, according to Paul in Eph. 3, was a mystery, revealed first to him. This is a different order, with Gentiles under Israel in the messianic kingdom.

c) 18, Israel and Judah reunited. The two will once again form a single nation, in the land of their ancient heritage.

3. **Application:** Remember that God's blessings are presented here as the MOTIVES for turning, not as RESULTS. We do not manipulate God. He has already anticipated us with blessings beyond what we could ask or think, and our joy is to respond to him.

C. **3:19-20, God's purposes contrast with Israel's rebellion.**

1. thesis: coordinate p

a) item-1: quote p

1) quote formula: 19 W:/)FNOKIY)FMAR:T.IY

2) quote: coordinate p

a> item-1:)"YK:):A\$IYT/"K: B.A/B.FNIYM

b> item-2: W:/)ET.EN-L/FK:)EREC XEM:D.FH NAX:ALAT

C:BIY CIB:)OWT G.OWYIM

b) item-2: quote p

1) quote formula: WF/)OMAR

2) quote: negated antonym paraphrase p

a>)FB/IY *T.IQ:R:)IW-L/IY! **T.IQ:R:)IY-L/IY

b> W./M"/)AX:ARAY LO) *TF\$W.BW. **TF\$W.BIY

2. antithesis: manner p

a) manner: 20)FK"N B.FG:DFH)I\$.FH M"/R"(FH.

b) text: K."N B.:GAD:T.EM B./IY B."YT YI&:RF)"L N:)UM-Y:HWFH

D. **3:21-4:2, God continues to woo Israel.**

This section is structured like a little drama. Ends in suspense: we do not know what the outcome will be.

1. Lead-in: reason p

a) text: 21 QOWL (AL-\$:PFYIYM NI\$:MF(B.:KIY TAX:ANW.N"Y B.:N"Y YI&:RF)"L

b) reason: paraphrase p

1) item-1: K.IY HE(:EW.W.)ET-D.AR:K./FM

2) item-2: \$FK:XW.)ET-Y:HOWFH):ELOH"Y/HEM

2. initiation utterance: command-promise p

a) command: 22 \$W.BW. B.FNIYM \$OWBFBIYM

b) promise:)ER:P.FH M:\$W.BOT"Y/KEM

3. cu: reason p

- a) text: reason p
 - 1) text: HIN/:NW.)FT/FNW. L/FK:
 - 2) reason: K.IY)AT.FH Y:HOWFH):ELOH"Y/NW.
 - b) reason: ampl. p
 - 1) text: contrast p
 - a> Antithesis: 23)FK"N LA/\$.EQER MI/G.:BF(OWT HF MOWN HFRIYM
 - b> Thesis:)FK"N B.A/YHOWFH):ELOH"Y/NW. T.:\$W.(AT YI&:RF)"L
 - 2) ampl: Reason p
 - a> text: summary p
 - 1> text: 24 W:/HA/B.O\$ET)FK:LFH)ET-Y:GIY(A):ABOWT"Y/NW. MI/N.:(W.R"Y/NW.)ET-CO)N/FM W:/)ET-B.:QFR/FM)ET-B.:N"Y/HEM W:/)ET-B.:NOWT"Y/HEM
 - 2> summary: parallel p
 - a: item-1: 25 NI\$:K.:BFH B.:/BF\$:T./"NW.
 - b: item-2: W./T:KAS./"NW. K.:LIM.FT/"NW.
 - b> reason: negated antonym p
 - 1> text: K.IY LA/YHWFH):ELOH"Y/NW. XF+F)NW.):ANAX:NW. WA/:ABOWT"Y/NW. MI/N.:(W.R"Y/NW. W:/)AD-HA/Y.OWM HA/Z.EH
 - 2> paraphrase: W:/LO) \$FMA(:NW. B.:/QOWL Y:HOWFH):ELOH"Y/NW. S
4. cu: command-promise p
- a) command: conditional p--At the end of the section, this builds on the contrast in the two meanings of \$WB already seen in vv. 12 and 14 at the start.
 - 1) if: 4:1)IM-T.F\$W.B YI&:RF)"L N:)UM-Y:HWFH
 - 2) then:)"L/AY T.F\$W.B
 - b) promise: conditional p
 - 1) if: W:/)IM-T.FSIYR \$IQ.W.CEY/KF MI/P.FN/AY
 - 2) then: coordinate p
 - a> item-1: paraphrase par
 - 1> neg ant par: W:/LO) TFW.D
 - 2> 2 W:/NI\$:B.A(:T.F
 - a: XAY-Y:HWFH B.E/):EMET B.:/MI\$:P.F+W.:BI/C:DFQFH
 - b> item-2: coordinate p
 - 1> item-1: W:/HIT:B.FR:KW. B/OW G.OWYIM
 - 2> item-2: W./B/OW YIT:HAL.FLW. S