

God Comforts His People - Jeremiah 30



- I. Now we have not a letter (like Ch 29), but a book (Ch 30:1ff). Jeremiah 30-33 is known as the 'book of consolation.' These chapters (esp. 31) represents the peak of the OT revelation on the new covenant. It is 'as NT as OT gets.' Jeremiah wrote these chapters 'shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem' (32:1; 33:1). Jeremiah 1-28 was hard going, but it was the necessary part of the word of God we had to plow through in order to understand the joys and significance of the deliverance, healing, and restoration to come. The word of God 'wounds' and 'heals.'
- II. Jeremiah 30-31 is mostly poetical – It is an invitation to dream God's dream of Israel's future restoration, e.g. 'prisoner of hope' (Zech 9:12). Ch 32-33 is in prose. Jeremiah buys a field in a business transaction with a prophetic significance.
- III. 'I will' (God's will) occurs 17 times in this chapter. Behind Israel's restoration is 'God's will'. There can be no other explanation. So Jeremiah 30 opens with the declaration of God's will: 'For behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah,' says the LORD. 'And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.' (Jer 30:1-3) Though it was hard to believe at the time, both northern and southern kingdom will come together!

A. Deliverance: God is going to remove their panic (30:4-11)

(a) Thus says the Lord, 'We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear and not of peace' (v5). (A hint of Trinity?) When the Lord brings them back, it will be a time of fear, not of peace! This is absolutely true of modern Israel. This will escalate to 'Jacob's trouble' i.e. the Great Tribulation (Dan 9:27; 12:1-2; Matt 24:15-28; Zech 14:1-8), but he shall be saved out of it (not from it).' (v7)

(b) '... I will break his yoke from your neck... (so that) they will serve the LORD their God (v8-9).' Prophet Hananiah tried to break the yoke, but he couldn't. But God Himself will break the iron yoke. Why? So that they can serve the Lord. (C.f. 'Let My people go, so that they can serve Me in the wilderness.' (Ex 7:16) We are made to serve someone – God or the devil or ourselves. The question is whose servant will you be? Paul said, 'I am a bond-slave of Jesus.' But remember that the Lord's yoke is easy, and His burden is light. 'Do not fear O My servant Jacob,' says the LORD... 'For I am with you to save you.' (v11) Jacob's trouble will be much more intense than the holocaust. Jacob's faith and trust in the Lord will be tested (v7).

(c) Then God says, 'though I make a full end of all nations...yet I will not make a complete end of you.' (v11) That's why troubling Israel is detrimental to any nation – whether it be UK, US, or UN. God guarantees there will be Israel on the last day, but there is no guarantee for any other nation. Australia's future well-being is conditional. One of the most important factors about any nation's future is their attitude toward Israel when God brings them back to their own land from all the nations.

B. Healing: God is going to remove their pain (30:12-17)

(a) Their pain is deep. Medical language is used here. What is hurting them so badly? They have lost their home, and 'There is no one to plead their cause...your lovers have forgotten you.' (v14) They are abandoned by everyone and they are alone. Then God claims the responsibility for Israel's wounds, 'For I have wounded you with the wound of an enemy...for the multitude of your sins...I have done these things to you.' (v14-15) Israel has been betrayed and wounded again and again (UK, US, UN...) to the point their wound became incurable. And Israel will not be fully healed unless and until she returns to her God.

(b) Then suddenly God will come and heal Israel's wounds. Why? Because God loves and cares for Israel. The reason is not in Israel, but in God. This is the same for the Church. When the nations say, 'This is Zion; No one seeks (cares for) her' (v17), then suddenly God will come to devour the nations that devour Israel, and He will heal Israel.

If you have deep wounds, and no one cares for you, take it to the Lord because God cares for you. God can remove the pain and heal your broken heart.

C. Restoration : God is going to remove their poverty (30:18-24)

1. **(a)** Jerusalem here is a picture of peace and prosperity. Gone are the insecurity, sickness, and destitution. Now there is abiding peace, healing, and progressive restoration: (i) 'Jacob's tents' (ii) 'dwelling places' (iii) 'city on its mound' (iv) 'palace (or citadel) to be rebuilt'. The whole city was rebuilt in stages exactly as witnessed in their history. It will once again be bustling with life - children playing on the streets with songs and dance and thanksgiving to God, and the older people enjoying the children. There is no hostile enemy to oppress them again. Jerusalem becomes an ideal city to live in!

(b) When will this happen? The climaxing verse tells us, 'when their governor ('ruler' Heb. Marshal) shall come from their midst' (v21). The Jews had so many outsiders ruling over them - Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Greece, Persia, Rome, etc. But this governor/ruler is 'their own' countryman, and He will be able to 'approach God' directly on behalf of the people. This is a priestly term, denoting free access to God. The result will be 'You shall be My people, and I will be your God.' (v22) This ruler will need no mediator. He is greater than David. Like Melchizedek, he will have a dual role of kingship and priesthood. Targum translates this verse: 'Messiah shall be revealed to them out of their own midst.'

(c) There is no temple mentioned here. If Israel's ruler can directly approach God on their behalf, so that they become God's people and God becomes their God, then they don't need a temple (c.f. Rev 21-22)!

2. **(a)** Now suddenly comes a surprise (30:23-24). The whirlwind of the Lord – the wrath of God - comes upon the 'head of the wicked' on a global scale (30:23-24). God's wrath is now directed against the wicked of the whole world, and will not be eased until God accomplishes all His purposes.

(b) In Jeremiah's days Israel was under God's discipline and did not understand the enormity of the scope and purpose behind this whirlwind. But in 'due time' people will 'consider it', i.e. 'perceive', 'have insight'.

(c) In the days of the whirlwind, the Lord would bring about an intimate relationship between Himself and 'all the families of Israel,' and 'they shall be My people.' (31:1) This was God's purpose.

D. Application to Christians

1. The Book of Consolation is about God's regathering, healing, and restoration of Israel. When God brings His people back from the nations of the world, it will be in times of pressure, not peace. This will eventually lead to 'Jacob's Trouble,' but Israel will be saved 'out of it,' not from it. Each nation's fate hangs in the balance, based on their attitude toward Israel and to the Jews scattered among the nations. Israel is guaranteed to survive the trouble, but the gentile nations are not. When the nations declare, 'Zion is now alone, and is finished,' suddenly God will come to heal her broken heart and restore her fortunes. Jerusalem will become a city of peace and prosperity when her Messiah comes. And the 'whirlwind of the Lord' will fall upon the wicked on a global scale. What is God's purpose in sending the whirlwind to the earth? To draw His people to Himself and to establish a deep relationship with them as God's One Family.

2. God's Invitation to share His dream: God invites His people to share His dream of Israel's restoration. As gentile believers, we have the prophetic word to speak to the Jews scattered around the nations: 'Do not fear O My servant Jacob, nor be dismayed Israel, for behold, I will save you from afar...' (30:10-11) What comforting words Israel will need to hear! The new US administration means increased international pressure on Israel. We need to be reminded that not only Israel will go through great trouble, but also the rest of the world. It is through 'many tribulations' we must enter the kingdom of God.

We can ask two questions here. (a) Why are they called Jacob and not Israel? (b) Why must they go through the time of Jacob's trouble? Because God brings them back to their land as unsaved, unsanctified people. Because although they have returned to their land, they have not returned to their God. But they will return to the Lord and be saved and sanctified during Jacob's Trouble (Zech 12-14).

Is it also possible for the Church to receive God's blessing, but not come to Him with all our hearts? If so, how does the whirlwind of the Lord relate to the last day Church? One thing is clear. God's purpose for sending the whirlwind to the world is to gather His own family as One so that 'They will be My people and I will be their God' (31:1) through the Messiah Jesus who is both our King and our Priest.