

# ESCHATOLOGY: DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS

## PART 32

### THE KING

Jeremiah 32 does concern the local restoration to the land from Babylon after seventy years of dispersion and captivity in that kingdom. That's very clear from the context. The end of the chapter does contain some hints of the final, future restoration but the primary context concerns the return from the Babylonian captivity.

Jeremiah 33:14–18 <sup>14</sup>'Behold, days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will fulfill the good word which I have spoken concerning the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>15</sup>'In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth. <sup>16</sup>'In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell in safety; and this is the name by which she will be called: the LORD is our righteousness.' <sup>17</sup>"For thus says the LORD, 'David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel; <sup>18</sup>and the Levitical priests shall never lack a man before Me to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings and to prepare sacrifices continually.'"

The unified Israelite nation is again referenced by the Lord. Jeremiah is given more revelation concerning the King, the righteous Branch of David, the everlasting availability of a descendant of David to assume the throne, and the perpetual Levitical priesthood.

This is introduced by the eschatological line, "Behold, days are coming." The righteous Branch of David will be a faithful King executing, for the first time in the history of the world, justice and righteousness not just in Israel but in the world. It isn't just wicked and unjust kings of Israel that failed to execute justice and righteousness, that is the history of the rulers of the world from the beginning. The righteous Branch will be the first perfectly just ruler in history. These conditions did not exist after the restoration of Judah from Babylon. The land of Israel and Jerusalem will be safe. That wasn't the case when the exiles returned from Babylon, it has not been the case since then, and it will not be the case until Christ assumes the Davidic throne in His Messianic Kingdom. Only then will the kind of safety the Lord promises for the land of Israel be experienced. Jerusalem will be what God has always intended it to be and that is a city of righteousness.

The promise concerns in this pericope refers to the King and the Levitical priests. "Monarchy and priesthood were the two bases of the OT theocracy. When these appeared to be most in danger of extinction in Jeremiah's day, we find their continuance couched in sure and irrevocable terms." [Charles L. Feinberg, "Jeremiah" in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, p. 6:592]. David shall never lack a man to sit on throne in Jerusalem. "Some have felt that this promise was incorrect because the

throne did cease in 586 B.C when Jerusalem fell. However, God did not promise an unbroken monarchy but an unbroken line of descendants from David who would be qualified to sit on that throne when it was reestablished. David's line would not fail before the righteous Branch came to claim His throne." [Charles H. Dyer, "Jeremiah" in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, p. 1176]. The genealogies of Matthew and Luke proved this unbroken line to Christ. The genealogies established Christ to be both the legal heir to the throne from Solomon through His father, Joseph, and a human descendant of David through his son Nathan and Christ's mother, Mary. Jesus has the legal right to the throne under the conditions established in the Davidic Covenant and He has the right to the throne as a son of the king because he is a physical descendant of King David through Nathan which fact avoids the curse on the line of Jeconiah.

The same promise is made concerning the Levitical priests. There will always be priests of the Levitical order to present offerings and perform the Levitical duties. We've previously discussed the fact the Levitical priesthood will be operative in the Kingdom. Christ is the High Priest of the order of Melchizedek but the Levitical priests will be performing their duties under Zadok. Zadok is in the line of Phinehas who was promised a perpetual priesthood (Num. 25:10-14). In this dispensation, there is no priesthood, however, that does not preclude reestablishing it in the Messianic Kingdom dispensation if God so desires to do so and Scripture reveals that He will do just that.

Those who deny literal hermeneutics have to find alternate, theological interpretations of these Scriptures because, among other things, they do not believe there will be priests and sacrifices during the Messianic Kingdom. "Those who follow the hermeneutical principle that prophecy is to be interpreted literally whenever possible usually interpret v. 18 to mean that the OT sacrificial system would be literally reinstated at a future time. This interpretation, however, is contrary to the biblical explanation that Christ abolished the sacrificial system once and for all (cf. Gal 3:1-3; Heb 10:1-16; cf. v. 16 and Jer 31:33).

Christ as King-Priest would fulfill the promises of vv. 17-18 (see Ps 110:4). If the promise of a Davidic king is considered to be fulfilled in Christ, it is not unreasonable to conclude that Christ in his priestly role fulfills the Levitical priestly role (see Zech 6:13; Heb 7:23-28). [F. B. Huey, Jr., *The New American Commentary: Jeremiah and Lamentations*, p. 302].

The first thing to note here, according to this theologian, is the denial that literal hermeneutics must be the controlling interpretive principle for understanding the issues involved. What this theologian fails to understand is the Bible's dispensational distinctions, the Kingdom program, and the analogy of Scripture. His theology is the controlling factor for his understanding of this Scripture. The Mosaic system is done away in this dispensation; that does not preclude some sort of law system operative in the Messianic Kingdom. The totality of Scripture affirms the Mosaic Law to be done away in this age but sacrifices are part of the Kingdom age; both are true, and because of

dispensational distinctions identifying them as distinct systems of law, they are not contradictory. Despite what this man claims, it is totally unreasonable to conclude that Christ fulfills the Levitical priestly role. Christ cannot be a Levitical priest; His lineage is not in the line of Levi. He is a priest according to the order of Melchizedek; they are different priesthoods. Christ literally fulfills the Scriptures concerning the Davidic King but He does not literally fulfill any Scripture concerning the Levitical priesthood. Note that he uses Jeremiah 31:33 to say the sacrificial system has been abolished but that verse says no such thing. It says the law, which has to refer to Messianic Kingdom Law, will be written on the hearts of the Jewish people as part of the New Covenant. It's not about the church at all. It is not addressing the end of the Mosaic Law; that's already long past by the time Jeremiah is writing about comes to pass and which is still future even today. This verse will not be fulfilled until the Tribulation is over and the Jewish nation is saved and prepared to inherit the Messianic Kingdom. Once that happens, there will be a literal Messianic Kingdom being ruled by a literal Davidic King and served by literal Levitical priests with the High Priest being of the order of Melchizedek and not of the Levitical, Aaronic order of priests.

God's covenant promises to Israel will not and cannot be abrogated for any reasons and He confirms that in the same way He did in Jeremiah 31:35-37.

Jeremiah 33:19–22 <sup>19</sup>The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, <sup>20</sup>“Thus says the LORD, ‘If you can break My covenant for the day and My covenant for the night, so that day and night will not be at their appointed time, <sup>21</sup>then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant so that he will not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levitical priests, My ministers. <sup>22</sup>‘As the host of heaven cannot be counted and the sand of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.’”

As long as day and night occur at their appointed times, God's covenant with David and His promises to the Levitical priests cannot be broken. Only if day and night no longer exist as God created them to exist, will it be possible for His promises to Israel be abrogated. God is also going to fulfill His promise to Abraham that he would have so many descendants that it would be impossible to count them all.

Genesis 15:5 <sup>5</sup>And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”

Genesis 22:17 <sup>17</sup>indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.

God's covenants with Israel are unconditional and they will be fulfilled. This is not to say the covenant blessings have not been postponed until a faithful remnant of Jewish

people represents a repentant Jewish nation because they are being held in abeyance now. Matthew makes that truth explicitly clear. Up to this point in history there has never been a faithful generation of Jews to enjoy the complete covenant blessings. Instead, they are suffering under the curses promised for national rebellion. Even though the nation has been unfaithful, God is faithful and the covenant promises will be unconditionally fulfilled.

Jeremiah 33:23–26 <sup>23</sup>And the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, <sup>24</sup>“Have you not observed what this people have spoken, saying, ‘The two families which the LORD chose, He has rejected them’? Thus they despise My people, no longer are they as a nation in their sight. <sup>25</sup>“Thus says the LORD, ‘If My covenant for day and night stand not, and the fixed patterns of heaven and earth I have not established, <sup>26</sup>then I would reject the descendants of Jacob and David My servant, not taking from his descendants rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them.’”

As of Jeremiah's writing, the Northern Kingdom was destroyed by Assyria and the prophet was warning Judah of imminent destruction by Babylon. Some people were discouraged and feeling rejected by God. If both nations were destroyed, then what would become of the promises God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? God reassures them through the prophet that they will be restored, Israel and Judah, and their fortunes will be restored. God will make good on all the promises He has made to the Jewish descendants of Abraham. He made the promises over and over again to the patriarchs and through the covenants and He will fulfill His promises.

Jeremiah clearly speaks about the distant future and the restoration of Israel and Judah in the Messianic Kingdom. These Scriptures have to be seriously abused and disbelieved in order to arrive at any theology that says the church has replaced Israel.

Isaiah has a large number of Messianic Kingdom prophecies and included among them are some descriptions of life in that Kingdom.

The first chapter of Isaiah deals with the rebellion of the Southern Kingdom against God. Chapter 2 begins by describing the conditions that were meant to characterize the Kingdom from the start, but instead will characterize it in the Messianic Kingdom. Jerusalem and Israel will no longer be places only for Jewish worship, but the world's worship will be centered there during the Kingdom. The first four verses of chapter 2 are quite a contrast with chapter 1.

Isaiah 2:1–4 <sup>1</sup>The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup>Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. <sup>3</sup>And many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He

may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths.” For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup>And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war.

“In the last days” refers to a time far in the future from the time Isaiah is writing his book. “The expression “the last days” (*acharith hayyamim*, “the end of the days”), which does not occur anywhere else in Isaiah, is always used in an eschatological sense. It never refers to the course of history immediately following the time being, but invariably indicates the furthest point in the history of this life—the point which lies on the outermost limits of the speaker’s horizon.... The prophet here predicted that the mountain which bore the temple of Jehovah, and therefore was already in dignity the most exalted of all mountains, would, one day tower in actual height above all the high places of the earth.” [Keil & Delitzsch, “Isaiah,” *Commentary on the Old Testament*, p. 7:74-75]. Keil and Delitzsch go on to say this is a description of the New Jerusalem but that is incorrect. This is describing the Temple Mount in and during the Messianic Kingdom.

In the ancient Middle East, mountains were thought to be associated with pagan gods. The “high places” of the Bible are often associated with pagan places of worship. This seems to be the thinking behind the building of the ziggurat, the Tower of Babel, in Babylon. God’s Temple in Jerusalem was on Mt. Moriah which was actually a smaller mountain in the area. The Mount of Olives is higher in elevation. One of the reasons pagans disdained the Temple was because it was in such a comparatively low place. During the Messianic Kingdom, the Temple will once again stand on Mt. Zion, but it will be a Mt. Zion that is topographically changed to a higher elevation during the Tribulation and the Second Coming. It will be a very prominent feature in Jerusalem; the city will be elevated (Zech. 14:10; Ezek. 40:2, “a very high mountain”). It will be the chief of the mountains; God Himself will be there. “God will bring about His promised blessing by making the temple mount, or the mountain of the house of the Lord, the highest of the mountains. The height of the mountain was a significant factor because of the ancient Near Eastern perspective suggesting that the peaks of the mountains were associated with the presence of the gods. Mountains, in particular the temple mount, were viewed as the junction between heaven and earth. That the mountain of the Lord will be higher than any other mountain speaks to its prominence and, in this context, the glory of the temple and the truthfulness of the worship that occurs there.” [Michael Rydelnik and James Spencer, “Isaiah” in *The Moody Bible Commentary*, p. 1013].

Over and over the Israelites rebelled against God by abandoning the God ordained worship practices for idolatry on the high places. Psalm 78 informs us the people had abandoned worship at the Tabernacle in Shiloh for worship on the high places and the result was death and captivity.

Psalms 78:56–62 <sup>56</sup>Yet they tempted and rebelled against the Most High God And did not keep His testimonies, <sup>57</sup>But turned back and acted treacherously like their fathers; They turned aside like a treacherous bow. <sup>58</sup>For they provoked Him with their high places And aroused His jealousy with their graven images. <sup>59</sup>When God heard, He was filled with wrath And greatly abhorred Israel; <sup>60</sup>So that He abandoned the dwelling place at Shiloh, The tent which He had pitched among men, <sup>61</sup>And gave up His strength to captivity And His glory into the hand of the adversary. <sup>62</sup>He also delivered His people to the sword, And was filled with wrath at His inheritance.

Jeremiah wrote about the abominations that took place on the high places.

Jeremiah 7:31 <sup>31</sup>“They have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, and it did not come into My mind.

Jeremiah 19:5 <sup>5</sup>and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, a thing which I never commanded or spoke of, nor did it ever enter My mind;

Whenever a righteous king sought to bring the nation back to God from idolatry, one of the things he did was abolish the high places.

Among the curses for disobedience God promised the Israelites in Leviticus 26 was destruction of their idolatrous high places upon which He would heap their dead bodies.

Leviticus 26:30 <sup>30</sup>I then will destroy your high places, and cut down your incense altars, and heap your remains on the remains of your idols, for My soul shall abhor you.

When a righteous king instituted religious reforms, he destroyed the high places. Hezekiah is an example.

2 Chronicles 31:1 <sup>1</sup>Now when all this was finished, all Israel who were present went out to the cities of Judah, broke the pillars in pieces, cut down the Asherim and pulled down the high places and the altars throughout all Judah and Benjamin, as well as in Ephraim and Manasseh, until they had destroyed them all. Then all the sons of Israel returned to their cities, each to his possession.

The point to all this concerning Eschatology is that the prophecy of the Messianic, Kingdom Temple seems to suggest it will be the highest place on earth. There will be serious topographical changes to the earth's surface during the Tribulation and one of them may well be the lowering of the mountains as we know them now and the elevation of the Temple Mount to be higher than every other topographical feature on earth. The Bible suggests that possibility based on Revelation 16:20. Isaiah 40:4 refers to

making the hills become low. I wouldn't be dogmatic about it, but it does at least seem to be likely based on these Scriptures and on Isaiah 2:3. It could simply be describing the Temple in relation to the area around it in Jerusalem but the context suggests something broader than that.

Revelation 16:20<sup>20</sup>And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

Isaiah 40:4<sup>44</sup>Let every valley be lifted up, And every mountain and hill be made low; And let the rough ground become a plain, And the rugged terrain a broad valley;

Theologians who deny a literal Kingdom and believe the church is in view in Isaiah have to deny the literal existence of a Messianic Temple on a literal mountain in Jerusalem. "A miraculous physical elevation of Zion may possibly be thought of (Ez. 40:2; Zech. 14:10); but the idea (seriously entertained by some) that Zion is to be literally set on the top of the other hills is too grotesque to be attributed to any prophet, save under compulsion. In this passage a metaphorical exaltation, in respect of political and religious importance, seems to satisfy all the requirements both of syntax and exegesis." [J. Skinner, *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah, Chapters I.–XXXIX. With Introduction and Notes*, p. 15].

"*The mountain of the Lord's house; the temple of the Lord which is upon Mount Moriah; which yet is not to be understood literally of that material temple, but mystically of the church of God, as appears from the next following words, which will not admit of a literal interpretation; and from the flowing of all nations to it, which was not to that temple, nor indeed was fulfilled till that temple was destroyed; and from the frequent use of this metaphor, the temple, or the house of the Lord, concerning the Christian church, both in the Old and the New Testament. Shall be exalted above the hills; shall be placed and settled in a most conspicuous and glorious manner, being advanced above all other churches and kingdoms in the world.*" [Matthew Poole, *Annotations upon the Holy Bible*, vol. 2, p. 329]. Poole assumes the Temple is the Herodian Temple which no longer exists and the Temple now means the church which he places in both the Old and the New Testaments.

During the history of Israel before the diaspora, worship in Jerusalem was a Jewish affair and the Jews were required to come to the Temple to worship. Jewish males were required to come there three times a year at the time of three feasts or celebrations mandated by God in the Mosaic Law. During the Messianic Kingdom, the people of the world will travel to Jerusalem to worship the King and to learn from Him.

The people of the world, probably a majority of them, if not everyone, and for at least nine hundred years of the one thousand, will want to go to the mountain of the Lord in order to learn His ways so they can then walk in His ways. Jerusalem will be the place of learning for the Gentiles in the Kingdom. The Law is not a reference to the Mosaic Law;

it is a reference to whatever Law regulations are enacted by the King for the administration of His Kingdom and for the orderly conduct of His Kingdom subjects.

During the Kingdom, the Lord will judge the world from Jerusalem. The citizens of the Messianic Kingdom will still possess sin natures so it will not be a problem free dispensation. The nature of the judging required between nations is not specified. It will not involve warfare; the nations will be at peace. The Scriptures in Isaiah make it clear that while the Kingdom is a time of unprecedented peace and general welfare, it will not yet be a perfect society. As noted by Isaiah, nations will have problems that need an arbiter. There will be poor and afflicted people who will need the assistance of a holy, benevolent King. But it will be a human society where justice and honesty prevail. The King will have absolute power but He will always wield that power truthfully, honestly, faithfully, and righteously. It will be a society the world has never seen, but it will not yet be perfect.

In this Kingdom, there will not be another war on planet earth until the final rebellion fomented by Satan at the end of the 1,000-year Kingdom. Implements of war will instead be forged into useful tools; agriculture appears to be the primary beneficiary of this program. The materials formerly used to manufacture military weaponry and supplies will go to peaceful pursuits.

Dennis Waltemeyer  
Fredericksburg Bible Church