

Avoiding A Life of Ruin

Lessons from Jeremiah's Loincloth



"6 A long time afterward the Lord said to me, 'Go back to the Euphrates and get the loincloth I told you to hide there.' 7 So I went to the Euphrates and dug it out of the hole where I had hidden it. But now it was rotting and falling apart. The loincloth was good for nothing." Jer. 13:6-7 NLT

God loved rebellious Judah so deeply that for years, He tried to get their attention and call them back to Himself. Many times, as in the book of Jeremiah, He used object lessons.

Object lessons in Jeremiah: Branch of an almond tree (1:11-12), boiling pot tilting away from the North (1:13), a ruined linen loincloth (13:1-11), potter's clay (18:1-17), broken clay jar (19:1-12), two baskets of figs (24:1-10), yoke (27:2-11), large stones (43:8-13), scroll sunk in the river (51:59-64).

Hebrew: **אֲזוֹרָה** (ay-zore) loincloth, girdle, belt, waist-cloth, undergarment (modern language: underpants). Various translations: "linen loincloth" (NLT, ESV); "linen undergarment" (NASB); "linen belt" (NIV); "linen shorts" (NET); "linen girdle" (KJV).

Central Lesson: Sin ALWAYS Results In Ruin!

God's Four Messages to Jeremiah

Message #1 - BUY A Loincloth & Wear it (13:1-2).

"1 This is what the Lord said to me: 'Go and buy a linen loincloth and put it on, but do not wash it.' 2 So I bought the loincloth as the Lord directed me, and I put it on."

Message #2 - BURY the Loincloth at the Euphrates (13:3-5).

"3 Then the Lord gave me another message: 4 'Take the linen loincloth you are wearing, and go to the Euphrates River. Hide it there in a hole in the rocks.' 5 So I went and hid it by the Euphrates as the Lord had instructed me."

Message #3 - WAIT A Long Time and Retrieve the Loincloth (13:6-7).

"6 A long time afterward the Lord said to me, 'Go back to the Euphrates and get the loincloth I told you to hide there.' 7 So I went to the Euphrates and dug it out of the hole where I had hidden it. But now it was rotting and falling apart. The loincloth was good for nothing."

Message #4 - TELL Judah the Meaning of the Loincloth Object Lesson (13:8-27).

*"8 Then I received this message from the Lord: 9 'This is what the Lord says: This shows how I will rot away the **pride** of Judah and Jerusalem. 10 These wicked people **refuse to listen** to me. They **stubbornly follow their own desires and worship other gods**. Therefore, they will become like this loincloth—good for nothing!'"*

Lessons from Jeremiah's Loincloth

1. **Sin always results in RUIN (13:7, 22).** Sin causes everything in life to rot, deteriorate, and fall apart.
*"7 So I went to the Euphrates and dug it out of the hole where I had hidden it. But now it was **rotting and falling apart**. The loincloth was **good for nothing**." 22 'Why is all this happening to me?' It is because of your **many sins**!"*
2. **God does not overlook or ignore our sins. He LOVES us too much to allow us to deteriorate from sin (13:9).** God was trying to rescue Judah from the rot of their pride and sin: *"... **I will rot away the pride of Judah and Jerusalem**."*
3. **Sin can ROB us of our value and usefulness (13:10).** *"... they will become like this loincloth—good for nothing!"*
4. **Judah's sin is COMMON today (13:9-10, 25):** pride (*I don't need God*); refusing to heed God; Stubbornness; gratification of self-centered desires; worship other gods (*devoted to other things over God—money, possessions, pleasure, prestige, entertainment*).
*"10 These wicked people **refuse to listen** to me. They **stubbornly follow their own desires and worship other gods**. Therefore, they will become like this loincloth—good for nothing!"*
5. **God expects His people to CLING to Him, not avoid Him (13:11).** *"As a loincloth clings to a man's waist, so I created Judah and Israel to cling to me, says the Lord."*
6. **God allows a LIMITED time to turn back to Him (13:16).** *"Give glory to the Lord your God **before it is too late**. Acknowledge him **before** he brings darkness upon you, causing you to stumble and fall on the darkening mountains. For then, when you look for light, you will find only terrible darkness and gloom."* If people ignore God after He persists in reaching out to them, He will eventually allow them to suffer the consequences of their sins, resulting in darkness and gloom.
7. **God offers specific STEPS to turn back to Him.**
 - **Listen** to God (13:10, 11, 15, 17).
 - **Cling** to God (13:11).
 - **Give** glory to God (13:16).
 - **Acknowledge** God—declare that He is your God (13:16).

ILLUSTRATION: King David had God's complete favor. He had victory in battle, people loyal to his kingdom, and prosperity over his kingdom. But, he later committed adultery with Bathsheba and tried to hide his sin by murdering Uriah (Bathsheba's husband). His sin brought ruin upon his life—discord in his reign as king, the death of his baby son, betrayal of his sons, and much more.

Conclusion: God loves us too much to allow sin to ruin us. He will convict us of our sin, speak to our conscience, discipline us as a father would a son, and do much more to turn us from sin to draw us back to Himself. *Are you allowing sin to ruin your life, marriage, family, career, reputation, or morals?*

Central Lesson: Sin ALWAYS Results In Ruin!

- Accept Christ as your Savior. ► As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ► Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ► Attend a small group. ► Read the Bible. ► Pray for friends that need Jesus.