

ESCHATOLOGY: DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS

PART 30

KINGDOM PROPHECY, PART 11: JEREMIAH 31

Jeremiah 30-31 are about the national restoration of Israel into the land to enjoy the Messianic Kingdom blessings promised them in the covenants. Many theologians and their systems of theology insist the restoration happened in the return from Babylon. I've spent a lot of time disproving that. Peters also refuted it in detail. "It is requisite here to meet another objection urged against our view, on the ground that the predictions of restoration were met by the return from Babylon.... [T]he promises of restoration were *never* realized in the return from Babylon; not in *the King* that was to reign over them, not in *the magnitude* of the return, not in the dwelling *safely*, removal of *sorrow*, imparting of *prosperity*, etc., not in the *union* of the two kingdoms [Israel and Judah], or in the *protection* from enemies and *perpetuity* of the Kingdom, or in a *manifestation* of the Branch, or in *repentance* of the nation occurring as described, or in an *engrafting* of Gentiles, or in a *gathering* of nations against Jerusalem and a sudden deliverance, or in a *fearful overthrow* of nations and corresponding exaltation of the nation [Israel], or in a *removal* from nations so far off that they then did not know them, etc.... It is amazing that believers in Holy Writ can overlook the fact that not only prophets before, but prophets at and *after*, *the return from Babylon* predict *the same* glorious restoration. Let any one [sic] e.g. compare Zechariah, Haggai, and Malachi [all prophets after the return from Babylon], with the previous prophets and a restoration *very different* from the one experienced is seen to be foretold. The one from Babylon was designed and carried out to provide the necessary preliminary conditions for the First Advent; the one in the future is identified with the Second Advent.... Well may it be asked, if the return from Babylon with its small colony, under Persian rule, struggling painfully on, etc., is all that is meant by those glowing portrayals of restoration, dominion, and exaltation, where, which these prophets professed to be guided by, and what becomes then of *the credibility* of their utterances in other respects? Such manipulation of Scripture is not only *unwarranted* but *dangerous*, leading as it does... to a direct impeachment of the truthfulness of the Divine Word." [George N. H. Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom*, prop. 112, obs. 2, pp. 2:59-60].

Jeremiah 31, as was chapter 30, is about the national restoration of Israel and Judah. Ironside wrote, "Nowhere in Scripture, so far as I am aware, have we clearer instructions to the final, literal restoration of Israel, preceded by the great tribulation, than in [Jeremiah 30-31]." [H. A. Ironside, *An Ironside Expository Commentary: Jeremiah and Lamentations*, p. 100]. This chapter contains the New Covenant that will be covered in more detail later. The point to be made now is that the Jewish state will be reestablished in the place where it existed at the time Jeremiah wrote his prophecy. There is a future for Israel and for the Jewish people and that future is in Jerusalem and Israel. This chapter of the Bible has to be exegetically butchered in order to affirm

Replacement Theology. This chapter also confirms the existence of Israel after the Jews were dispersed out of Samaria by the Assyrians. There is no such entity as the ten lost tribes of Israel; God knows who they are, God knows where they are, and God will bring them back into the land at the end. Jeremiah isn't just referring to Israel; he is also referring to Judah as this chapter makes clear. We may not be able to discern between the descendants of those who were in Israel, the Northern Kingdom, and those who were in Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin, the Southern Kingdom, but God can and He will bring them all back into the land as one nation.

Jeremiah 31:2–6 ²Thus says the LORD, “The people who survived the sword Found grace in the wilderness— Israel, when it went to find its rest.” ³The LORD appeared to him from afar, saying, “I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness. ⁴“Again I will build you and you will be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel! Again you will take up your tambourines, And go forth to the dances of the merry-makers. ⁵“Again you will plant vineyards On the hills of Samaria; The planters will plant And will enjoy them. ⁶“For there will be a day when watchmen On the hills of Ephraim call out, ‘Arise, and let us go up to Zion, To the LORD our God.’”

Jeremiah begins chapter 31 by addressing the Jews from Israel who lived in Samaria and were dispersed by the Assyrians. There several ways to understand this verse. Some believe it refers to the survivors of the Assyrian conquest of Israel [Charles H. Dyer, “Jeremiah” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, p. 1169]. Others believe grace in the wilderness refers to Israel's protection at the hand of God from antichrist during the Tribulation in the same way He protected them in the wilderness after the Exodus [Thomas L. Constable, *Thomas Constable's Notes on the Bible, vol. IV Isaiah-Daniel*, 4:294]. Given the context of Jeremiah 30-31 that deals with the end times restoration of believing Jews, Constable has the preferable understanding. It seems likely this refers to both in terms of a type or symbol.

A professor at Southwest Baptist Theological Seminary has a somewhat different view. “The language of v. 2 supports two interpretations: (1) it looks back to the exodus from Egypt and God's provision in the wilderness, or (2) it looks ahead to the return from exile. Supportive of the first interpretation is the reference to the desert and Heb. verb form (perfect) *masa*, ‘find,’ normally translated as past tense. On the other hand, mention of surviving the sword fits the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests better than liberation from slavery in Egypt. In view of the verb forms, which are all perfect in vv. 2-3 and switch to imperfect in v. 4, J. A. Thompson's interpretation is probably best, that God was pointing to his delivering Israel from Egypt and caring for them in the wilderness as a pattern or paradigm for what he was about to do in caring for them in their new ‘wilderness’ experience and restoring them from exile.” [F. B. Huey, Jr., *The New American Commentary: Jeremiah, Lamentations*, p. 269]. God is looking back to the Exodus as a pattern for what is going to occur in the end times. The Jews in question here are not those from Judah who will suffer the Babylonian exile. The people in view here are the Israelites who separated from Judah and lived in Samaria and suffered

dispersion at the hands of Assyria. The Jews from Judah did return from Babylon but that return is not the subject here; the subject is the final end times restoration in belief which includes Israel, the Northern Kingdom as well as the Southern Kingdom. The Jews from Samaria never returned to the land, but they will at the end. Jeremiah is also not referring to the regathering of Israel back into the land in unbelief that is going on now although it too has Jews from Israel and from Judah moving to modern Israel. The final quote Dr. Huey used there is correct on its face, but I suspect that commentator was referring to returning from Babylon and not to restoration after the Tribulation. Later, in his commentary on Jeremiah 31:16-17, Dr. Huey does recognize that the restoration "more literally" refers to a future age [p. 267]. He left me a little confused on exactly what his position is concerning Jeremiah 31.

Israel will never enter into God's rest until the final restoration into the land. God's love for Israel encompasses the ages. He will discipline them as He promised to do, but He will never abandon them. In the restoration, Israel will be the nation God created them to be in the beginning. The anguish of the diaspora and the Tribulation will be forgotten and the people will rejoice in the land. They will resume their agricultural pursuits in Samaria and the land will no longer be under a curse; instead it will be amazingly productive. Hints of that may be seen in Israel even today but it is nothing now like what it will be then. Israel will once again worship in Zion. God will view Israel as a pure virgin again rather than as the unfaithful wife so vividly described in the book of Hosea.

Constable quoted a man named Scalise concerning Israel's restoration. "This restoration reverses at least six aspects of the judgment suffered by Israel and Judah: no resting place in exile, a nation torn down, celebrations silenced, vines and plants uprooted, watchmen announcing the invading conqueror, and the temple destroyed. The poem also introduces an Israel transformed from a desperate adulteress to a joyful maiden on her way back to God." [Thomas L. Constable, *Thomas Constables Notes on the Bible*, vol. IV, *Isaiah-Daniel*, pp. 294-295]. The point being made is all the curses God pronounced on the Israelites in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 for their rebellion will be reversed in the Messianic Kingdom.

Scalise didn't provide any supporting Scriptures, but following are some that prove his assessment to be correct.

There will be no resting place in exile:

Deuteronomy 28:65⁶⁵ "Among those nations you shall find no rest, and there will be no resting place for the sole of your foot; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and despair of soul.

The nation will be torn down:

Leviticus 26:33 ³³“You, however, I will scatter among the nations and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste. Vines and plants will be uprooted:

Hosea 2:12 ¹²“I will destroy her vines and fig trees, Of which she said, ‘These are my wages Which my lovers have given me.’ And I will make them a forest, And the beasts of the field will devour them.

Celebrations will be silenced:

Hosea 2:11 ¹¹“I will also put an end to all her gaiety, Her feasts, her new moons, her sabbaths And all her festal assemblies.

Watchmen will announce the coming of the invader/conqueror:

Jeremiah 6:17 ¹⁷“And I set watchmen over you, saying, ‘Listen to the sound of the trumpet!’ But they said, ‘We will not listen.’

This Scripture is, in context, is referring to the Babylonian conquest of Israel, but Israel still isn't listening to the warnings being provided them. The Bible, in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, clearly warns Israel of their impending judgment and restoration. Christian evangelists and theologians have been warning them but in the end, the majority of them still won't heed the warnings.

The Temple will be destroyed:

Matthew 24:2 ²And He said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down.”

Jeremiah 31:7–9 ⁷For thus says the LORD, “Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, And shout among the chief of the nations; Proclaim, give praise and say, ‘O LORD, save Your people, The remnant of Israel.’ ⁸“Behold, I am bringing them from the north country, And I will gather them from the remote parts of the earth, Among them the blind and the lame, The woman with child and she who is in labor with child, together; A great company, they will return here. ⁹“With weeping they will come, And by supplication I will lead them; I will make them walk by streams of waters, On a straight path in which they will not stumble; For I am a father to Israel, And Ephraim is My firstborn.”

These verses once again make it clear any return from Assyria or Babylon is not Jeremiah's subject because God will be gathering the Israelites from the remote parts of the earth. By the time of the Second Coming, the Jews will be crying to God for salvation and when they see it coming they will be overjoyed. God will gather them and bring them into Israel. The weeping describing by Jeremiah could be due to remorse over the sinful rebellion that characterized the Israelites for several thousand

years or it could be because of the joy they are expressing over their restoration. The weeping is coupled with their supplications to God for their rescue. I'm thinking it is referring to remorse because Zechariah 12:10 is referring to the Second Coming; therefore, Jeremiah and Zechariah are referring to the same period of time. The Bible has other verses that similarly predict Israel's remorse at the Second Coming. They will realize how mistaken they have been all these years and they will be ashamed, frightened, and remorseful while, at the same time, grateful their Messiah is coming. In other words, their emotions will be all over the place. They will be facing immanent annihilation when Christ appears and they will be scared to death. Then they will be relieved to see the Messiah returning. But they will be remorseful for rejecting Him and participating in His crucifixion during His First Advent. Jeremiah 31:19 confirms the idea of remorse when they see the Lord returning.

Zechariah 12:10 ¹⁰"I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.

Ezekiel 36:31 ³¹"Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abominations.

Every Jewish person will be brought back into the land by the Lord to begin the Messianic Kingdom. They will be brought back to the land no matter their health, no matter their societal status, and no matter their location around the world. Christ Jesus is going to send His angels throughout the world to gather them (Mt. 24:31). Fruchtenbaum notes that the God who is able to scatter them is also the God who has the capability and the power to regather them and bring them into the land. [Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, p. 798]. God will safely lead them back. He is like a father to Israel and He will safely bring them back to their homeland.

Israel was created to be the preeminent nation in the world. Here, God calls them the "chief of the nations." The NET Bible has it "foremost of the nations." After the reigns of David and Solomon, they failed to live up to that status. Once they are restored, they will again assume that preeminent position. This concept drives Replacement theologians crazy! They simply cannot conceive any way that God will restore Israel to such a position over the other nations. According to their theology, God is completely done with Israel.

God said He is a father to Israel and Ephraim is His firstborn. Israel, the Northern Kingdom, is the subject of this Scripture so it doesn't seem to be unusual to say that. There is some scriptural warrant for suggesting that Ephraim is the first born. Reuben, the physical firstborn (Gen. 29:32), forfeited his rights as the firstborn son due to sin (Gen.

35:22; 49:4). Jacob granted Joseph the benefits of the firstborn son in Reuben's place (Gen. 48:21-22) Jacob blessed Ephraim over Manasseh (Gen. 48:20) who then could technically be called God's firstborn. But God is the father of all Israel and all the tribes will be equally treated in the Kingdom. The remnants of the Northern Kingdom are going to be restored in the end.

Genesis 29:32 ³²Leah conceived and bore a son and named him Reuben, for she said, "Because the LORD has seen my affliction; surely now my husband will love me."

Genesis 35:22 ²²It came about while Israel was dwelling in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine, and Israel heard of it. Now there were twelve sons of Jacob—

Genesis 49:4 ⁴"Uncontrolled as water, you shall not have preeminence, Because you went up to your father's bed; Then you defiled it—he went up to my couch.

Genesis 48:21–22 ²¹Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you, and bring you back to the land of your fathers. ²²"I give you one portion more than your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow."

Genesis 48:20 ²⁰He blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will pronounce blessing, saying, 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh!'" Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh.

Jeremiah 31:10–14 ¹⁰Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, And declare in the coastlands afar off, And say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him And keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock." ¹¹For the LORD has ransomed [פָּדָה] Jacob And redeemed [גָּאֹלִים] him from the hand of him who was stronger than he. ¹²"They will come and shout for joy on the height of Zion, And they will be radiant over the bounty of the LORD— Over the grain and the new wine and the oil, And over the young of the flock and the herd; And their life will be like a watered garden, And they will never languish [דָּאָב] again. ¹³"Then the virgin will rejoice in the dance, And the young men and the old, together, For I will turn their mourning into joy And will comfort them and give them joy for their sorrow. ¹⁴"I will fill the soul of the priests with abundance, And My people will be satisfied with My goodness," declares the LORD.

It is a very interesting truth that in the end times, God is going to make it known among all the nations of the world that He scattered Israel and He will restore Israel. The world may think it is on its way to destroying Israel but it is not. God gave the Jews over to the world for a time for the purpose of divine discipline, but He did not give Israel over to the world for annihilation. The world does not have the power to do that which God forbids them to do. The world is going to do a lot of serious damage to Israel, but the world is not going to destroy Israel. God is going to rescue Israel out of the hands of the

world who would otherwise destroy them not just as a nation but as individual Jews. Satan's goal is not just to destroy Israel as a nation; his goal is to kill every Jew alive in the world. It is interesting to note that Revelation makes it clear the wrath the world experiences will be known by the earth dwellers to be from God and they will still persist in their rebellion.

Revelation 6:16 ¹⁶and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;

The world wants the Jews dead. Satan has to have the Jews dead in order to defeat the plan of God and the world, knowingly or, in some ways unknowingly, is actively participating in this satanic plot. Satan failed to kill the Jews off in Moses' day and he has failed to kill them off since then. Satan knows that Jesus is not coming back until the Jewish people as a nation say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" (Mt. 23:39). If Satan can kill all the Jews, no one is left to recognize Jesus as the Messiah from the Jewish nation. If that were to happen, Satan makes God out to be less than omnipotent, which means He isn't the all-powerful God He is supposed to be, and Satan wins. Satan is trying to prove that he can be God because, according to Satan, at least in his own mind, God isn't all that He claims to be. That won't happen, of course, but Satan is insane and he won't stop trying and even after he is incarcerated for a thousand years he won't stop trying. Many people are unwitting participants in this satanic plan to destroy the world and make it ready to embrace the antichrist and a world system of economics, government, and religion. Lenin called the people of the West who supported his Communism useful idiots. Today, Replacement theologians are Satan's useful idiots. Unwitting or not, they are responsible for their actions because the Bible's truth concerning Israel is plain for all to read and know. But it's not just Christians; the secular world almost totally opposes Israel, the Jews, and God. They know God and they exchange the truth for the lie and God gives them over to their deception because it is what they have chosen to do and they will suffer the consequences. What we are seeing around us in the deterioration of society in this country and around the world at this time is not simply a cultural, societal aberration in world history or a historical blip in terms of national governance among the nations of the world; it is the culmination of a carefully and well thought out design Satan implemented millennia ago. Obviously, God knows Satan's plan and He will defeat it.

The major component for defeating Satan's plan is God's divine, providential care for Israel and He is going to make sure the world knows it. This is not only a display of God's power; it is also a display of God's grace. In effect, God is telling the world He is in charge and they need to get right with Him before it's too late. Most of the world will reject Him anyway and that world will suffer the wrath of God for their rejection of the Truth. It is a display of His power and of His omnipotence. It is also an exhibition of God's grace to Israel. Israel has been in almost constant rebellion against God in one way or another since He created them to be a nation. God promised Israel, through His covenants with them, that He would do certain things on their behalf and He is going to

do them. Without fail, He will fulfill His promises. Ultimately, these things will be to His glory.

As we frequently see throughout the Bible, the metaphor of a shepherd and his flock is used here of God's shepherding relationship with His flock, Israel. Israel knows that God is their Shepherd and they either remain in rebellion against Him anyway or they think they will be blessed no matter what they do.

Psalm 80:1 ¹Oh, give ear, Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who are enthroned above the cherubim, shine forth!

God spoke through the prophet Ezekiel using this same metaphor to declare the truth that He would regather and restore Israel in the end.

Ezekiel 34:11–16 ¹¹For thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. ¹²"As a shepherd cares for his herd in the day when he is among his scattered sheep, so I will care for My sheep and will deliver them from all the places to which they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day. ¹³"I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and bring them to their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams, and in all the inhabited places of the land. ¹⁴"I will feed them in a good pasture, and their grazing ground will be on the mountain heights of Israel. There they will lie down on good grazing ground and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵"I will feed My flock and I will lead them to rest," declares the Lord GOD. ¹⁶"I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken and strengthen the sick; but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with judgment.

Jeremiah uses the language of deliverance to characterize God's restoration of Israel and indeed He will deliver them from annihilation at the hands of the satanic world system. Ransom, פְּדָה, refers to causing the freedom or release of a person from bondage or ownership often implying a delivering or rescue of a person in distress. Redemption, גְּאוּלִּים, is the act of releasing or setting free. Israel will be in desperate need of deliverance at the end and God will rescue them from the world's onslaught but not without a great deal of damage done to them.

Israel is and always has been an insignificant nation in terms of land and population but they have had an enormously significant presence in world history. Right now they have a strong military but when the world comes against them at the end, they will be overpowered and overwhelmed to the point it looks as though they will be destroyed.

Once Israel is redeemed and restored to the land, the Jewish people will be overjoyed. They will finally live in peace and safety which is something they have not enjoyed on a consistent basis since Solomon was their king. Even in Solomon's time there was always the possibility of warfare, poor people, disease, and all the other problems associated

with a sinful, broken, fallen world. All those problems will not be an issue in the Messianic Kingdom which is the restoration to which Jeremiah is referring.

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