

Journey through Jeremiah Part 35 The Shepherd Gathers

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney, Th.D. – Wednesday, Aug. 30, 2017

† Jeremiah 31:10-21

We pick up where we left off last Wednesday with verse 10 of Jeremiah 31. If you remember last week I spent nearly the entire study examining the relationships between the Hebrew, Israelite, and the Jew. We saw that there were some distinct differences between the three, but nowadays they are all referred to simply as “Jews.” And that it is more of a religious indicator as opposed to an ethnicity indicator.

(10) Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare *it* in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd *doth* his flock.

The message is sent out to all lands that the LORD is gathering His people back. He is also clear to tell them that it was HE that scattered them to begin with, not them. They may have been the ones that invaded and took them captive, but it was the LORD that caused them to do it to fulfill His purpose.

Just as we preached this past Sunday night concerning the Shepherd and the Sheep, we find the LORD God Jehovah is caring for his flock and like a Shepherd he is gathering His flock.

(11) For the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of *him that was stronger than he*.

The name “**Jacob**” being used here is implying all of Israel and Judah, not Jacob himself as an individual, but his descendants. The LORD has rescued them from their enemies, those that were “**stronger than he**.” Just as the LORD rescues us from Satan, who is much stronger than we are.

(12) Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the LORD, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all.

He mentions the “**height of Zion**.” Zion is a mountain in Jerusalem, however, Zion also become another name for the City of Jerusalem.

It’s not in any of the hymn books we have but one of my favorite hymns is one written by Isaac Watts called “**We’re Marching to Zion**.” *We’re marching to Zion, beautiful, beautiful Zion, we’re marching upward to Zion, the beautiful city of God.*

Again, more signs of celebration and abundant blessings from the LORD. All of these things are signs of God’s richness that He bestows on those that belong to Him. The Prophet Isaiah mentions this in **Isaiah 2:2** *And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.*

(13) Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow.

When the LORD gathers his flock back into his City, they will dance and rejoice and all of the sorrows that they had while in captivity and in bondage will be lifted and turned into joy. It’s the same as we are promised when we reach heaven, no more tears in heaven, no more sorrow. No more curse of sin. We will be rejoicing and celebrating.

(14) And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the LORD.

The LORD will fill his priests and his people full of his goodness and they shall be satisfied.

(15) Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, *and* bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they *were* not. (16) Thus saith the LORD; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. (17) And there is hope in thine end, saith the LORD, that thy children shall come again to their own border.

Here the name Rachel is spelled Rahel, but it is the same person, a wife of Jacob and the mother of three tribes, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh, Rachel is regarded as the mother of all the Tribes of Israel. She is pictured here as crying for her children but the LORD says to refrain from weeping and tears because He will restore the Children of Israel and Judah back to their lands. That’s why he says “there is hope in thine end.” He is giving them hope in their time of distress.

(18) I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself *thus*; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed *to the yoke*: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou *art* the LORD my God. (19) Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon *my* thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.

Ephraim, the son of Joseph represents the 10-tribes of the Northern Kingdom. They had been led into bondage a long time before the tribes of Judah were. He says that Ephraim is “**bemoaning himself**.” That word “bemoaning” means to wail, and weep, and mourn. All of the regrets of their past sins and rebellions against God now comes to their remembrance -they cry out and the LORD hears them.

(20) *Is* Ephraim my dear son? *is he* a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD. (21) Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps: set thine heart toward the highway, *even the way which thou wentest*: turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities.

The LORD in his ever-merciful love has compassion upon his children. Despite their sins and iniquities, He is still willing to take them in and bless them. He calls them to return to their native lands and cities.

(22) How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the LORD hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man.

Here we find the LORD saying that he will create a “**new thing on earth, A woman shall compass a man**.” That means the natural order of things will be reversed. Instead of the man chasing after the woman and courting the woman, the woman will chase after and court the man. It is a picture of Israel coming back to the LORD and trying to please Him instead of Him always being the one that comes to Israel.

(23) Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; The LORD bless thee, O habitation of justice, *and* mountain of holiness.

(24) And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they *that* go forth with flocks.

Then his attention goes from Israel to Judah and promises them the same things that he promised Israel. To restore them and bring them back into the holy place to dwell.

(25) For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul.
(26) Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me.

These sounds like the same words he used for Israel in verse 14 and it is a promise that He will fill their weary souls and replenish their sorrowful souls and give them joy again.

(27) Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast.

The both Israel and Judah are mentioned together. This is His promise to bless in them in multiplying their seed and their animals. You will find in the Bible that multiplication is a blessing from the LORD. That is why He said to be fruitful and multiply. In the Book of Genesis, that phrase is repeated **7-times**:

- 1) **Genesis 1:22** And God blessed them, saying, **Be fruitful, and multiply**, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.
- 2) **Genesis 1:28** And God blessed them, and God said unto them, **Be fruitful, and multiply**, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.
- 3) **Genesis 8:17** Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and **be fruitful, and multiply** upon the earth.
- 4) **Genesis 9:1** And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, **Be fruitful, and multiply**, and replenish the earth.
- 5) **Genesis 9:7** And you, **be ye fruitful, and multiply**; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.
- 6) **(Isaac to Jacob) Genesis 28:3** And God Almighty bless thee, and **make thee fruitful, and multiply thee**, that thou mayest be a multitude of people;
- 7) **Genesis 35:11** And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: **be fruitful and multiply**; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins;

(28) And it shall come to pass, *that* like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the LORD.

Here He is comparing the vigor in which he tore them down to the vigor that He will build them back up. The LORD always has a purpose. He doesn't arbitrarily do things. His ways are calculated and perfect, whereas our ways are usually abrupt and selfish.

(29) In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge.

This is a proverb of the people in that time. It is speaking of the sins of the fathers coming down on the children. It may be a reference to all of the inhabitants of Judah suffering because of the sins of Manasseh, remember he was the Judean King accredited with bringing so much idolatry into the Land of Judah. But the LORD is saying when He restores them to their land it will no longer be said they are suffering because of their fathers.

(30) But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.

The people will no longer pay for the sins of their fathers but will be individually responsible for their own sins. Just as we are. People try to blame all of their sins and bad habits on other people. I'd like to blame my parents that I am fat but I got married at 18 and moved out of their house, so they aren't the ones that have made me eat unhealthy for the past 33-years. I have to take responsibility for my own actions.

We all must own up to our own sins. That is why we must each be saved individually and not as a group. The wages of sin is death, therefore we must be individually saved.

I want to stop right here because the rest of this chapter deals with the New Covenant and I want us to spend our time discussing that in our next study.

† All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version of the Bible