

### The Excellence of Restored Israel

#### Jeremiah 33

**Jeremiah 33:1-5** – *“Moreover the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah a second time, while he was still shut up in the court of the prison, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Thus says the Lord who made it, the Lord who formed it to establish it (the Lord is His name): <sup>3</sup>‘Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.’ <sup>4</sup>“For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city and the houses of the kings of Judah, which have been pulled down to fortify against the siege mounds and the sword: <sup>5</sup>‘They come to fight with the Chaldeans, but only to fill their places with the dead bodies of men whom I will slay in My anger and My fury, all for whose wickedness I have hidden My face from this city.’”*

#### Background Notes

In Jeremiah 32, while Jeremiah was confined to the court of the royal guard, and while Jerusalem was under siege by the Babylonian army, the word of the Lord came to him. The Lord assured Jeremiah that this was not the end of Judah and Israel. The Jewish people would return to the Land - not only in the near future, but in the far future as well.

In Jeremiah 33, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah a second time while he was still shut up in the court of the prison. The year was 587 BC, when Jerusalem was under siege by the Chaldeans (as the Babylonians were also known). The people in Jerusalem were frantically trying to strengthen the walls of the city, even tearing down houses to get material to reinforce the walls against the onslaught of the battering rams. That was sure to come as the siege continued (v4). This reinforcing of the walls is confirmed by archaeology. But all these efforts would fail in the end (v5). The walls would be breached, and many people would be killed by the sword.

Why was there no miraculous deliverance at this time, as there was deliverance from the Assyrians in King Hezekiah's time about 100 years earlier? The Lord could have brought about a miraculous deliverance - after all, He is the Lord who formed and established the earth (v2). Two reasons were stated right here in these verses. First, God was angry because of the wickedness of Jerusalem: *“I will slay in My anger and My fury, all for whose wickedness I have hidden My face from this city”* (v5). Second, the people refused to call on the Lord and turn back to Him.

Verse 3 is one of the best-known and most favorite verses in the Bible, *“Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.”* This verse is found in the context of Israel's helpless situation. They were helpless because of their sin and their refusal to turn back to the Lord – even though His help was close at hand if they would only repent. The good news of Jeremiah 33 is this: even though the nation would not call on Him now, they will call on Him in the future.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. In the future, there will be both cleansing and restoration for the nation of Israel.

**Jeremiah 33:6-13** - *“Behold, I will bring it health and healing; I will heal them and reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth. <sup>7</sup> And I will cause the captives of Judah and the captives of Israel to return, and will rebuild those places as at the first. <sup>8</sup> I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned and by which they have transgressed against Me. <sup>9</sup> Then it shall be to Me a name of joy, a praise, and an honor before all nations of the earth, who shall hear all the good that I do to them; they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and all the prosperity that I provide for it.”*

<sup>10</sup> *“Thus says the Lord: ‘Again there shall be heard in this place—of which you say, “It is desolate, without man and without beast” — in the cities of Judah, in the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man and without inhabitant and without beast, <sup>11</sup> the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who will say: “Praise the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good, for His mercy endures forever” — and of those who will bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord. For I will cause the captives of the land to return as at the first,’ says the Lord.*

<sup>12</sup> *“Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘In this place which is desolate, without man and without beast, and in all its cities, there shall again be a dwelling place of shepherds causing their flocks to lie down.”*

The health and healing promised in this chapter are both spiritual and material. Not only will there be a cleansing from sin and iniquity (v8), but the fortunes of both Judah and Israel will be restored as they once were (v7).

Once again, be careful with the interpretation of some teachers here in these verses. We believe ***these promises are not to be spiritualized and applied to the Church today***, just because they have not literally taken place for Israel in past history. No! These promises will be fulfilled - **literally** - in the future - when the Jewish people turn back to the Lord as a nation. In that day, restored Israel will be a testimony to all the nations of the earth (v9). The cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem will be populated, and the people will be joyful and glad because there will be peace (v10-13). These conditions are not true yet - but they will be in the future.

Notice the emphasis on the “land” in these verses. What “land” is this? This promise is speaking about the Land of Israel that God gave to the Jewish people. It is not to be spiritualized and interpreted as some kind of “spiritual land of the Church.” Notice again what God said in verse 11, *“For I will cause the captives of the land to return as at the first,” says the Lord.* How do you think Jeremiah and the people to whom he spoke understood these promises? They understood that Jeremiah was speaking about the very Land that was under siege at that time - and they were not wrong in their interpretation! In the future, there will be both cleansing and restoration for the nation of Israel.

**2. In the future there will be both a king and priests for the nation of Israel.**

**Jeremiah 33:14-18** - *“Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah:*

*15 ‘In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David a Branch of righteousness. He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. 16 In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this is the name by which she will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.’*

*17 “For thus says the Lord: ‘David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel; 18 nor shall the priests, the Levites, lack a man to offer burnt offerings before Me, to kindle grain offerings, and to sacrifice continually.’”*

Clearly these verses were not fulfilled when the Jewish people returned from captivity in Babylon under the leadership of Zerubbabel. The “righteous Branch of David” was obviously a Messianic prophecy that referred to the coming of Christ. Notice several predictions associated with the coming of Christ:

- He will execute justice and righteousness in the earth, not just in heaven (v15).
- Judah and Jerusalem will dwell in safety. In fact, Jerusalem itself will be called “The Lord is our Righteousness” (v16).
- The Davidic dynasty will be re-established, with a descendant of David ruling over Israel from His throne (v17).
- The Levitical priesthood would be re-established, including offerings and sacrifices (v18).

Have these prophecies been fulfilled? No, not yet - certainly not when the Babylonian captivity was over and the Jews returned to Jerusalem. Some folks spiritualize these prophecies, making the “justice and righteousness in the earth” (v15) as justice and righteousness in the Church, or in Christian lands. They spiritualize the peace and safety of Jerusalem (v16) to the peace and safety of Christian fellowship, with “Judah” and “Jerusalem” becoming symbolic of the Church. The throne of David (v17) is said to be the Lord’s present rule over the Church from His throne in Heaven - the Church being the “new house of Israel.” And they spiritualize the restoration of the Levitical priesthood (v18) to become the present “priesthood of all believers,” offering sacrifices of praise within the Church, or spiritual worship in Heaven.

The context is clearly **literal Israel**. I don’t think that Jeremiah had all this spiritualization of the prophecies in mind when he gave them - and neither did the Jewish people to whom Jeremiah gave these prophecies! Because the Lord Jesus was rejected by Israel as their King at His first coming, we believe that all these prophecies will be fulfilled **literally, at His second coming**, when He returns to establish His earthly kingdom and He reigns from His literal throne in Jerusalem. Offerings as memorials of His once-for-all sacrifice for sin will take place in the literal millennial temple in Jerusalem.

**Jeremiah 33:19-26** - *“And the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, 20 “Thus says the Lord: ‘If you can break My covenant with the day and My covenant with the night, so that there will not be day and night in their season, 21 then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the*

*Levites, the priests, My ministers. <sup>22</sup> As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.”*

*<sup>23</sup> Moreover the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, <sup>24</sup> “Have you not considered what these people have spoken, saying, ‘The two families which the Lord has chosen, He has also cast them off’? Thus they have despised My people, as if they should no more be a nation before them.<sup>25</sup> “Thus says the Lord: ‘If My covenant is not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, <sup>26</sup> then I will cast away the descendants of Jacob and David My servant, so that I will not take any of his descendants to be rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will cause their captives to return, and will have mercy on them.”*

In verses 19-26, the Lord assured Jeremiah that the fulfillment of these prophecies was as certain as day follows night. Those who would “spiritualize” this chapter say that there is no future for literal Israel because of their failure, but verse 24 shows that this is **not** a valid argument. In spite of their failures, in His grace, God will bring the Jewish people back and restore their nation. Notice verse 26: these promises are for the **descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob**. Christians are **not** in view here! Christians are included in the spiritual seed of Abraham (Galatians 3), but the people to whom these promises were made in Jeremiah 33 were **Jewish people**, the literal descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They will constitute the literal restored nation of Israel in the future. In the future, there will be both a king and priest for the nation of Israel.

## Practical Application

### Expect an answer when you call!

“*Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things which you do not know*” (v3). When you make a phone call these days, there’s a very good chance that you’ll only get a recording, or voice mail - or you will get no answer at all. But that won’t happen when you call the Lord! He promised to answer us - and not only answer us, but also to show us “great and mighty things” that we don’t now know!

*Interpreted properly in the context*, these “great and mighty things” were God’s plans for His people Israel. But certainly there’s an *application* for any of God’s people today. Do you want the Lord to show you great and mighty things about your life, and how you can serve Him more effectively? Then call upon the Lord - and expect an answer! Do you need wisdom from above about a trial or test of your faith that’s present in your life?

Then **call upon the Lord - and expect an answer when you call!**