

## PRECURSOR TO THE NEW COVENANT

(Jer 31:1-16) 11/28/18

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### I. CONTEXT

- A. *In chapter 30 the restoration of Judah is foretold; here that of Israel is predicted. The messages of hope and restoration, it will be recalled, carry through chapter 33 [so KD] (Feinberg).*
- B. The first theme in Chapter 31 is the “Precursor to the New Covenant,” which is the restoration of Israel (Jer 31:1-30). The second and great theme is the “Promise of the New Covenant” to Israel (Jer 31:31-40).

### II. RESTORATION PLAN OF THE LORD (1-6)

- A. God will be God of all Israel (1)
  1. The phrase “**at that time**,” looks back to the mention of the “latter days” in Jer 30:24. *The “latter days” would certainly mean after Israel was restored from Babylonian Captivity. But, ultimately, the “latter days” will be during the restoration of Israel in the Millennium with their righteous king sitting on the throne of David (cf. Deu 4:30; Dan 10:14) (notes from Jer 30:24).*
  2. It is the Lord who is giving this **declaration** and it will be the Lord carrying it out. He will be their **God** once again and they will be His **people**. However, the overarching emphasis is that fact that the Lord is speaking to **all the families of Israel** (northern and southern kingdoms).
  3. The Lord spoke to the entire nation of Israel in Jer 31:1. Through the rest of this chapter the Lord refers back and forth to both the northern and southern tribes.
  4. *Verses 2-22 deal mainly with Israel, 23-26 with Judah, and 27-40 with both kingdoms. It is absolutely clear that both kingdoms will return to Palestine and jointly share the blessings of God (Smith Commentary).*
- B. From the Sword to Rest (2)
  1. Though this verse may have some allusion to the Exodus wanderings in the wilderness (cf. Exo 14:5-23), it most likely referred to those who **survived** the Captivity and its **sword**.
  2. Just as **Israel** eventually **found grace** to come out of the **wilderness**, so those in Captivity (Assyrian and Babylonian) will find grace to return to Jerusalem (cf. Hos 2:14-15).
- C. The Lord’s Love is Everlasting (3)
  1. Those who repent while in Captivity would find a restored love relationship with their God. It was because of God’s **everlasting love** that He **drew** Israel back to Himself.
  2. This has always been the divine protocol for Israel and New Testament believers, either initially or consequentially (Deu 4:37; 10:15; Psa 78:68; Joh 15:19; Eph 1:4).
- D. The Lord Will Rebuild Israel (4)
  1. It is the Lord who does the rebuilding. Here He promised to rebuild Israel (“**you**”) as well as rebuild Jerusalem. There will be great rejoicing similar to times past (**tambourines**, Exo 15:20; **merrymakers**, 2Sa 6:14).
  2. The phrase “**O virgin of Israel!**” most likely referred to the northern kingdom. This is strengthened by the mention of Samaria (Jer 31:5) and Ephraim (Jer 31:6, 9, 18, 20).
- E. Vineyards Will Flourish in Samaria (5)
  1. Among many other regions in the Israel, the “**hills of Samaria**” were known for their vineyards. They will be **planted** and restored. Samaria is located in the northern kingdom.
  2. The Law of Moses forbid eating of the fruit from newly planted trees for the first four years (Lev 19:23–25). Therefore, these vineyards had been established for at least five years emphasizing God’s blessing of restoration so that the **planters** could **enjoy** them.
  3. The Law of Moses forbid eating of the fruit from newly planted trees for the first four years (Lev 19:23–25). Since the **planters** were able to eat and **enjoy** the fruit, the Lord had established the vineyards for at least five years prior.
- F. Ephraim Announces Worship in Zion (6)
  1. The “**hills of Ephraim**,” also located in the northern kingdom, would be called to worship once again in **Zion** (Jerusalem).
  2. According to Jewish tradition, the **watchers** had several responsibilities, but among their most important was to give the call to worship and direct pilgrims to Jerusalem (Feinberg).
  3. *This will mark the end of the disruption of the kingdom of Solomon in 930 B.C. Ephraim’s condition in blessing will be permanent because Jeroboam’s misleading them from the*

*Lord's sanctuary will be a thing of the past, when they return to Zion. The breach of many centuries will at last be healed (EXP).*

### III. RESTORATION OF JACOB'S JOY (7-14)

- A. Gladness for Jacob (7)
  - 1. There are five verbs that express the joy of Jacob ("**Sing**," "**shout**," "**proclaim**," "**give praise**," and "**say**").
  - 2. Jacob (Israel) is the "**chief of the nations**" because the Lord has not only chosen it but also "**saved**" the **remnant**.
- B. Great Company Will Return (8)
  - 1. The Lord would gather a **great company** of His people from the **north** who had been in Assyrian Captivity.
  - 2. Among those who were the remnant, none would be excluded. This included the **blind**, the **lame**, and those who were in **labor** (cf. Isa 35:5-10).
- C. Weeping Replaced by Joy (9)
  - 1. *Furthermore, the return will be accompanied by weeping and tears of repentance (v.9). Weeping for their sin and rebellion will then be overshadowed by the joy of return (EXP).*
  - 2. Weeping will be replaced by guidance ("**by supplication I will lead them**"), joy, and refreshment ("**streams of waters**").
  - 3. Ephraim's (Israel's) sonship as "firstborn" reemphasizes God's elective (Exo 4:22) and salvific (Deu 32:6) purposes.
  - 4. *Sonship in the OT includes the concept of paternal love and care on a national scale, rather than the NT concept of personal membership in the family of God by the Spirit. (EXP).*
- D. Great Shepherd Will Lead (10)
  - 1. The entire world ("**all the nations**" "**coastlands afar off**") was to hear about the Lord's great deliverance.
  - 2. The Sovereign Lord **scattered** His people but will also **gather** His people. The Lord had chastised them (Jer 13:17) but restored them as a flock by the Shepherd (Isa 40:11).
- E. Jacob Will Be Ransomed (11)
  - 1. Jacob would be **ransomed** (*padah - transfer of ownership, i.e. buy back*) from Captivity.
  - 2. Whether it was Pharaoh (Exo 6:5; 15:13), Sargon II (Isa 20:1), Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 52:30), or a demonic world ruler (2Th 2:8-9), the Lord would **redeem** them from the hand of those **stronger** than Israel.
- F. Jacob Will Rejoice in Zion (12)
  - 1. When Israel is restored, it will rejoice in Jerusalem ("**Zion**"). Their faces will be **radiant** over the Lord's **bounty** and blessings.
  - 2. These blessings are physical and spiritual, but they include **new wine, oil, and a watered garden** (Isa 58:11).
- G. Sorrow Replaced by Joy (13)
  - 1. All will rejoice in Zion, both **young** and **old**.
  - 2. Their **mourning** and **suffering** will be turned into **joy**.
- H. Experience the joy of the Lord (14)
  - 1. The soul of the **priests** will have **abundance** because they have a relationship with the Lord, they are serving the Lord, and the people also are following the Lord.
  - 2. They will all be filled with the **goodness** and joy of the Lord.

### IV. RESTORATION FROM ISRAEL'S CAPTIVITY (15-22)

- A. A Voice is Heard in Ramah (15a)
  - 1. The present circumstance for the northern kingdom (and soon to be for the southern kingdom) was death and captivity.
  - 2. **Ramah** was often seen as the dividing line between the two kingdoms. In fact, battles had been fought over its boundary (1Ki 15:17, 21-22). So, Ramah itself becomes an allusion to both kingdoms.
  - 3. Later in the book of Jeremiah, Ramah will be the place where the captives would wait to be taken to Babylon (Jer 40:1).
- B. Rachel is Weeping for Her Children (15b)
  - 1. **Rachel** was the mother of both Joseph (father of Ephraim and Manasseh in northern kingdom) and Benjamin (in southern kingdom).
  - 2. Therefore, she weeps for her children in the northern and southern kingdom who would be killed or taken captive.
- C. Massacre of the Innocence (Mat 2:17-18)

1. In Mat 2:17-18, Matthew quotes from Jer 31:15. Matthew's application was that Rachel was a picture of all the mothers of Israel, both north and south, weeping for the children in the Massacre of the Innocence (Captivity). However, the case in Matthew's gospel was that the children were not taken in captivity but were slain by Herod the Great.
2. Yet, in Jer 31:16, there would be the future hope of returning to Zion. In Matthew's case, Jesus would not be slain by Herod but would be the Savior by dying for man's sin on the cross.

V. OBSERVATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

- A. Hope of Jer 31:15-16
- B. Hope of the Gospel
- C. Hope of Everlasting Love