

Celebration Services (Sept 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup>, 2008)  
**"The Bridge of Brokenness"**

**"Returning from Exile" (Pt. 2)**

**INTRO....** The Pathway of RETURN

**Exile is an Experience Common to Man ....** but God Has Stepped Into Man's Exile Seizing the Opportunity to Proclaim the GLORY OF REDEMPTION

*The Road Home from Exile MUST Cross the BRIDGE of BROKENNESS.*

## CONSIDER THE PATHWAY TO EXILE

- *Consider How You Got Where You Are*

.... *This Gives Us Insight into WHAT Needs to Be BROKEN in Us.*

**Jer 2** ... (This Chapter = The Writ of Indictment Against Israel)

**v. 2-3** ... A Season of Faithfulness & Blessing for Israel

**v. 6, 8** ... "They did not say 'Where is the Lord?'"

**v. 8** ... The Priests, the Shepherds, and the Prophets all MISLED the People

***"Those who handle the law did not know me"***

“ A holy calling does not make a holy man. The priests of Jeremiah's day were handling the Scriptures, studying the bible, and teaching God's Word, but they did not know God himself. Their ministry was a dead ritual rather than a living relationship.” Philip Ryken, "Jeremiah & Lamentations", p.40

**v. 11-13** .... Man's Great Evil — Forsaking and Forgetting about GOD!!

This Has ALWAYS Been a Concern for Fallen Man — **"Prone to Wander"**

**Deut 6:4-15**

**"Forsaking God & Hewing Out Cisterns for Themselves"**

- **Cisterns of Protection** (Jer 2:18) .... Seeking Protection from Political Alliances rather than from God  
— *What Are You Seeking to Protect You in These Fearful Financial Times?*
- **Cisterns of Pleasure** (Jer 2:20, 23-24) .... Canaanite Fertility gods were sought for PROSPERITY & PLEASURE

.... **People are Away from the Purpose of God because of IDOLATROUS PURSUITS**

— We Want Something More Than God!!

— This is Why the Restoration of WORSHIP is the Top Priority in the Return. The Trenches of Life's Battle is over What We Worship (What we are Affectionately & Passionately Drawn to).

## CONSIDER THE PRACTICES IN EXILE

- **Exposure to Religious, Social, and Economic Ways of Life**
  - Babylon & Persian were the "AMERICANS" of the Day — the dominant World Empire.
  - The Religious Practices were Attractive
- **After 70+ years there was COMFORT & COMPLACENCY** — it's not easy to Relocate

"**A DESIRE TO RETURN?**"..... Not everyone was ready, interested, and eager to return from Exile ....

“ Not all the Jews in Babylonia went back to Judah. A significant group stayed behind, because they had become prosperous and were satisfied with conditions in that country. They enjoyed a great amount of freedom and some of them concentrated with success on business.” **Charles Fensham**, "The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah", NICOT, p. 11

**HABITS DIE HARD** .....what had they incorporated into their worldview and life patterns while in Exile that were going to be counterproductive to their Calling as God's People?

— The Danger of becoming the "Exile Church in the Promised Land"

.... **They Were Out of the Practice of Spiritual Disciplines**

.... **They Were Used to being ABSORBED in the Distractions and Demands of Their Surroundings**— Life w/o the temple practice (w/ its built in reminders of and checks and accountability)

“ As a religion with high ethical principles, Israelite religion, like Christianity, emphasized the guilt of the people. A sense of guiltiness developed that could only be removed by atonement of sins. With the destruction of the temple, this privilege had been taken away. This must be regarded as one of the major catastrophes which had overtaken the Jews. Their whole religious life was disorganized by it.” **Charles Fensham**, "The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah", NICOT, p. 16

.... **They Were Accustomed to the Purpose of God being "ON HOLD"**

**Hag 1:1-11**

**NOTE: TODAY'S CHRISTIAN MAY COME IN 3 STYLES:**

- (1) There are Christians Today whose Lives are in a **PRE-EXILIC Condition** (Characterized by INDULGENCE in Sin, BUILDING IDOLATROUS Pursuits, Unreceptive to Correction)
- (2) There are Many Christians Today who have Adopted **an EXILIC Christianity** — a Limited Pursuit of Idolatry coupled with a LACKLUSTER Pursuit of God .... LUKE WARM .... NOMINAL
- (3) Then There are **BROKEN BELIEVERS**

**CONSIDER THE POSTURE OF THOSE WHO LED THE RETURN**

- Daniel (Dan 9)

– Daniel was Broken and Repentant

- Humble Before God
- Inclined Toward RECEIVING CONVICTION not Excusing or Evading it
- Eager for the Glory of God at All Cost

- Ezra & Nehemiah

***BROKENNESS***

- *Brokenness means my stubborn, willful, resistance is broken*

- *Brokenness means my aggressive, impulsive, pursuits are broken*

... Brokenness to STOP Resisting and to START Pursuing

**Are We Returning as a BROKEN PEOPLE?**

**APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

1. In what ways have you experienced "waywardness" or "exile" in your life?
2. What factors contributed to getting you to a place of exile? (Think about past decisions, influential relationships, cravings/ambitions, etc.)
3. What "cisterns" have you built in your life in order to seek pleasure and protection?
4. In what ways does the church lack brokenness?
5. In what ways does "brokenness" need to be applied to areas of "stubborn, willful, resistance" in you?
6. In what ways does "brokenness" need to be applied to areas of "aggressive, impulsive pursuits" in your life?