

Glad Tidings

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

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Habits Determine Who You Are

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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 cannot change his skin or the skin color with which he is born. Neither can the leopard change his spots in exchange for the stripes of a tiger. Jeremiah 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, they had practiced their adulterous and idolatrous ways. “*I have seen thy abominations, even thy adulterous, 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 may still consider themselves God’s people, but their ungodly

idolatrous ways have determined who they really are before the face of God.

Are there some things in your life you need to change? Do you have eyes full of fornication from habitually looking at pornography? When you find yourself in a tight spot, do you default to lying? Do you constantly explode in sinful anger? As you continue to practice these things, they are determining your true character and who you really are. More sobering is the fact that if you do not change, you have become as an Ethiopian who cannot change his skin or the leopard who cannot change his spots! Habitual practice imbeds these sins deep within and speaks to your true character. It is scary to think habitual sinful practices lock in your character that 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 set, and God’s longsuffering had reached the limit. Judgment was coming.

Judgment is still ahead for each one of us. As a nation, how long will our immorality continue, establishing the fact that we are not a “Christian” or “godly” nation before God brings judgment upon us? What a sorrowful thought to think that in God’s eyes we have become as an 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!

Personally, do you want to face God in judgment with the baggage of sinful habits (2 Corinthians 5:10). They are manifesting your true character, as you continue to do them. God wants all men to repent (2 Peter 3:9), but as 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!