***Jeremiah 13: 1-14 Thus the Lord said to me: “Go and get yourself a linen sash, and put it around your waist, but do not put it in water.” 2So I got a sash according to the word of the Lord, and put it around my waist. 3And the word of the Lord came to me the second time, saying, 4“Take the sash that you acquired, which is around your waist, and arise, go to the Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole in the rock.” 5So I went and hid it by the Euphrates, as the Lord commanded me. 6Now it came to pass after many days that the Lord said to me, “Arise, go to the Euphrates, and take from there the sash which I commanded you to hide there.” 7Then I went to the Euphrates and dug, and I took the sash from the place where I had hidden it; and there was the sash, ruined. It was profitable for nothing. 8Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 9“Thus says the Lord: ‘In this manner I will ruin the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem. 10This evil people, who refuse to hear My words, who follow the dictates of their hearts, and walk after other gods to serve them and worship them, shall be just like this sash which is profitable for nothing. 11For as the sash clings to the waist of a man, so I have caused the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah to cling to Me,’ says the Lord, ‘that they may become My people, for renown, for praise, and for glory; but they would not hear.’ 12“Therefore you shall speak to them this word: ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: “Every bottle shall be filled with wine.” “And they will say to you, ‘Do we not certainly know that every bottle will be filled with wine?’ 13“Then you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land—even the kings who sit on David’s throne, the priests, the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem—with drunkenness! 14And I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together,” says the Lord. “I will not pity nor spare nor have mercy, but will destroy them.”***

We’re back with Jeremiah this evening. Jeremiah continues to call after the people according to what God is telling him to do. He is obedient, regardless of the disobedience of the people of Judah. This chapter continues to demonstrate the persistence of God in calling the people back to the covenant that He made with them. God could have long since acted on this wicked and perverse people, but He is long suffering and is giving every opportunity for reform and repentance.

Verse 1-2 *Thus the Lord said to me: “Go and get yourself a linen sash, and put it around your waist, but do not put it in water.” 2So I got a sash according to the word of the Lord, and put it around my waist.* Jeremiah now repeats what God has told him to do. Notice that this is instruction that doesn’t make immediate sense, yet Jeremiah obeys immediately. Likewise, we are to obey, even when the instruction of God doesn’t make immediate sense to us. God and get yourself a linen sash or a belt. This symbolism would make a lot of sense to the people of that time. The sash in ancient Israel served as a reminder of God’s covenant with the people. Jeremiah is to bind it around his waist or loins. He’s to wear it continually as a reminder and not wash it. It’s to encircle his waist as God’s protection encircles His people. In the beginning, it’s a clean covenant, but over time it becomes filthy. Jeremiah is instructed to allow the filth to cling to him as a reminder of the filth clinging to God’s covenant people. In obedience, Jeremiah gets this sash and placed it just as God commanded. He didn’t hesitate.

Verses 3-4 *And the word of the Lord came to me the second time, saying, 4“Take the sash that you acquired, which is around your waist, and arise, go to the Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole in the rock.”* We don’t know how long Jeremiah is wearing this sash, but a period of time passes. God speaks a second time. God now commands the prophet to go to the banks of the Euphrates river, also known as the waters of Babylon, and hide that sash. Recall that the sash represents the covenant of God with His people. It’s filthy now. Hiding it on the banks of the Euphrates signifies that the Jewish people will be carried away to Babylon. Most theologians agree that this journey to the river Euphrates is in a vision, as the Euphrates is almost 700 miles north of Jerusalem. Let it not be lost on us that Jeremiah is seeing these visions as though they are physically happening at that very moment.

Verse 5*So I went and hid it by the Euphrates, as the Lord commanded me.* Jeremiah now says – so I went. Recall with me in John 6, we read the story of Jesus walking on the water. In verse 20 we read *But He said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.”* Then in verse 21, we read something interesting. *Then they willingly received Him into the boat,* ***and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.*** Recall in 1 Kings 18, Elijah was able to outrun Ahab’s chariot to Jezreel. God may have supernaturally transported Jeremiah 700 miles north to the river. With God, all things are possible. Whether vision or physically, the result is the same.

Verse 6 *Now it came to pass after many days that the Lord said to me, “Arise, go to the Euphrates, and take from there the sash which I commanded you to hide there.”* The Bible doesn’t define how long of a time interval elapses. Some like to believe 70 days, one day for each year of the coming exile, but we simply don’t know. Jeremiah is instructed to go back to the river and retrieve the sash that he hid there.

Verse 7 *Then I went to the Euphrates and dug, and I took the sash from the place where I had hidden it; and there was the sash, ruined. It was profitable for nothing.* Jeremiah returns to the spot, digs, and retrieves the sash. The sash, as one would expect, is ruined. It’s stained, filthy, worthless, and good for nothing. There’s no greatness left in the once fine linen sash. Likewise, Judah will be after the exile. It will be humbled and without pride.

Verse 8-9 *Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Thus says the Lord: ‘In this manner I will ruin the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem.* The Lord now reveals the meaning of the sash. In this manner, I will ruin the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem. God is saying – I will bring down the pride and the haughty spirits of this people. I will make them slaves, captives of a heathen nation. We studied this in our study of Lamentations 5. People that were formerly servants in Jerusalem now rule over the people of Jerusalem. God will take the people beyond the place that the sash was hidden by the Euphates across the waters of Babylon, into captivity for 70 years. They will no longer have their Temple, make their sacrifices, or be allowed to worship God openly.

Verse 10 *This evil people, who refuse to hear My words, who follow the dictates of their hearts, and walk after other gods to serve them and worship them, shall be just like this sash which is profitable for nothing.* God is still speaking here. The people who refuse to hear, follow the stubbornness and imaginations of their hearts, and pursue other gods shall be like the sash that was buried and then retrieved – it will be profitable for nothing.

Verse 11*For as the sash clings to the waist of a man, so I have caused the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah to cling to Me,’ says the Lord, ‘that they may become My people, for renown, for praise, and for glory; but they would not hear.* Now, we understand why God had Jeremiah wear the sash. Notice that the explanation comes long after Jeremiah serves obediently. God says – for as the sash clings to the waist of a man, so I have entered into a covenant with these people. I have caused the nation of Israel to cleave and cling to Me. God gave the nation favor and blessings, gave them special access to Him, blessed the Temple and dwelt among the people. That they might be His people and have the honor of being called by His name. He was glorified by their praise as He acted in His providence on their behalf.

Verse 12*“Therefore you shall speak to them this word: ‘Thus says the Lord God of Israel: “Every bottle shall be filled with wine.” “And they will say to you, ‘Do we not certainly know that every bottle will be filled with wine?’* God intended them only good and blessing, yet they turned away from Him, Therefore, Jeremiah is to speak of the destruction to come. The sash was a symbol and now the bottle of a symbol. Wrath will be poured into every bottle. Every person has stored up God’s wrath through their wickedness. All will share in the punishment to come. Now, God tells Jeremiah what they will say – another example of God’s providential complete knowledge. God knows that some will make a joke of it all, while others will mistake Jeremiah’s prophecy to mean that a vintage year of wine is coming, signifying blessings from God. God makes it clear what He means in the next two verses.

Verses 13-14*“Then you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land—even the kings who sit on David’s throne, the priests, the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem—with drunkenness! 14And I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together,” says the Lord. “I will not pity nor spare nor have mercy, but will destroy them.”* Jeremiah now hears the clarification from God. God will fill the people with the wine of confusion and astonishment. Kings, priests, prophets, and all the inhabitants will be filled. No one will be exempt. And I will dash them one against another, meaning God will send a spirit of division and disagreement, strife, among all the people. We see this in Judges 9:23 with a spirit of this kind coming between Abimelech and the men of Shechem. Fathers and sons will war against one another. In fighting will make the people easy prey for the invaders. God will have no mercy. All will be destroyed. Just as the wicked had no mercy upon the people they preyed up, God will send conquerors who have no mercy.

And so we leave Jeremiah tonight. Again, he has been given visions and prophecies to be delivered to a prideful and unrepentant people. He is obediently following God. God is still calling to His people, but the time is drawing near. In our next study, we will learn that it is pride and a haughty spirit that is bringing the people to this fall. God wants everyone to believe and repent, but He knows some will refuse. Likewise, God knows who will accept His Son and who will not. We have no such knowledge, therefore we witness to everyone praying that the seed will take and souls will be saved before it is everlasting too late.