

9. The prophecies for near and distant future

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An interesting thing about the biblical prophecies, some of them in the Bible have double prophecies: for the near future as well as for the distant future. The prophecies in the chapters we are about to study tonight fall into that category.

Bible scholars often call these 4 chapters, from ch. 30 to ch. 33, "The Book of Consolation," because the Lord gave the wonderful promise to the Israelis who were exiled in Babylon. He not only promised to them the glory of the dawn of a new day in the near future as they would come back to their homeland, but also to the Jewish people during the time of the Great Tribulation and into the Millennium.

We will see each step – Redemption, reconciliation, regeneration, and restoration.

A. REDEMPTION

Jeremiah 30:9-13 But they shall serve the Lord their God, And David their king, Whom I will raise up for them. 10 'Therefore do not fear, O My servant Jacob,' says the Lord, 'Nor be dismayed, O Israel; For behold, I will save you from afar, And your seed from the land of their captivity. Jacob shall return, have rest and be quiet, And no one shall make him afraid. 11 For I am with you,' says the Lord, 'to save you; Though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, Yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, And will not let you go altogether unpunished.' 12 "For thus says the Lord: 'Your affliction is incurable, Your wound is severe. 13 There is no one to plead your cause, That you may be bound up; You have no healing medicines.

Jeremiah 30:24 The fierce anger of the Lord will not return until He has done it, And until He has performed the intents of His heart. In the latter days you will consider it.

Jeremiah received the words of this prophecy that are recorded in 30:1 through 31:25 while he was asleep. He was told to write them down for a permanent record of His promises. His promises were that He would bring Israel the Northern kingdom that was taken by Assyria in 722 B.C. and Judah the Southern kingdom would come back to their own land and be united.

The Lord spoke through Jeremiah in v9 that He would raise the Messiah through the lineage of David as He promised. But before that happens, the redemption must be done. They needed to be punished for their wrongdoing. The Lord used Assyria to chasten Israel and Babylon against Judah, then the Gentiles to punish Israel so that they will know who the real Messiah will be in the latter days.

In v13, the Lord was telling Jeremiah that there is no intercessor. I believe that the same situation is still going on today. The Christian believers generally are so busy praying for their own only that they don't pray and intercede for others and the nation. I believe that the Lord is looking for intercessors, both men and women of God.

Of course, v24 talks not only about His judgment against the kingdoms that occupied Israel and Judah, because they persecuted them too much, but it also talks about the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus.

B. RECONCILIATION

Jeremiah 31:3 The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you. Jeremiah 31:14 I will satiate the soul of the priests with abundance, And My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, says the Lord."

Let's stop here and pull ourselves away from the study of Jeremiah and think about this verse itself. And let's ask ourselves a question: Did God create us because He needed us or He was lonely? No, million times no. He was doing just fine without humanity to put up with. He didn't need us, nor was He ever lonely without us.

This brings up a very sobering principle that we must remember all the time: The Lord didn't create humanity because He had to, but rather because He wanted to love us with His everlasting love and has drawn us to Himself with His lovingkindness in spite of our sinfulness.

I love the word 'satisfy' the Lord used in v14. The original Hebrew word is "ravah" and it means "saturate". The English definition is "to satisfy to the full." It is not good enough for our Lord to satisfy what we need, but He is more than willing to satisfy our needs to the full with His goodness. That's our Lord.

C. REGENERATION

Jeremiah 31:31-34 "Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah-- 32 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. 33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

This portion of the verses is familiar to us because we just studied them from Hebrews 8. The Old Covenant was based on what people had to "do" and "don'ts" according to what they were told from the Laws of God. One can say that it was based on the religious rituals, but the greatest shortcoming of the Old Covenant was that it lacked the power to enable people to do what it commanded. It has only been able to show how sinful they were.

But the New Covenant would be internalized through the power of the Holy Spirit, whose indwelling would be made possible through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Because of the indwelling Holy Spirit who is the Author of His Word, the followers of Jesus can experience transformation from inside out, rather than just the outside. They get to know the Lord through the Holy Spirit personally and experience Him powerfully.

I cannot get over the last portion of v34. God will not remember my sins anymore. It is not because He is having another Green Valley moment. He knows everything and remembers everything. But when He says that He is choosing not to remember our sins, it means that He is putting it away.

We can do that same. Regurgitating our past sins does not help us at all. As a matter of fact, it is a method of satan to bind us in condemnation. We cannot do anything about the past sins that we committed. But with the power of the Holy Spirit, we can break the power of the past by living for the future. And we should not choose to remember what the Lord has chosen to forget. Like I've said before, the only good thing from our past is learning from it and not to repeat it again.

D. RESTORATION

Jeremiah 32:6-12 And Jeremiah said, "The word of the Lord came to me, saying, 7 'Behold, Hanamel the son of Shallum your uncle will come to you, saying, "Buy my field which is in Anathoth, for the right of redemption is yours to buy it."' 8 Then Hanamel my uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison according to the word of the Lord, and said to me, 'Please buy my field that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin; for the right of inheritance is yours, and the redemption yours; buy it for yourself.' Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord. 9 So I bought the field from Hanamel, the son of my uncle who was in Anathoth, and weighed out to him the money--seventeen shekels of silver. 10 And I signed the deed and sealed it, took witnesses, and weighed the money on the scales. 11 So I took the purchase deed, both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open; 12 and I gave the purchase deed to Baruch the son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah, in the presence of Hanamel my uncle's son, and in the presence of the witnesses who signed the purchase deed, before all the Jews who sat in the court of the prison.

As a pastor and Bible teacher, I have more responsibilities than all of you. I have to believe and live what I teach. Do I do it all the time? No, but I try.

James 3:1 My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

Besides, if I teach one thing and don't believe what I teach, where is my faith?

James 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Think about this odd situation for Jeremiah. He was in a joint as a convict against the state. The Lord told him to buy a property that was located in the area under the occupation of the Babylon soldiers. Besides, he knew that the Babylonians were going to take over the entire country and the possession of the property would be useless. What was the reason for buying a land that he couldn't use while he was in prison? It didn't matter to Jeremiah because God's words were confirmed the next morning. He lived with what he taught and believed. Whether you are a Bible teacher or not, you all have that responsibility as a follower of Christ. The Lord will bless you for your trust and faithfulness.

From v26-44 of chapter 32, we find God's confirmation of His decision. Here we find another example of God's prophecy concerning the near future and the distant future. The Lord promised Jeremiah and whoever would listen to His prophecies through His prophet that He would bring back the people of Israel to their land.

This applies in both occasions. According to the Book of Ezra, the Persian king Cyrus the Great ended the exile in 538 B.C., the year after he captured Babylon. The exiles came back to their land. After the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70, the Roman emperor dispersed the Jews all over the known world. In 1948, the United Nations granted the Jewish people's rights to a homeland in Israel after nearly 1900 years of Jewish dispersion outside the land.

Jeremiah 33:3 'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'

The Lord was giving this prophecy while His prophet was still in prison. If it was you or me, we would suggest to the Lord, "Uh, Lord, if you don't mind, get me out of prison first and let me stay where it is comfortable and safe FIRST, then you can tell me the rest of your prophecy." I don't know whether Jeremiah asked the Lord that kind of request or not, but we don't see any record of it. I wouldn't be surprised if Jeremiah didn't even think about that.

If we seek Him with all of our hearts, He said that He will be found by us.

Jeremiah 29:13 And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

How can we seek Him? Through His Word and our prayers.

Jeremiah 33:10-18 "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, 11 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. 12 "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. 13 In the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the lowland, in the cities of the South, in the land of Benjamin, in the places around Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, the flocks shall again pass under the hands of him who counts them,' says the Lord. 14 '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.'"

Once the land of Israel was barren and desolate because of their disobedience. But the Lord restored the people and vitality and He will do it again.

We can understand when the OT people brought their sacrifices to the temple with the right hearts and they were accepted by the Lord, but how do we, the believers of the 21st century bring the sacrifice of praise to the Lord without the temple and without the actual animal sacrifices?

Hebrews 13:15 Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

It is our offering of praise to Him.

E. APPLICATIONS

1) Nothing is impossible to our Lord. Nothing is beyond His reach. Nothing is beyond His ability.

2) It is so much better to obey the Lord with our willingness than be forced to obey Him because of His chastisement.