

Monday Evening Bible Reading Group: Notes for October 17th: Jeremiah Chapter 13: The linen waistcloth and other messages

- 1) Themes:** There are translation and interpretation difficulties, so you will get different versions of Chapter 13; but the main messages are fairly consistent. Good can be misused (or not used), and go rotten. The Chosen People were in the Promised Land conditionally: breaking the conditions meant both that the promise went out of the Promised Land, and that the Chosen People went into exile – including Queen Mother and young King.
- 2) Some Quotations:** Verse 15: Let your lives glow bright before God. Verse 16: The light you always took for granted will go out. Verse 23: Can an African change his skin? Can a leopard get rid of his spots?
- 3) Some Clarifications:** Action sermons were used to good effect by various prophets. It isn't clear what article of clothing Jeremiah bought and wore and then allowed to deteriorate. Linen underpants would have been a good example of a quality asset being wasted; but how would anyone have known what was going on? A linen belt might have made the point. The underlying point seems to be: use it or lose it. The wine flask seems to be a picture story rather than an acted sermon.
- 4) Some Questions:** 1) Is it OK for a democratically elected government to choose the popular thing rather than the God thing? (Compare and contrast Tony Blair praying about war with Iraq, and being criticised for signing God up to his preferences.) 2) Can the leopard change its spots? (Men convicted for murder have become very different people.) 3) Can we change ourselves, or do we have to be changed? 4) Does Jeremiah encourage a black and white approach to being good? 4) Use it or lose it? (It being gifts, ideas, opportunities...) 5) Is there any hope for us? 6) How do you feel about action sermons?