

The Final Stages of Israel's Apostasy
Lesson 5 – The Merciful End of God's Wrath – a Purified Fellowship
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Introduction: Was the wrath of God poured out on Israel an act of mercy?

- A. There were some that could rightly be called “children of wrath.” They like Pharaoh, hardened their hearts and had only expectation of wrath. **(Jer 15:2)**
 - 1. God had a long term plan for Israel and all men.
 - 2. The nation of Israel had yet to fulfill its purpose of the promised Messiah coming from the descendants of Abraham. **(Gen 12:1-3)**
 - 3. God was mercifully fulfilling a plan to purify Israel and thus extend its existence as a nation until the coming of Christ. **(Ezk 14:22-23)**
- B. Israel's apostasy and the wrath of God serve to remind Christians today of how to have a relationship with God. **(1 Cor 10:11)**
 - 1. Whatever doctrinal system men come up with that provides “security” and “peace” that does not produce a teachable, reverent people that obey God, is in vain. **(Jer 6:13-14)**
 - 2. God's people will always have certain characteristics. Do you know them?

I. God wants a people for Him

- A. God wants a relationship with a people that He likens to a marriage relationship.
 - 1. God will not share! In that He is a jealous God.
 - 2. The coming wrath was designed to teach Israel that very point. **(Ezk 39:25-26)**
 - 3. God's purpose with His people is a tender and beautiful one. **(Ezk 16:1-14)**
 - 4. Because of the blessings of God, Israel became proud and committed adultery with other gods. **(Ezk 16:15-24)**
- B. How many of you would be willing to occasionally “share” your mate with another?
 - 1. God has always wanted all of our hearts! **(Jer 3:10; 4:14)**
 - 2. What did the “non-traditional” service to idols involve? How might the Israelites have framed this new enlighten approach to God?
 - 3. God called it adultery. **(Jer 3:8-9; 5:7; 7:9)**
 - 4. We serve a God that wants a personal relationship with us! Think about this.
- C. This relationship (fellowship) with God is personal.
 - 1. Israel thought that their nationality or the location of the temple would save them.
 - 2. God pointed out to them that each individual would stand by faith. **(Ezk 14:14-16, 20)**
 - 3. This is the very point of the book of Habakkuk. **(Hab 2:3-4)**

II. God wants His people to be separate from the world

- A. God will have a people!
 - 1. He was about to purge most of Israel but in the end there was a “remnant.” **(Jer 31:1-9)**
 - 2. They would be drawn by the “lovingkindness” of God. **(V3)**
 - 3. This remnant would take the issue of sin seriously. **(Ezk 6:5-10)**

4. If one could only see the wrath of God then the true grace of God would be seen!
(Rom 11:22)
 5. Those who laugh at you as a “legalist” when you simply question a practice are not the people of God.
- B. Because God was preparing the whole world to hear an invitation to become His people, He made this purging of Israel very public. **(Jer 31:10-14)**
1. Note that Israel would be humbled and pure.
 2. God’s act of wrath was a merciful lesson to the whole world that there is only one way to have a relationship with Him. How often do men forget this!
- C. The leadership of Israel had first compromised on fellowship. **(Jer 23:14-17; 7:9-10)**
1. We must have an integrity that demands an accurate teaching of God’s word.
 2. Over and over in history men have arisen who ridicule sound doctrine and under the false banner of being “grace-centered” try to comfort people in their desires.
 3. Look at how they were able to widen their “circle of fellowship” without any of the “traditional rebukes.” People who “despise” God can now be accepted.
 4. “They continually say to those who despise Me, 'The LORD has said, "You shall have peace" '; And to everyone who walks according to the dictates of his own heart, they say, 'No evil shall come upon you.'” **(Jeremiah 23:17)**
 5. Be honest, do you really want to follow a teacher that is “interesting” but has not accurately represented God’s word? **(Jer 23:18-32; Rev 22:18-19)**

III. The people of God under the New Covenant are clearly identified

- A. God’s people would have a spiritual birth to become His people. **(Jer 31:31-34)**
1. Only those who would know God would be His people. **(Jn 3:3-5)**
 2. One of the greatest mistakes a local church can make is to extend fellowship to those who are not converted!
- B. God has always used the word “covenant” to describe His relationship with His people.
1. **διαθήκη** diatheke - 1) a disposition, arrangement, of any sort, which one wishes to be valid, the last disposition which one makes of his earthly possessions after his death, a testament or will 2) a compact, a covenant, a testament 2a) God's covenant with Noah, etc.
 2. Why was a covenant so significant to Noah? **(Gen 6:18)**
 3. Again, God’s defining our relationship to Him is not just a set of rules. What a privilege to have such an opportunity. **(Jer 23:1-4)**

Questions to Consider:

1. Why was it necessary for such a terrible judgment to come upon Israel?
2. What lessons can we draw from how God describes His relationship with His people?
3. In what condition was Israel before they became the people of God?
4. What are the fruits of extending fellowship beyond what God does?
5. What do we learn about the New Covenant from Jeremiah?