

Jeremiah's Girdle

"GOD'S GIRDLE" or "THE DIRTY MESSAGE"

[Jeremiah 13: 1-27](#)

The words of the prophet have fallen on deaf ears. Now God will begin to use many illustrations to speak to Judah. He begins with a linen girdle.

I. THE LINEN GIRDLE ([Jeremiah 13: 1, 2](#))

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.'*
2. *So I got a girdle according to the word of the LORD, and put it on my loins.* The girdle in Biblical days was a type of belt that wrapped around the waist. It was worn by soldiers, priest, kings, and prophets and by common men and women.
 - 1.) The soldier's girdle was normally made of leather. It held the sword and other items needed for warfare.
 - 2.) The priest girdle was the most beautiful. It was made of gold, blue, purple and scarlet and fine twined linen. ([Exodus 39:5](#)). This girdle told an amazing story.
 - 3.) The fine twined linen spoke of the righteousness of the priest and the people, but mainly of the Savior and more.
 - 4.) The gold spoke of the Lord's testing and purity.
 - 5.) The purple spoke of the Lord's royalty and Kingship.
 - 6.) The scarlet represented the redemption of the Lord. Thus, the priest's girdle told a great story.
 - 7.) The kings would wear a different girdle. It may have been of purple, scarlet or linen interwoven with gems and precious stones.
 - 8.) The common man and woman would have an inexpensive girdle, but nevertheless, a girdle.

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- This brings us to Jeremiah, the prophet's girdle. It was made of fine linen. This girdle told an amazing story that unfolds before us. It represented Israel and Judah. They were to cleave to God as a girdle cleaves to the prophet. As the girdle bound closely to the prophet, Judah was to cleave to the Lord. It was made of the fiber of flax. This linen which came from the flax preserved the warmth of the body. Thus, God's desire was for his people to hold a deep affection for Him, all day long. The girdle was to reveal Judah's royalty, beauty and glory.

The teaching for the Church is this:

1. We should not just have the knowledge of God's word and will and ways, but have great love in our heart for Him, yea in our innermost being.
2. As God made an earthly covenant with Israel, God made an eternal covenant with His Church.
3. The earthly covenant was the law to be obeyed. The eternal covenant was the love of Christ to be received.

As the people caught sight of Jeremiah parading down the streets in a girdle, they knew it represented a sign! Jeremiah was well known among the people as God's prophet. And they knew that everything he did, including what he wore, had an important prophetic message! When Jeremiah first appeared on the streets of Jerusalem wearing the linen girdle, the guessing game began: "What is the meaning of the girdle? What is the prophet trying to say to us? The educated priests and rulers prided themselves on interpreting for the people the prophet's message. They probably told them: "It's very obvious. God is saying to us what we all know."

- A. We are His chosen people! We are His girdle worn proudly by Him.
- B. We are His glory and strength, the excellency of the ages.
- C. We are united to Him by a covenant. He will never leave us or forsake us.
- D. We are bound to Him as surely as that girdle is bound to Jeremiah!"

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As the prophet walked by, you could almost hear the people saying: "Amen, Jeremiah! We get the message. Right on! Praise God!" But in a short time those same priests and people were frowning! They watched Jeremiah with a deep puzzlement – because day by day the girdle got dirtier.

It was becoming soiled and unclean. Spots were beginning to appear. But the prophet kept wearing it for God told him not to wash it. "Why is he not daily washing it?" the people wondered. They all knew the girdle represented them. So, why did he allow it to cling to him with filth and stench on it? Soon they were angry and hissing. To the Jewish mind of that day, cleanliness was a form of godliness. And this soiled, smelly girdle was an offense! They could no longer believe the girdle represented them! They must have run to the priests and said: *"That girdle can't mean us! God doesn't allow dirt to cling to Him. We sacrifice, pay tithes and keep the law. We pray every day and fast." "The girdle must represent the wicked heathen around and among us. If we were that kind of people, God would have cast us aside. He'd never wear a stinking, dirty girdle upon His waist!"* They were so right. The dirty girdle was Israel. These who claimed to be the children of God were filthy in their hearts. They were practicing sin. They were away from God. God was very unhappy with them, but they did not even know it. Why? They had justified sin to the point that they saw nothing wrong with it.

Study here: ([Sin and Evil](#)) ([The Tragedy of Seeing Nothing Wrong with Sin](#))

II. JEREMIAH'S COMMAND:

NEXT, JEREMIAH WAS COMMANDED TO WEAR THE DIRTY GIRDLE ON A LONG JOURNEY TO THE EUPHRATES RIVER! THERE, HE WAS TO BURY THE GIRDLE.

[Vs. 3](#) – *And the word of the LORD came unto me the second time, saying,*

[Vs. 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.*

[Vs. 5](#) – *So I went, and hid it by Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me.*

This journey would cover 250 miles. Jeremiah walked from town to town, wearing a dirty girdle. Why? It was sadly a witness against Judah. Before the prophet arrived in each town, word had already arrived that he was coming. People feared the prophets of God for they had been known to call down fire from heaven

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and pronounce death and diseases upon certain cities and people. Jeremiah was well known and respected throughout Israel and Judah. He was admired even among the surrounding nations. Foreign kings acknowledged God was with him. And now, by his walking the distance to the Euphrates, every village along the way would see the famous girdle. The trip would take weeks – and it would set every town abuzz as Jeremiah passed through. Everyone would want a glimpse of the dirty, spotted and stained girdle, to speculate about its message!

Question: Is the girdle of the church dirty? Though we are righteous in the eyes of the Father through Jesus Christ, I am afraid the world looks at the church and sees a soiled girdle. When the people of this world come into churches that claim to be of God and they see within the church the same things that were in the world thirty, and forty and fifty years ago, what do you think they think of our Heavenly Father? The entertainment of the world that the church rejected forty years ago has slowly, spot by spot, been brought into the church. You would never have women pastors, but you do today.

When the world looks upon your spiritual girdles today, what do they see? Do they see you and me with a close, relationship with the Lord? Do they see us with a light in our eye and excitement in our voice, in love with the Lord Jesus Christ?

What probably was most mystifying to the people was Jeremiah's destination. Why would Jeremiah take this dirty, soiled girdle to the Euphrates River? Everyone knew the Hebrew word "Euphrates" meant "river of fruitfulness." Would he wash it? No, he would bury it.

The analogy is simple:

- How can a filthy people produce fruit for God? The answer – They can't!
- How could Judah expect God to bless them if they would not clean their hearts, repent of their sins and cleave to Him?
- How can the Christian expect God to bless them if they will not clean their hearts, repent of their sins and cleave to Him?

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Our girdle is our love relationship to God. God wants us to cleave to Him all day long....and, not by law but by love. And I found something out about love. Love is a far greater motivation to cause a people to walk with God, than the law. Do you know what will make a missionary leave America and go to the most desolate place on earth? Love! Well, when Jeremiah returned to Judah, the people were happy. The girdle was gone. Soon, they forgot about that dirty message Jeremiah brought to them.

III. JEREMIAH'S DIG [13:6-7](#)

[Vs.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.*

[Vs.7](#) – *Then I went to Euphrates, and dug, and took the girdle from the place where I had hidden it: and, behold, the girdle was marred, (ruined) it was profitable for nothing. (worthless)*

Not only was the girdle hidden to rot and ruin, but it was dug up and brought back as a reminder! After a time, God commanded Jeremiah to go and dig up the girdle. It was ruined, useless, and good for nothing! What did this girdle represent now? Why did God tell Jeremiah to dig it up? Why didn't He just leave it buried, to show that this was the end result of sin? Most of Israel had forgotten all about it. Some probably thought, "At least he finally cast it off and buried it, whatever or whoever it was he was preaching about!" But here came Jeremiah again, parading through the streets with that same girdle, now tattered, filthy and in total ruin and worthless, and it all told a story.

Jeremiah preached: *"This ruined girdle is you, Israel! You have not repented. You are good for nothing! You are a stench in God's nostrils."* ([Romans 3](#)). Paul said, *"You are like the stench of an open grave of dead bodies."* The dug up girdle told Judah something they would not understand till later and it is evident that even today, they don't understand it. When Jeremiah dug up the girdle, it represented God having given Judah freedom again after Babylon conquered them. The message from the "soiled girdle" was *"Judah; your life is as filthy today as the day God buried you."* The Jewish nation was buried as a whole for many

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years. Still to this day they have rejected Jesus Christ as their Messiah, Savior and Lord. Their sins have still separated them from God.

IV. THE DIRT ON THE GIRDLE

Vs. 8 – *Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,*

Vs. 9 – *Thus says the LORD, “After this manner will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem.”*

Vs. 10 – *“This wicked (evil) people, who refuse to listen to my words, who walk in the stubbornness of their hearts, and have gone after other gods, to serve them, and to worship them, let them be just like this girdle, which is good for nothing. (Totally worthless)*

The dirt on the girdle began with pride. Pride is in everyone's heart. It is as hard to tame as a cobra. It raises its head every time someone says something nice about you. It raises its head every time somebody says something bad about you. Pride makes us pout. Pride makes us angry. Pride makes us want our way. Pride makes us quit on God. The pride of man often sends to the low road of destruction.

V. A LAST REMINDER OF WHAT THE GIRDLE REPRESENTS

Vs. 11 – *“For as the girdle clings to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cling unto me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, says 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 girdle represents your love relationship to the Lord. You and I wear a girdle for God. Oh, you can't see it on the outside of my clothes, but those around us can see it.

- The girdle shows this world how much we love God's people.
- It shows the world how much we love the Lord Jesus Christ.
- It shows the world how much we love the eternal Word of God.

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- It shows the world the gratitude we have in our hearts.
- It shows the world that we live for God's glory.
But, the girdle Jeremiah dug was soiled. Judah – a people who claimed to know God in name, but did not know God in their heart. They were deceived. They believed falsehoods or lies.

VI. THE BOTTLES OF WINE: [13:12-15](#)

God had a very good reason for giving this illustrated message, both to Israel and to us at this very hour!

[Vs. 12](#) – “Therefore you are to speak unto them this word; thus says 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?’”

[Vs. 13](#) – “Then say to them, ‘Thus says 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’”.

Judah didn't understand this riddle either. God was saying, “Judah, you represent the empty wine bottle. The wine represents my wrath. I will fill you with my wrath. I will dash the life out of you because of your mockery.”

A hundred years earlier Isaiah told Judah in [Isaiah 63: 3](#) “I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.”

And in the New Testament Jesus describes the judgment upon this world as grapes being crushed in a winepress ([Rev. 14:20](#), [19:15](#)). Judgment would soon fall on Judah. The Babylonians would soon destroy them.

Is America standing at the point of judgment? The judgment of God, if we do not turn – [2 Chronicles 7:14](#) declares: “If my people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

Judah was drunk with madness. They could not see why they should suffer. They could not see that the

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evil life they were living was wrong. Why? They were drunk with their own pride! Why will a person not surrender his life to Jesus Christ? Pride! Why will a person not change for God? Pride! Why do people hold grudges or stay bitter or refuse to receive the Lord Jesus? Pride! Why won't people forgive? Pride! Why do we complain? Pride! Paul said in the last days, "*men shall be lovers of themselves.*" Judah was proud. They thought God owed them something. God owes us nothing. All mankind deserves is to die and spend eternity in the lowest regions of hell. If you are saved by grace, you should spend the rest of your life honoring the one who saved your soul.

VII. BE CAREFUL OF THE DARK MOUNTAIN [13:16-27](#)

[Vs. 16](#) – "*Give glory to the LORD your God, before he brings 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*".

Jeremiah then pleads with all of Judah from the palace of the king to the lowest citizen to humble their hearts before God and to walk in the light. Yet sadly, they still would not change.

Thus, Jeremiah ends with two illustrations:

1. The first illustration is one of uncovering Judah's nakedness. ([Vs. 22](#), [26-27](#)). You see, Judah was living a lie ([vs. 25](#)). They didn't want anyone to know that they truly didn't love God. But, God said, "*I will reveal to the whole world, your false life style. And to all who know the Bible know that Israel is still living in falsehoods.*"
2. Jeremiah then, slaps a tough accusation upon Judah. He speaks to them kindly with a question, in [verse 23](#). "*Can a leopard change his spots?*" Once a leopard is born, he cannot change his spots. He is born that way. He also uses the illustration of the Ethiopian born black. Jeremiah says, "*Can the Ethiopian change his skin?*" Thus, the leopard and Ethiopian will die the way they were born. This is a deep text, but God was saying, when a people live so wickedly, generation after generation that the rebellious thoughts of their mind are not just thoughts, but a lifestyle born in the hearts of their children. They will raise their children to believe lies. It would be better if they were never born.

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The children will think right is wrong and wrong is right. Thus, God says, *“you have lived so wickedly for so long, I know you won't change your ways, and therefore, I must send judgment”*. Israel was cast aside as that light to the world and then Jesus Christ brought into being His body of born again believers – His church.

But, Jeremiah ends with one more opportunity; one more invitation to Judah to repent and turn to God:

[Vs. 27](#) – *“I have seen your adulteries, God says, I see your lustful living and your neighing. I see your complaining and griping, the lewdness of your whoredom and your abominations on the hills in the fields. I see your offensive and ill-mannered way of living”. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! O' Judah, do you not know judgment is coming? Will you not be made clean? When shall it once be? Will you not confess your sins and clean up your life? Will you not live as you once did, in righteousness, loving me?*