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JEREMIAH 2: 1 the LORD's word came to me, saying,

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God expresses his continued regard for his people, long since chosen, Jer 2:1-3. He then expostulates with them on their ungrateful and worse than heathen return to his regard, Jer 2:4-11; at which even the inanimate creation must be astonished, Jer 2:12, Jer 2:13. After this their guilt is declared to be the sole cause of the calamities which their enemies had power to inflict on them, Jer 2:14-17. They are upbraided for their alliances with idolatrous countries, Jer 2:18, Jer 2:19; and for their strong propensity to idolatry, notwithstanding all the care and tender mercy of God, Jer 2:20-29. Even the chastenings of the Almighty have produced in this people no repentance, Jer 2:30. The chapter concludes with compassionately remonstrating against their folly and ingratitude in revolting so deeply from God, and with warning them of the fearful consequences, Jer 2:31, Jer 2:37.

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JEREMIAH 2: 2 "Go, and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the LORD, "I remember for you the kindness of your youth, the love of your weddings; how you went after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.

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#### Verse 2

I remember thee - The youth here refers to their infant political state when they came out of Egypt; they just then began to be a people. Their espousals refer to their receiving the law at Mount Sinai, which they solemnly accepted, Exo 24:6-8, and which acceptance was compared to a betrothing or espousal. Previously to this they were no people, for they had no constitution nor form of government. When they received the law, and an establishment in the Promised Land, then they became a people and a nation.

Wentest after me - Receivedst my law, and wert obedient to it; confiding thyself wholly to my guidance, and being conscientiously attached to my worship. The kindness was that which God showed them by taking them to be his people, not their kindness to him.

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JEREMIAH 2: 3 Israel was holiness to the LORD, the first fruits of his increase. All who devour him shall be held guilty. Evil shall come on them,"" says the LORD."

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#### Verse 3

Israel was holiness unto the Lord - Fully consecrated to his service.

The first fruits of his increase - They were as wholly the Lord's, as the first fruits were the property of the priests according to the law Num 18:13. These the priests alone had a right to devote to their own use.

All that devour him shall offend - As they were betrothed to the Lord, they were considered his especial property; they therefore who injured them were considered as laying violent hands on the

property of God. They who persecute God's children have a grievous burden to bear, an awful account to give.

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JEREMIAH 2: 4 Hear the LORD's word, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel!

JEREMIAH 2: 5 Thus says the LORD, "What unrighteousness have your fathers found in me, that they have gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?"

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Verse 5

What iniquity have your fathers found in me - Have they ever discovered any thing cruel, unjust, oppressive in my laws? Any thing unkind or tyrannical in my government? Why then have they become idolaters?

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JEREMIAH 2: 6 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 of pits, through a land of drought and of the shadow of death, through a land that no one passed through, and where no man lived?'

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Verse 6

Through the wilderness - Egypt was the house of their bondage: the desert through which they passed after they came out of Egypt, was a place where the means of life were not to be found; where no one family could subsist, much less a company of 600, 000 men. God mentions these things to show that it was by the bounty of an especial providence that they were fed and preserved alive. Previously to this, it was a land through which no man passed, and in which no man dwelt. And why? because it did not produce the means of life; it was the shadow of death in its appearance, and the grave to those who committed themselves to it.

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JEREMIAH 2: 7 I brought you into a plentiful land, to eat its fruit and its goodness; but when you entered, you defiled my land, and made my heritage an abomination.

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Verse 7

And I brought you into a plentiful country - The land of Canaan.

My land - The particular property of God, which he gave to them as an inheritance, they being his peculiar people.

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JEREMIAH 2: 8 The priests didn't say, 'Where is the LORD?' and those who handle the law didn't know me. The rulers also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit.

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Verse 8

They that handle the law - ותפשי vethophe shey, they that draw out the law; they whose office it is to explain it, draw out its spiritual meanings, and show to what its testimonies refer.

The pastors also - Kings, political and civil rulers.

Prophesied by Baal - Became his prophets, and were inspired with the words of lying spirits.

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JEREMIAH 2: 9 "Therefore I will yet contend with you," says the LORD, "and I will contend with your children's children.

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Verse 9

I will yet plead with you - אריב arib, I will maintain my process, vindicate my own conduct, and prove the wickedness of yours.

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JEREMIAH 2: 10 For pass over to the islands of Kittim, and see; and send to Kedar, and consider diligently; and see if there has been such a thing.

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Verse 10

The isles of Chittim - This is the island of Cyprus, according to Josephus. In 1 Maccabees 8:5, it is taken for Macedonia. Besides this, how they (the Romans) had discomfited in battle Philip and Perseus, king of the Chittims. Chittim was the grandson of Japhet; and Bochart has made it appear that the countries inhabited by the Chittim were Italy and the adjacent provinces of Europe, lying along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea; and probably this is the prophet's meaning.

Send unto Kedar - The name of an Arabian tribe. See if nations either near or remote, cultivated or stupid, have acted with such fickleness and ingratitude as you have done! They have retained their gods to whom they had no obligation; ye have abandoned your God, to whom ye owe your life, breath, and all things!

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JEREMIAH 2: 11 Has a nation changed its gods, which really are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit.

JEREMIAH 2: 12 "Be astonished, you heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid. Be very desolate," says the LORD.

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Verse 12

Be astonished, O ye heavens - Or, the heavens are astonished. The original will admit either sense. The conduct of this people was so altogether bad, that among all the iniquities of mankind, neither heaven nor earth had witnessed any thing so excessively sinful and profligate.

JEREMIAH 2: 13 "For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the spring of living waters, and cut them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

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Verse 13

Two evils - First, they forsook God, the Fountain of life, light, prosperity, and happiness. Secondly, they hewed out broken cisterns; they joined themselves to idols, from whom they could receive neither temporal nor spiritual good! Their conduct was the excess of folly and blindness. What we call here broken cisterns, means more properly such vessels as were ill made, not staunch, ill put together, so that the water leaked through them.

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JEREMIAH 2: 14 Is Israel a servant? Is he a native-born slave? Why has he become a captive?

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Verse 14

Is Israel a servant? - Is he a slave purchased with money, or a servant born in the family? He is a son himself. If so, then, why is he spoiled? Not because God has not shown him love and kindness; but because he forsook God, turned to and is joined with idols.

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JEREMIAH 2: 15 The young lions have roared at him, and yelled. They have made his land waste. His cities are burned up, without inhabitant.

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Verse 15

The young lions roared upon him - The Assyrians, who have sacked and destroyed the kingdom of Israel, with a fierceness like that of pouncing upon their prey.

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JEREMIAH 2: 16 The children also of Memphis and Tahpanhes have broken the crown of your head.

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Verse 16

The children of Noph and Tahapanes - Noph and Tahapanes were two cities of Egypt, otherwise called Memphis and Daphni. It is well known that the good king was defeated by the Egyptians, and slain in battle. Thus was the crown of Judah's head broken.

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JEREMIAH 2: 17 "Haven't you procured this to yourself, in that you have forsaken the LORD your God, when he led you by the way?

JEREMIAH 2: 18 Now what have you to do in the way to Egypt, to drink the waters of the Shihor? Or what have you to do in the way to Assyria, to drink the waters of the River?

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 Verse 18

What hast thou to do in the way of Egypt - Why dost thou make alliances with Egypt?

To drink the waters of Sihor? - This means the Nile. See on Isa 23:3 (note).

The way of Assyria - Why make alliances with the Assyrians? All such connections will only expedite thy ruin.

To drink the waters of the river? - The Euphrates, as נהר nahar or הנהר hannahar always means Euphrates, the country between the Tigris and Euphrates, is termed to this day Maher alnahr, "the country beyond the river," i.e., Mesopotamia.

Instead of cleaving to the Lord, they joined affinity and made alliances with those two nations, who were ever jealous of them, and sought their ruin. Egypt was to them a broken reed instead of a staff; Assyria was a leaky cistern, from which they could derive no help.

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JEREMIAH 2: 19 "Your own wickedness shall correct you, and your backsliding shall reprove you. Know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and a bitter, that you have forsaken the LORD your God, and that my fear is not in you," says the Lord, the LORD of Armies.

JEREMIAH 2: 20 "For of old time I have broken your yoke, and burst your bonds; and you said, 'I will not serve;' for on every high hill and under every green tree you bowed yourself, playing the prostitute.

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 Verse 20

Of old time I have broken thy yoke - It is thought by able critics that the verbs should be read in the second person singular, Thou hast broken thy yoke, Thou hast burst thy bonds; and thus the Septuagint, συνετριψας τον ζυγον σου, "thou hast broken thy yoke." And the Vulgate, Confregisti jugum meum, rupisti, vincula mea; "Thou hast broken my yoke; thou hast burst my bonds;" and so the Arabic. But the Chaldee gives it a meaning which removes the difficulty: "I have broken the yoke of the people from thy neck; I have cut your bonds asunder." And when this was done, they did promise fair: for "thou saidst, I will not transgress;" but still they played the harlot - committed idolatrous acts in the high places, where the heathen had built their altars, pretending that elevation of this kind assisted their devotion.

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JEREMIAH 2: 21 Yet I had planted you a noble vine, wholly a right seed. How then have you turned into the degenerate branches of a foreign vine to me?

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 Verse 21

I had planted thee a noble vine - I gave thee the fullest instruction, the purest ordinances, the highest privileges; and reason would that I should expect thee to live suitably to such advantages; but instead of this thou art become degenerate; the tree is deteriorated, and the fruit is bad. Instead

of being true worshippers, and of a holy life and conversation, ye are become idolaters of the most corrupt and profligate kind. See Isa 5:1, etc., where the same image is used.

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JEREMIAH 2: 22 For though you wash yourself with lye, and use much soap, yet your iniquity is marked before me," says the Lord GOD.

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#### Verse 22

For though thou wash thee with nitre - It should be rendered natar or natron, a substance totally different from our nitre. It comes from the root נתר nathar, to dissolve, loosen, because a solution of it in water is abstersive, taking out spots, etc., from clothes. It is still used in the east for the purpose of washing. If vinegar be poured on it, Dr. Shaw says, a strong effervescence is the immediate consequence, which illustrates Pro 25:20 : "The singing of songs to a heavy heart is like vinegar upon natron;" that is, there is no affinity between them; opposition and strife are occasioned by any attempt to unite them.

Thine iniquity is marked before me - No washing will take out thy spots; the marks of thy idolatry and corruption are too deeply rooted to be extracted by any human means.

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JEREMIAH 2: 23 "How can you say, 'I am not defiled. I have not gone after the Baals'? See your way in the valley. Know what you have done. You are a swift dromedary traversing her ways;

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#### Verse 23

See thy way in the valley - The valley of Hinnom, where they offered their own children to Moloch, an idol of the Ammonites.

A swift dromedary traversing her ways - Dr. Blayney translates, "A fleet dromedary that hath taken to company with her." Dr. Dahler rather paraphrases, thus: -

Semblable a une dromedaire en chaleur,

Qui court d'une tote a l'autre. "Like to a dromedary in her desire for the male,

Which runs hither and thither."

This is an energetic comparison; and shows the unbridled attachment of those bad people to idolatry, and the abominable practices by which it was usually accompanied.

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JEREMIAH 2: 24 a wild donkey used to the wilderness, that snuffs up the wind in her desire. When she is in heat, who can turn her away? All those who seek her will not weary themselves. In her month, they will find her.

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#### Verse 24

A wild ass used to the wilderness - Another comparison to express the same thing.

Snuffeth up the wind - In a high fever from the inward heat felt at such times, these animals open their mouths and nostrils as wide as possible, to take in large draughts of fresh air, in order to cool them.

In her mouth they shall find her - The meaning is, that although such animals are exceedingly fierce and dangerous when they are in this state; yet, as soon as they have found the male, the desire is satisfied, and they become quiet and governable as before. But it was not so with this idolatrous people: their desires were ever fierce and furious; they were never satiated, one indulgence always leading to another. The brute beasts had only a short season in which this appetite prevailed; but they acted without restraint or limit.

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JEREMIAH 2: 25 "Withhold your foot from being unshod, and your throat from thirst. But you said, 'It is in vain. No, for I have loved strangers, and I will go after them.'

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#### Verse 25

Withhold thy foot from being unshod - When it was said to them, "Cease from discovering thy feet; prostitute thyself no more to thy idols."

And thy throat from thirst - Drink no more of their libations, nor use those potions which tend only to increase thy appetite for pollution. Thou didst say, There is no hope: it is useless to advise me thus; I am determined; I have loved these strange gods, and to them will I cleave.

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JEREMIAH 2: 26 As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed; they, their kings, their princes, and their priests, and their prophets;

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#### Verse 26

As the thief is ashamed - As the pilferer is confounded when he is caught in the fact; so shalt thou, thy kings, princes, priests, and prophets, be confounded, when God shall arrest thee in thy idolatries, and deliver thee into the hands of thine enemies.

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JEREMIAH 2: 27 who tell wood, 'You are my father;' and a stone, 'You have brought me out:' for they have turned their back to me, and not their face; but in the time of their trouble they will say, 'Arise, and save us.'

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#### Verse 27

Thou art my father - By thee we have been produced, and by thee we are sustained. This was the property of the true God; for he is the Author and Supporter of being. How deeply fallen and brutishly ignorant must they be when they could attribute this to the stock of a tree!

JEREMIAH 2: 28 "But where are your gods that you have made for yourselves? Let them arise, if they can save you in the time of your trouble: for according to the number of your cities are your gods, Judah.

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Verse 28

According to the number of thy cities are thy gods - Among heathen nations every city had its tutelary deity. Judah, far sunk in idolatry, had adopted this custom. The Church of Rome has refined it a little: every city has its tutelary saint, and this saint has a procession and worship peculiar to himself. So here; not much of the old idolatry is lost.

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JEREMIAH 2: 29 "Why will you contend with me? You all have transgressed against me," says the LORD.

JEREMIAH 2: 30 "I have struck your children in vain. They received no correction. Your own sword has devoured your prophets, like a destroying lion.

JEREMIAH 2: 31 Generation, consider the LORD's word. Have I been a wilderness to Israel? Or a land of thick darkness? Why do my people say, 'We have broken loose. We will come to you no more?'

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Verse 31

Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? - Have I ever withheld from you any of the blessings necessary for your support?

A land of darkness - Have you, since you passed through the wilderness, and came out of the darkness of Egypt, ever been brought into similar circumstances? You have had food and all the necessaries of life for your bodies; and my ordinances and word to enlighten and cheer your souls. I have neither been a wilderness nor a land of darkness to you.

We are lords - We wish to be our own masters; we will neither brook religious nor civil restraint; we will regard no laws, human or Divine. It was this disposition that caused them to fall in so fully with the whole system of idolatry.

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JEREMIAH 2: 32 "Can a virgin forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number.

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Verse 32

Can a maid forget her ornaments - This people has not so much attachment to me as young females have to their dress and ornaments. They never forget them and even when arrived at old age, look with pleasure on the dress and ornaments which they have worn in their youth.

Days without number - That is, for many years; during the whole reign of Manasses, which was fifty-five years, the land was deluged with idolatry, from which the reform by good King Josiah his grandson had not yet purified it.

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JEREMIAH 2: 33 How well you prepare your way to seek love! Therefore you have taught even the wicked women your ways.

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Verse 33

Why trimmest thou thy way - Ye have used a multitude of artifices to gain alliances with the neighboring idolatrous nations.

Hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways - Ye have made even these idolaters worse than they were before. Dr. Blayney translates, "Therefore have I taught calamity thy ways." A prosopopeia: "I have instructed calamity where to find thee." Thou shalt not escape punishment.

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JEREMIAH 2: 34 Also the blood of the souls of the innocent poor is found in your skirts. You did not find them breaking in; but it is because of all these things.

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Verse 34

The blood of the souls of the poor innocents - We find from the sacred history that Manasseh had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; see 2Kgs 21:16, and Eze 34:10.

I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these - Such deeds of darkness and profligacy are found only in Israel. Dr. Blayney translates, "I have not found it in a digged hole, but upon every oak." Others cover the blood that it may not appear; but ye have shed it openly, and sprinkled it upon your consecrated oaks, and gloried in it.

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JEREMIAH 2: 35 "Yet you said, 'I am innocent. Surely his anger has turned away from me.'

"Behold, I will judge you, because you say, 'I have not sinned.'

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Verse 35

Because I am innocent - They continued to assert their innocence, and therefore expected that God's judgments would be speedily removed!

I will plead with thee - I will maintain my process, follow it up to conviction, and inflict the deserved punishment.

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JEREMIAH 2: 36 Why do you go about so much to change your way? You will be ashamed of Egypt also, as you were ashamed of Assyria.

Verse 36

Why gaddest thou about - When they had departed from the Lord, they sought foreign alliances for support.

1. The Assyrians 2Chr 28:13-21; but they injured instead of helping them.
2. The Egyptians: but in this they were utterly disappointed, and were ashamed of their confidence.

See Jer 37:7-8 (note), for the fulfillment of this prediction.

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JEREMIAH 2: 37 From there also you shall go out, with your hands on your head; for the LORD has rejected those in whom you trust, and you shall not prosper with them.

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Verse 37

Thou shalt go forth from him, and thine hands upon thine head - Thou shalt find all thy confidence in vain, - thy hope disappointed; - and thy state reduced to desperation. The hand being placed on the head was the evidence of deep sorrow, occasioned by utter desolation. See the case of Tamar, when ruined and abandoned by her brother Amnon, 2Sam 13:19.

Thou shalt not prosper in them - They shall all turn to thy disadvantage; and this as we shall see in the history of this people, was literally fulfilled. O what a grievous and bitter thing it is to sin against the Lord, and have him for an enemy!