

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Your Habits Determine Who You Are

Jerry Fite

At a critical time in Israel's history, Jeremiah said, “*Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?*” (Jeremiah 13:23). The answer to these rhetorical questions is a definite “no”. The Ethiopian can not change his skin or the skin color with which he is born. Neither can the leopard change his spots for the stripes of a tiger. Jeremiah now makes the application: “...*then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.*” (Jeremiah 13:23).

Is this statement declaring the impossibility for people to change from evil and start doing good? No. But it is impossible if God's people are to continue the way they have been accustomed. Notice, God's people were in the habit, or they were “*accustomed to do evil.*” Over an extended period of time they had practiced their adulterous and idolatrous ways. “*I have seen thy abominations, even thy adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, on the hills in the field. Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! Thou wilt not be made clean; how long shall it be?*” (Jeremiah 13:26). They might want to still

consider themselves God's people, but their ungodly idolatrous ways have determined who they really are before God.

Are there some things in your life that you need to change? Do you have some bad habits that you would like to change, but have not done so? What ever they are, as you continue to practice them, they are determining your true character and who you really are. More sobering is the fact that you, through the bad habits that you are not changing, have become as a Ethiopian who cannot change his skin, or a leopard who cannot change his spots ! Because of your habit of not changing, you have really locked in your true character that you apparently will never change.

Jeremiah's message has another sobering point. Judgment was on its way!. “*lift up your eyes and see those who are coming from the north*” (Jeremiah 13:20). Nebuchadnezzar had returned to Babylon to claim the throne from his deceased father and was shortly to come from the north to destroy Jerusalem and take God's people away into captivity. Their character was now set and God's long-

suffering had now reached the limit. Judgment was coming.

Judgment is still ahead of each one of us. As a nation, how long will our immorality continue, establishing the fact that we are not really a “Christian” or even “godly” nation, before God brings judgment upon us? What a sorrowful thought to think that before God we have become as a Ethiopian who cannot change his skin or a leopard who cannot change his spots and have become a nation who cannot do good anymore. Judgment may be already on its way!

As an individual, do you want to face God in judgment with the baggage of bad habits? They are manifesting your true character, as you continue to do them. God wants all men to repent (2 Peter 3:9), but like in Jeremiah's day, his longsuffering will one day give way to judgment. But this judgment will be final and the consequences will be eternal!

Let us change our bad habits, before they determine who we really are permanently!