

When darkness is called light, and light darkness
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Text: Jeremiah 2, 5–7

We live in a time of inverted values, where light is called darkness and darkness is called light. Public morality has shifted, and our cultural icons have declared this progress and enlightenment. Furthermore, public expressions of Christianity have been stunted or challenged. Our freedom of speech has been marginalized through school policies and workplace codes of conduct. Jeremiah depicts this darkness, and the parallels between his time and our own are many. While the United States of America is not Judah, we too were once heavily influenced by God's Word. This is no longer the case.

We believe four lies exchanging light for darkness.

1. We have falsely believed that the consequences of our rebellion can be managed. Judah rationalized their rebellion in the same manner. On a political level, they attempted to ally themselves with the pagan empire of Assyria. But clever politics could not stay the coming catastrophe. On an individual level, the people tried to remedy their consciences by their own means, just as we do today through drugs, entertainment, and other desires.
2. We swallowed the lie that if we follow our desires and leave God, we will achieve true freedom; O generation, see ye the word of Jehovah. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? or a land of thick darkness? wherefore say my people, We are broken loose; we will come no more unto thee (Jeremiah 2:31 ASV)? But this freedom is actually bondage. What once promised much actually began to enslave the nation of Judah. False gods proved addictive, and the nation could not escape their lures. So the people continued in their idolatry, telling themselves that they could return to God whenever they were actually desperate enough to need Him.

3. We have decided that new paths are better than ancient paths; Thus saith Jehovah, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way; and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls: but they said, We will not walk therein (Jeremiah 6:16 ASV). As a nation, the United States of America, has arrived at many crossroads and forsaken the ancient paths. We legalized abortion in 1973. We excluded God from the school system. At some point, we decided to let political correctness destroy us, letting claims of intolerance for mere disagreement paralyze public debate. We took the wrong path concerning same-sex marriage, revolting against the created order.
4. We accepted that the loss of the presence of God is not fatal to worship. Ezekiel, a contemporary of Jeremiah, witnessed the exit of God's glory from the temple (Ezekiel 10), yet the people continued in their same rituals. Sadly, our churches are often devoid of God's presence, even as we persist in our religious activities led by smooth-talking false teachers.

But hope exists. God is trying to turn us back to Himself. In the case of Judah, He filed for divorce, but He did not carry it out. God still wanted Judah. God still wants us, and while we do not know if the United States of America will ever return to God, God still sees us each as individuals. Don't get lost in the United States of America's troubles and fail to peer into your own soul. Will we be persons who weep for our country's sins? Will we be laborers who minister to the lost? This is not the time to sit back and wait for judgment.

In Jeremiah 5, God challenges the prophet to find one righteous man to avert the looming destruction of Jerusalem. One could not be found. Thankfully, Jesus is the end of Jeremiah's search; only the Son of Man can save us from judgment. If we trust in Him, judgment will be withheld from us, for it already fell on our Savior.