***Jeremiah 2:1-19 Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 2“Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord: “I remember you, The kindness of your youth, The love of your betrothal, When you went after Me in the wilderness, In a land not sown. 3Israel was holiness to the Lord, The firstfruits of His increase. All that devour him will offend; Disaster will come upon them,” says the Lord.’ 4Hear the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob and all the families of the house of Israel. 5Thus says the Lord: “What injustice have your fathers found in Me, That they have gone far from Me, Have followed idols, And have become idolaters? 6Neither did they say, ‘Where is the Lord, Who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, Who led us through the wilderness, Through a land of deserts and pits, Through a land of drought and the shadow of death, Through a land that no one crossed
And where no one dwelt?’ 7I brought you into a bountiful country, To eat its fruit and its goodness. But when you entered, you defiled My land And made My heritage an abomination.
8The priests did not say, ‘Where is the Lord?’ And those who handle the law did not know Me; The rulers also transgressed against Me; The prophets prophesied by Baal, And walked after things that do not profit. 9“Therefore I will yet bring charges against you,” says the Lord, “And against your children’s children I will bring charges. 10For pass beyond the coasts of Cyprus and see, Send to Kedar and consider diligently, And see if there has been such a thing. 11Has a nation changed its gods, Which are not gods? But My people have changed their Glory For what does not profit. 12Be astonished, O heavens, at this, And be horribly afraid; Be very desolate,” says the Lord. 13“For My people have committed two evils:
They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water. 14“Is Israel a servant? Is he a homeborn slave? Why is he plundered? 15The young lions roared at him, and growled; They made his land waste; His cities are burned, without inhabitant. 16Also the people of Noph and Tahpanhes Have broken the crown of your head. 17Have you not brought this on yourself, In that you have forsaken the Lord your God When He led you in the way?18And now why take the road to Egypt, To drink the waters of Sihor? Or why take the road to Assyria, To drink the waters of the River?
19Your own wickedness will correct you, And your backslidings will rebuke you. Know therefore and see that it is an evil and bitter thing That you have forsaken the Lord your God,
And the fear of Me is not in you,” Says the Lord God of hosts.***

We’re back in Jeremiah tonight. Remember with me that Jeremiah has just been called by God around 626 BC, but God prepared him from the womb to answer this call. He says he’s too young, but we discovered last time that the Hebrew word used as too young means the beginning of manhood. Jeremiah is most likely in his twenties, he is a Levite, and would likely be a teacher of the Law in his town. God calls and, though Jeremiah protested, God did not relent. His purpose is His purpose. Jeremiah is prophesying during Josiah’s reign as king. We’ll rejoin Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, as he is engaged by God to bring God’s word to God’s people.

Verse 1 *Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying,*The word of the Lord, meaning this prophecy, comes to Jeremiah. Tonight, we’ll only look at the first 13 verses of a prophecy that last 42 verses.

Verses 2-3 *“Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord: “I remember you, The kindness of your youth, The love of your betrothal, When you went after Me in the wilderness, In a land not sown. 3Israel was holiness to the Lord, The firstfruits of His increase. All that devour him will offend; Disaster will come upon them,” says the Lord.’* ***Go*** *and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem saying, Thus says the Lord:* Go cry publicly in all parts of the city, making it known that God is speaking. It is His message and not Jeremiah’s. *I remember you, The kindness of your youth, The love of your betrothal –* God reminds the people of His kindness, delivering them from Egypt, claiming them as His special people by His covenant, here represented as a marriage or a betrothal. As we would feel if faced with an unfaithful spouse, God feels with spiritual adultery, betrayal, and unfaithfulness. *When you went after Me in the wilderness, In a land not sown.* God reminds the people of His love for them and how they followed Him in the wilderness. He cared for and protected them. They beheld His miracles. They showed glimmers of love and proper devotion. They were blessed with a land they didn’t even have to sow to receive bounty from. *Israel was holiness to the Lord, The firstfruits of His increase.* Israel was a people dedicated to God. They were accepted as His first fruits, holy to God. *All that devour him will offend –* This looks into the future – all that devour WILL offend and will be punished, because the devourer has devoured the Holy First Fruits of God. *Disaster will come upon them,” says the Lord.* God will avenge His people. We have no reason to seek vengeance. Vengeance is Mine sayeth the Lord. We saw that with the Egyptians, Midianites, Canaanites, Amalekites, and the list goes on. God takes care of His people.

Verses 4-6 *Hear the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob and all the families of the house of Israel. 5Thus says the Lord: “What injustice have your fathers found in Me, That they have gone far from Me, Have followed idols, And have become idolaters? 6Neither did they say, ‘Where is the Lord, Who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, Who led us through the wilderness, Through a land of deserts and pits, Through a land of drought and the shadow of death, Through a land that no one crossed And where no one dwelt?* ***Hear*** *the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob and all the families of the house of Israel.* Jeremiah directs the prophecies to the whole house of Jacob. Recall that 10 tribes have been taken into captivity, but some of each tribe remain among the people of Judah. We know this to be true through many examples. Anna, in Luke 2:36, says in part, *Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher.* Asher was one of the 10 tribes taken away by the Assyrians. *What injustice have your fathers found in Me, That they have gone far from Me, Have followed idols, And have become idolaters?* God now asks a question we all know the answer to – How have I been unjust in My covenant? The answer is He hasn’t. We stray. He doesn’t. He continues – what have I done to cause you to stray, violate My Law, worship idols, fail to give Me Honor, Worship, and Service? We know the answer – God has done nothing to cause this. Romans 1:20-23 *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.* It is we that corrupt the goodness of God. *Neither did they say, ‘Where is the Lord, Who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, Who led us through the wilderness, Through a land of deserts and pits, Through a land of drought and the shadow of death, Through a land that no one crossed And where no one dwelt?* The people do not inquire after God, the One that delivered them from Egypt, through the wilderness, and into the Promised Land. They are not seeking His favor. They have no sense of loss. I’d say that we, today, likewise have no sense of the loss we have suffered for our wickedness, but we will.

Verses 7-8 *I brought you into a bountiful country, To eat its fruit and its goodness. But when you entered, you defiled My land And made My heritage an abomination. 8The priests did not say, ‘Where is the Lord?’ And those who handle the law did not know Me; The rulers also transgressed against Me; The prophets prophesied by Baal, And walked after things that do not profit.* ***I brought*** *you into a bountiful country, To eat its fruit and its goodness. But when you entered, you defiled My land And made My heritage an abomination.* God brought Israel to a fruitful land, overflowing with blessings, to enjoy the goodness. They defiled the land with sin by rejecting God and worshipping idols and taking on false gods. Sounds Oh So familiar today. *The priests did not say, ‘Where is the Lord?’ And those who handle the law did not know Me; The rulers also transgressed against Me; The prophets prophesied by Baal, And walked after things that do not profit.* God raised priests up to an honorable place, yet they don’t even inquire after Him. They do not seek Him in their duties, don’t seek knowledge of Him, and, as we saw in Malachi, they are leading the people to wickedness, rather than being the source of knowledge and example of righteousness. The rulers, the Pastors, the ones appointed to attend to the flock, have transgressed against Me. These are the magistrates and the teachers of the people, as well as the appointed governors. Further, the prophets that are being heard are prophesying in the name of Baal. Baal was a Phoenician false god. The people are walking after idols, things, and stuff. These bring no profit. The point is that the leaders are corrupt and the people are falling right in line.

Verse 9 *“Therefore I will yet bring charges against you,” says the Lord, “And against your children’s children I will bring charges.*God is sending charges by His prophets, leaving the fathers of the country, and every house, with no excuse. There is a saying – Ignorance of the law is not an excuse. Try telling the judge you didn’t see the speed limit sign…. God says, “I’m sending My word. Not only will you suffer, but your children will suffer for your ignorance and rebellion. We see our sin of unfaithfulness bearing fruit in our children today.

Verse 10-11 *For pass beyond the coasts of Cyprus and see, Send to Kedar and consider diligently, And see if there has been such a thing. 11Has a nation changed its gods, Which are not gods? But My people have changed their Glory For what does not profit.* ***For*** *pass beyond the coasts of Cyprus and see, Send to Kedar and consider diligently, And see if there has been such a thing.* From East to West, North to South. There is nowhere found a more rebellious, adulterous nation that Judah. God, through Jeremiah, tells the people to seek diligently, and they will not find a city more adulterous than Jerusalem. *Has a nation changed its gods, Which are not gods? But My people have changed their Glory For what does not profit.* The people have changed the One True God for false gods made by hand, which are not gods. They have sacrificed their Protector, Provider, and Benefactor for that which doesn’t profit. That sounds way too close to home. We’ve thrown God out for wealth and things. We’ve forgotten the Face of our Father. We’ve deserted the One True God.

Verses 12-13 *Be astonished, O heavens, at this, And be horribly afraid; Be very desolate,” says the Lord. 13“For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.* ***Be*** *astonished, O heavens, at this, And be horribly afraid; Be very desolate,” says the Lord.* This verse has the idea that even the inanimate objects would stand amazed at the wickedness of the people; that the heavens themselves would feel fear, the moon and sun would hide their faces from such abominations and senselessness as the people are exhibiting. Isaiah 1:2-3 says *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the Lord has spoken: “I have nourished and brought up children, And they have rebelled against Me; 3 The ox knows its owner And the donkey its master’s crib; But Israel does not know, My people do not consider.”* Animals know who God is. Man chooses to forget. Shame on us.***For My people*** *have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, And hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.* Foolishness and ungratefulness, the two evils. God freely brought an inexhaustible supply of comfort, relief, protection, provision. Living water, flowing without end, and they have forsaken Him. How foolish! Instead, they’ve turned to gods of their own making, plans of their own, protections of their own, pride and lust instead of praise and love. But these are broken cisterns, broken water holders that have no bottom and leak. The water disappears. What kind of person would reject a pure, perpetual spring of cool water for a leaking, dirt filled puddle in a broken pot? A foolish, foolish person… yet, we do this everyday.

And so we leave Jeremiah tonight as he begins crying in the streets. He will continue this for the next forty years in Judah, but I’d tell you that he continues to this day. He cries from the pages of this Bible to the people of America and the world – don’t despise God, don’t desert God, don’t give up His perpetual blessings for the stuff which moths eat, rust destroys, and thieves steal. Lay up treasure in Heaven. Love God while He may yet be found. The question is – are we listening? My prayer is we all are and that we cry night and day to God, acknowledging who He is, and praying intercessory prayers on behalf of our wicked nation and our wicked world.