

Jer. 13:1 ¶ 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.

Jer. 13:2 So I got a girdle according to the word of the LORD, and put *it* on my loins.

This chapter begins with the LORD giving Jeremiah instructions to perform a series of actions to illustrate the message he is to deliver to the people. I personally believe that these were physical actions performed by Jeremiah and not just visualized by him as some commentators seem to think.

Jeremiah is instructed to get a linen girdle, a belt, and wear it while being careful not to get it wet. He then did as he was told.

Jer. 13:3 And the word of the LORD came unto me the second time, saying,

Jer. 13:4 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.

Jer. 13:5 So I went, and hid it by Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me.

We aren't told how long Jeremiah wore the belt, but we are told that sometime later the LORD instructed him to take the girdle off and hide it in a hole in the rock somewhere by the Euphrates River. Again, Jeremiah did as he was told.

Again, there are some differences of opinion among the commentators regarding the reference to the Euphrates River. Some indicate that there was a location closer to Anathoth called by the same name.

Jer. 13:6 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.

Jer. 13:7 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.

After many days, Jeremiah is instructed by the LORD to go back to the Euphrates where he hid the belt and dig it out. This seems to indicate that it was buried in rocky soil. Though we don't know how long it had been hidden, we know that it was long enough to have rotted to the point of being unusable.

Jer. 13:8 Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Jer. 13:9 Thus saith the LORD, After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem.

Jer. 13:10 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.

Jer. 13:11 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.

The LORD now begins to explain the truth represented by Jeremiah's actions. Just as the girdle rotted and became useless, so will YHWH destroy the pride of the people of Judah, especially their great pride in Jerusalem. Just as the girdle is good for nothing, the LORD has determined that His people have become good for nothing. He had established them in blessing to His glory, and they had utterly failed Him by rejecting Him and turning to idols. Just as the girdle was worn snug against the body of the man, YHWH had established the people of Israel to cling to Him just as closely to His praise and glory before the nations. The very sad choice of the people--"they would not hear" or obey (from the Hebrew).

Jer. 13:12 ¶ 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?

Jer. 13:13 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.

Jer. 13:14 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.

I had to read these verses through a few times to understand that the LORD is comparing the inhabitants of the land to the bottles referenced in v12. The LORD is saying that He is going to fill his people—from commoner to king--with his wrath to the point of drunkenness or helplessness. The indication is that the people would be so desperate that they would turn on one another--even father against son. He is going to destroy His people without mercy or pity.

Jer. 13:15 Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the LORD hath spoken.

Jer. 13:16 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.

Jer. 13:17 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.

At this point Jeremiah urges the people to pay attention and humble themselves before the LORD. There are so many scriptures that speak to the folly of pride and the wisdom of humility.

Proverbs 29:23 "A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit."

Isaiah 57:15 "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

James 4:6 "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."

He encourages them to give glory to YHWH before He sends His wrath. If they do not repent and glorify the LORD, Jeremiah declares that his heart will break as he witnesses his people being taken away captive by their enemy. It was obvious that Jeremiah hated their sin, but he loved his people.

I think the reference to the "LORD's flock" also speaks to Jeremiah's concern for God's honor. In His righteousness He must judge His people and allow them to be taken captive by their enemy. To the people of that day, this would indicate that the "god" of the people was weak. They would not understand judgment being motivated by love and as a refining fire to purify His people of their sin.

Jer. 13:18 Say unto the king and to the queen, Humble yourselves, sit down: for your principalities shall come down, *even* the crown of your glory.

Jer. 13:19 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.

Jer. 13:20 Lift up your eyes, and behold them that come from the north: where is the flock *that* was given thee, thy beautiful flock?

Jer. 13:21 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?

Jer. 13:22 ¶ 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.

Jeremiah is now instructed to speak directly to the king and queen and implore them to humble themselves before the LORD. They need to understand that the coming judgment will result in the loss of their thrones and their land and their people will be taken captive. Verse 20 indicates that the enemy is already invading from the north. The "flock" is a reference to the people of Judah, and point is made that their nation had been given to them by the LORD.

I think the CJB gives a clearer understanding of v21: *"When he sets over you as rulers those you trained to be allies, what will you say? Won't pains seize you like those of a woman in labor?"*

The fact that the people of Judah had tried to ally themselves with Babylon was recorded by Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 23:11–17 "And when her sister Aholibah [Jerusalem/Judah] saw this, she was more corrupt in her inordinate love than she, and in her whoredoms more than her sister in her whoredoms. She doted upon the Assyrians her neighbours, captains and rulers clothed most gorgeously, horsemen riding upon horses, all of them desirable young men. Then I saw that she was defiled, that they took both one way, And that she increased her whoredoms: for when she saw men pourtrayed upon the wall, the images of the Chaldeans

pourtrayed with vermilion, Girded with girdles upon their loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads, all of them princes to look to, after the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea, the land of their nativity: And as soon as she saw them with her eyes, she doted upon them, and sent messengers unto them into Chaldea. And the Babylonians came to her into the bed of love, and they defiled her with their whoredom, and she was polluted with them, and her mind was alienated from them."

Jeremiah doesn't wait for the king and queen to question him as to why their nation is being judged; he tells them directly. They are being judged for spiritual adultery against the LORD. The fulfillment of this prophecy (v15→) is recorded in 2Kings.

2 Kings 24:8–15 "Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done. At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it. And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign. And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said. And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land. And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon."

Jer. 13:23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.

It seems that the LORD has concluded that there is about as much chance of Judah repenting and turning back to him in faith as there is for an Ethiopian to change the color of his skin or the leopard to change its spots.

I am afraid that mirrors my feelings about the possibility of national revival in America today.

Jer. 13:24 Therefore will I scatter them as the stubble that passeth away by the wind of the wilderness.

Jer. 13:25 This is thy lot, the portion of thy measures from me, saith the LORD; because thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood.

These verses are emphasizing that the coming judgment will cause the people to be carried away by their enemy as a desert wind carries away the chaff of the grain. Again, the LORD emphasizes that this judgment is a result of rejecting Him and trusting in false gods.

Jer. 13:26 Therefore will I discover thy skirts upon thy face, that thy shame may appear.

Jer. 13:27 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?*

The LORD is going to see that the pride of His people is turned to public shame. Why? Because they have been so public in their spiritual adultery and in embracing the wicked practices associated with the worship of their false gods. They seem determined to cling to their filthy practices. The LORD then poses the question (my paraphrase): How long is it going to take you to repent?