

The Prophet Jeremiah - Part 2

by H.J. Vine

The sermon delves into the prophetic messages of Jeremiah, emphasizing the hope of restoration for Israel through Jesus Christ and the importance of standing firm in God's truth.

Scripture: Jeremiah 35:19

Topics: "Prophetic Ministry", "Gods Restoration"

Description

Jeremiah recounts the historical events following the destruction of Jerusalem, highlighting the faithfulness of the Rechabites in contrast to the disobedience of Israel. The prophet's imprisonment, release, and the fall of Jerusalem due to the people's rejection of God's warnings are depicted. Despite the city's destruction, a promise of restoration and glory is foretold, especially with the coming of the righteous Branch, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will establish justice and righteousness in Jerusalem. The section concludes with the remnant's journey to Egypt and Jeremiah's final words to them.

Transcript

THE SEED ROYAL IS PRESERVED. The New Testament opens with the genealogical proof that Jesus Christ is of David's royal line; yet the Old Testament foretold that He should suffer and be put to death before He took the throne; and thus it came to pass: He was cut off out of the land of the living; God, however, raised Him from among the dead and exalted Him to His right hand. The heavens now conceal him from the sight of Israel. The time of their repentance will come and He will return for their salvation and blessing. Indeed, a few weeks after they had rejected Him it was said to them, "Repent, therefore, and be converted, for the blotting out of your sins, so that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and He may send Jesus Christ, who was fore-ordained for you, whom heaven indeed must receive till the times of the restoring of all things" (Acts 3:19-21). They did not repent, as we know, and the nation is still without Him. The apostle Paul in Acts 13, speaking of David in verse 22, continues, "Of this man's seed according to promise has God brought to Israel a Saviour, Jesus"; they, however, compassed His death; but being raised from among the dead, "He said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David" (v. 34). Those who believe on Him now truly come into a far higher order of blessing as members of His body, the assembly, but, when will these sure mercies be brought to Israel? Not till after our Lord Jesus Christ has taken the assembly away to her heavenly home to be with Himself. Afterwards He will revive, recover, and restore Israel. He will come out of heaven for that purpose. Like Thomas, who is a type of the repentant remnant of Israel in the future day, they will exclaim when they see Him, "Our Lord and our God"! Indeed, as our chapter in Jeremiah tells us, "This is the Name whereby He shall be called

JEHOVAH TSIDKENU" (Jer. 23:6).

Notice the definite way the prophet first foretells His connection as Man with the house of David: "I will raise up unto David a righteous Branch" (v. 5). That has been fulfilled as we know, but being cut off, as was plainly prophesied, He has been taken by God to heaven. Jesus Christ was raised from among the dead of the seed of David. The great Gospel treatise, written to the believers at Rome, begins by showing that this is the foundation of all the rich blessings which are afterward unfolded for faith; and upon this firm basic truth, coupled with the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ is also the Son of God, they rest securely. Thus we read, "Come of David's seed according to the flesh, marked out Son of God in power, according to the spirit of holiness, by resurrection of the dead." Here, then, lies open before us the revealed secret of the believer's blessings now, and of Israel's blessings by-and-by. This also explains many apparently obscure passages, some speaking of Him as Man, and others of Him as God, and sometimes both being involved in one verse even. Oh, how it cheers the heart to think of the great and glorious Son of God, the One who was rich in Godhead glory, coming down to us in our lost estate; becoming poor--a poor man asking for a penny--owing to the darkness and distance of the cross, that we, and Israel too, through His poverty may be rich; a Man who has come close to us: God over all, Who is ever above us! Blessed Lord and Saviour, we may well worship and adore Thee.

"We love Thee for the glorious worth

Which in Thyself we see;

We love Thee for that shameful cross,

Endured so patiently."

How bright and beautiful does this splendid promise, given in verses 5 to 8, shine out after the stormy blackness which forebodes the destruction of the house of David after the flesh. Clearly and calmly its rich radiance beams before the eyes of the believer now blessed through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, for there is no longer anything unexplained: all is intelligible in the light of the Person and work of our blessed Saviour. How rejoicing to the heart are these priceless promises, these precious words, whereby, we are told, we become partakers of the Divine nature:

"Behold the days come, says the Lord, that I will raise up unto David a righteous Branch Who shall reign as King and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell in safety: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, Jehovah Tzidkenu (The Lord our righteousness). Therefore, behold, the days come, says the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord lives, Who brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt; But the Lord lives, who brought up and who led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I have driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land."

These words describe a greater deliverance than that whereby God made His Name to be known among the nations when He brought Israel out from under the tyrannous oppression of Pharaoh, for it tells of the salvation and national settlement of Israel in righteousness through our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Seed of David in resurrection power; a power which has already triumphed over Satan, in that Christ is now in the place of supreme authority; and under Him Israel will become again the national head of the world, while the assembly will be united to Christ in His exalted universal supremacy. To God be the glory for ever and ever.

It is for the believer to know the truth which sanctifies him, and to stand in it; for "the eyes of the Lord are upon the truth." From verse 9 we have a solemn indictment against the prophets who did not stand in the truth. Carnality, unreal activity, lightness and lying marked them, though they spoke in the name of the Lord. He asks, "Who has stood in the counsel of the Lord?" (v. 15), and, again, He says, "if they had stood in My counsel, and had caused My people to hear My words, then they should have turned them from the evil of their way, and from the evil of their doings" (v. 22). It is in regard to standing in the truth that failure has been at all times. "Having done all TO STAND," is said in Ephesians 6, and that in the face of unseen powers of darkness. Let the word of the prophet be remembered and we shall be strong to stand in the truth: "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? says the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? says the Lord" (v. 24). We are to be strong in Him, not in ourselves; not in self-confidence, but in the Lord. From verse 33 to the end of the chapter we see that the people, the prophet and the priest are all alike walking in vanity and not in the truth. They use the Name of the Lord in vain; therefore says the Lord, "I will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you." They should be cast out of His sight, and be a perpetual shame (vv. 39-40).

Jeremiah 24, the last of our section, shows by the sign of the two baskets of figs that a remnant shall be preserved, though the rest as bad figs are utterly rejected. Sad and solemn as it is to think of these latter, it is nevertheless cheering and comforting to think of these who are represented by the very good figs. Even in the land of the Chaldeans the eyes of the Lord are upon them for good. They should be restored again, too, and established in the land of Israel; but, better than the best of the land, they should know the Lord; and, better than returning to the place, they should return to Him, as He says: "I will give them an HEART TO KNOW ME, that I am the Lord: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God: for they shall RETURN UNTO ME WITH THEIR WHOLE HEART" (v. 7).

When the new covenant is established with Israel, the Lord says, "They shall all know Me" (vv. 31-34). That will, indeed, be a glad and glorious day. Then they will plenteously prove that the One who was forsaken and forgotten by wayward Israel is truly "the Fountain of Living Waters." So rich is this blessing that it will be like life from the dead, and truly it will be eternal life, though not in the same measure and relationship which belongs to the believer now. They will know Jehovah: we are brought to know the Father and the Son: "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee [the Father] the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (John 17:3). May we esteem this exalted privilege with worshipping hearts more and more.

Since in Christ we have redemption,

And with Him the church is one,

Now we taste our endless portion,

Know the Father and the Son.

Section 2--The Yoke and Covenant Section (Jeremiah 25-39)

The second section of the book which we are now to consider, contains teaching and principles of immense importance. Beginning with a formal declaration of the destruction of Jerusalem and the effect upon all the nations of the earth, it ends by showing us the accomplishment of God's word concerning Jerusalem, the city of His Name and the proper metropolis of the earth.

This second section embraces fifteen chapters (25 to 39). We have called it "The Covenant Section" because that expresses the prominent thought in it. The word itself occurs fifteen times in this second section, whereas it is used but eight times in all the rest of the book. Another fact is also very prominent in these chapters, namely, The yoke of Nebuchadnezzar. God had given him the dominion, Israel and all the nations therefore must submit to his yoke--his government. Israel had broken the covenant of the Lord and had not repented, therefore he removed from Jerusalem the central authority and gave power to Babylon, so the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar must be accepted. God, however, gave the great promise of a "New Covenant" in Jeremiah 31; a "New Thing" is to transpire in the earth, and this involves Jerusalem's supremacy once more. It will be for the good of all the world, for Babylon could never be the proper metropolis, not having the name of the Lord attached to it. A more complete title for this second division is therefore "The Yoke and Covenant Section."

Although the signs are significantly confined almost exclusively to the second twelve chapters of the first section of Jeremiah, yet we have an exception here in the case of the yokes (see Jer. 27 and 28); and also in the purchase of a field (Jer. 32); but this emphasizes what we have said and helps us to understand the remarkable arrangement of this book. Another feature of this section is the abounding of dates, so sparsely used previously, as we have seen; also the illustrative incidents so interestingly grouped together at the close (Jer. 34 to 39).

In our chapters we have the rise of the Gentile power and the overthrow of Jerusalem; the covenant of the Lord broken and a new covenant promised; Jerusalem desolated but to become the exalted habitation of justice with the Name of the Divine Son of David (Jer. 23:5-6) named upon her (Jer. 33:16), so that both "He" and "she" are to be called "Jehovah Tzidkenu"! The interesting details which abound with instruction may be considered as we proceed.

Like the first section this also falls into two main divisions, namely, chapters 25 to 33 and 34 to 39. These again subdivide as follows: (1) Jeremiah 25 stands alone, and is followed by three chapters together, 26 to 28; Jeremiah 29 is also alone, but the four following stand together, 30 to 33. (2) The six chapters 34 to 39 fall into two equal subdivisions of three chapters each. The Divine numbers 1 and 3 characterize this second section all through. The exceptional group of four chapters (Jer. 30 to 33) contain the new covenant promise and prophecies which involve world-wide blessing, though centring especially in Judah and Israel, cleansed, pardoned and restored under the Son of David their king, with Jerusalem for their metropolis. It shall be to the Lord for "a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth" (Jer. 33:9)!

Jeremiah 25: Jerusalem and the Nations of the Earth

Chapter 25 opens formally by fixing the date of this far-reaching word. This date in itself is of the greatest value to chronologers, for the fourth year of Israel's king, Jehoiakim, is seen to coincide with the first year of the Gentiles' king, Nebuchadnezzar. The Holy Spirit seems to emphasize its importance, for it is used in this book no less than four times (Jer. 25:1; 36:1; 45:1; 46:2). This synchronism, so important for chronological use, has doubtless a definite and Divine use also in measuring the times of the Gentiles. Up to this date the prophet shows that he had diligently declared the word of the Lord to them for 23 years though they hearkened not. He began in the thirteenth year of Josiah (v. 3); and now, he tells them, "The Lord has sent unto you all His servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened nor inclined your ear to hear" (v. 4). They had provoked the Lord to anger and gone their own way to their own hurt (vv. 5-7); therefore Israel and the surrounding nations should serve the King of

Babylon 70 years (vv. 8-11). They should be punished, and brought under his yoke, for Nebuchadnezzar was the Lord's servant (v. 9) to this end. This 70 years must not be confounded with that of Jeremiah 29:10, from which Daniel afterwards learned that God would restore the people. What is said here is that "these nations" (not only Israel) should serve the King of Babylon 70 years, and at the end of that period they themselves should be punished for their own iniquity, and other nations and kings should serve themselves of Babylon (vv. 12-14).

To grasp the great import of the following verses (vv. 15-38) an important Scripture in Deuteronomy should be weighed (Deut. 32:8)--"When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is His people." This planting of the nations around Israel is called the national "Garden of Eden" in Ezekiel. Here we find it is to be levelled to the ground and desolated. Jeremiah has to make "all the nations" drink of the cup of fury (v. 17); yea, "all the kingdoms of the world" (v. 26); but it should be noticed that this is the result of the metropolitan breakdown: "For, lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by My Name, . . . I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, says the Lord of hosts" (v. 29). World-wide effects followed: beginning at His own habitation, the cry readied "to the ends of the earth" (v. 31). Although God has mercifully maintained authority among the Gentile nations since that time, the world has never yet been governed according to His law, nor will it be until the national order with Israel as the head and central nation be restored, and they themselves are governed by our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of David, who will also then be owned as the nations' Emperor--"the Prince of the kings of the earth." It is as this order is understood, the solemn and awful import of the word in this chapter 25 will be duly appreciated. At the close, the shepherds of Israel are called upon to howl and wallow in the dust for the fierce anger of the Lord. All is to be laid waste, and the place of His Name--the place which He loved--"His Covert" in the earth--He has forsaken as a young lion (v. 38). Nor will the world be at rest until in Christ He returns again to that Covert in a more glorious way than ever before.

The assembly which is now builded by Christ the Son of the Living God, upon the revelation of Himself as such by the Father, must also first be completed and be set in her place of administration as the heavenly Jerusalem, for the nations are to walk in that coming day by her light (Rev. 21:24), Israel having a special relationship therewith (Rev. 21:12): the glory of God in connection with administration being the light of the heavenly city, and this she mediately passes on to those upon the earth, our blessed Lord Jesus Christ as the Lamb being the immediate bearer of it, for He is the Lamp thereof (Rev. 21:23, N.Tr.). The shining of that day will be like a lustrous gem, beauteous and blessed, rich and radiant, for the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in the city, and therefrom shall also flow forth the river of the water of life, bright and bountiful with everlasting vitality. The throne tells us of eternal stability of its source: and the Lamb of the fact that its full-flowing waters bear their life-giving blessedness as the result of Christ's atoning death.

"Then the wide earth, in glad response

To the bright world above,

Shall sing in rapturous strains of joy,

In memory of His love."

Jeremiah 26-28: Gentile supremacy

These three chapters continue to speak of the solemn fact that the removal from Jerusalem to Babylon of the Divinely appointed authority must take place and must be submitted to. This latter is signified by the sign of the yokes. The actual accomplishment took place fully in Zedekiah's day, but the word and sign of it were given "in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim" (Jer. 25:1; 26:1; and 27:1). These three chapters show, first, that the house of the Lord and the city are to be desolated; second, that the yoke of the king of Babylon must be received; and, lastly, the punishment of the prophet who speaks contrary to this, for he is guilty of "rebellion against the Lord" (Jer. 28:16), who in His wisdom and power had raised up Nebuchadnezzar to be His servant for this very purpose. This shows the immense importance, for any who serve the Lord at any time, of being assured of His way as well as His will.

The prophet took his stand in the court of the Lord's house to speak the word concerning it. This house, which gave its character to the city, was to have been a centre of blessing to all nations and a house of prayer for all people, but because of the wickedness of the people the Lord declares, "I will make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth (Jer. 26:6). What a contrast between His will and His way is seen here! The priests, prophets and people seized the prophet because of his word, and sought to compass his death, bringing him before the princes. The prophet declared that the Lord had sent him to speak thus, and he exhorted them to amend their ways and obey His voice, then the Lord would repent Him of the threatened evil. As for himself, in the calm consciousness of fulfilling the mind of God, Jeremiah told them to do to him as seemed good and right in their eyes, but that if they slew him they would bring innocent blood upon their heads. The princes favoured the prophet, and certain elders quoted precedents--those of Micah (v. 18) and Urijah (v. 20)--the former case argued for Jeremiah and the latter rather against him. We are told, however, "The hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death" (v. 24). We learn here that when the priests and those who were professedly nearest to God (who should therefore best know His mind) became the greatest enemies of the truth, others were used by the Lord for His servant's deliverance. Sometimes the most unlikely are so used, as the princes in this case, and even the name of one, Ahikam, signifies "of the enemy." This teaches those who serve Him to trust in the Lord at all times. We also see in the cases quoted by the elders that the blessed Lord was using others to diligently warn the people of the same thing that Jeremiah spoke of, so solemn and stupendous was this giving up of the world's right centre of earthly government in the next chapter we have the new centre referred to.

The dominion in the fullest sense, as well as the kingdom, belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of Man; but here we are told that God (Jer. 27:5-7), who made all things--the earth and all upon it--had now given to His servant the King of Babylon all the beasts of the field as well as all nations to serve him. In Daniel 2:38 we read that the fowls of the heavens were likewise given into his hand. In Genesis 1:28 we learn that the fish of the sea were also to come under man, but these are not named in connection with Nebuchadnezzar's dominion. When, however, the dominion of the Son of man is spoken of in Psalm 8 all these are included, and indeed much more is involved in the language there used.

The word concerning this supremacy of the King of Babylon and the sign of submission seem to have been first made known to the prophet "in the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim" (Jer. 27:1). He was told to make bonds and yokes to be sent to the kings of the nations around Israel, and the prophet himself was to wear this sign, for it illustrated the great burden of his whole prophetic word; and then as opportunity occurred he was to give the representatives of the various nations these signs to carry to their kings with the word of the Lord as to the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar. This was carried out in Zedekiah's day as verses 3, 12, and 28:1, show; but that gives no reason for altering the name Jehoiakim in 27:1, to Zedekiah, as

some would do, for it simply tells us when the word came to Jeremiah. This sign of the bonds and yokes was characteristic rather than special. It signified that God had decreed that all must submit to the yoke of the King of Babylon. In Jeremiah 28 Hananiah speaks against this, and he does so with "thus says the Lord" (v. 11) upon his lips. To do such a solemn thing, however pious and optimistic it might sound, was to speak "revolt against the Lord" (v. 16) who had made Nebuchadnezzar His servant, and given him power and dominion. Hananiah's doom was therefore sealed and executed that same year (Jer. 28:17)! He had spoken a lie like the diviners and soothsayers--the spiritualists of the nations (Jer. 27:9-10)--and like other false prophets who sought to turn men from submission to the yoke of the King of Babylon (Jer. 27:15-16). This lying spirit is often in evidence among those who profess to speak the mind of God for the time. Yokes of iron were to take the place of the yokes of wood (Jer. 28:13) which Hananiah had broken, and even the remaining vessels of the house of the Lord and of the house of the king were to be taken to Babylon till the time of the foretold restoration under Cyrus (Jer. 27:21-28). Hananiah falsely fixed two years for the breaking of Babylon's yoke; God fixed 70.

THE YOKE OF A GREATER THAN NEBUCHADNEZZAR. Power from God, although corrupted, is still with the Gentile nations today, and when the Lord came in lowly grace to His people they were under the Roman yoke. When He was brought before Pilate He meekly acknowledged this authority, and even said he (Pilate) could have had no power against Him except it were given from above. Pilate was perturbed and, marvelling at the Divine Stranger, asked if He were a king. Yes, truly, a greater than Rome ever saw! The yoke of kings had usually been oppressive, but the yoke of this gracious King would be found easy and beneficial.

In every way He is pre-eminent. In the nation of Israel, with its many advantages, even the Sabbath was made oppressive; but when clearing His disciples from a false charge as to it, He reminded His hearers that even the Sabbath and its rules were subject to Him, saying, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath" (Matt. 12:8)! The temple, too, and its rich ritual became a burden when used wrongly, and at the time we have referred to the Lord Jesus reminded them of His pre-eminence also in this respect when He said, "There is here a Greater than the temple" (Matt. 22:6)! In the same chapter the striking sign of the prophet Jonah and the rare result of his preaching is spoken of, but only to show that all this is surpassed in Christ--"Behold, a Greater than Jonas is here" (Jer. 12:38-41)! After Solomon's royal reign of regal splendour his subjects complained of its burdensomeness and of the oppression of its yoke, though the Queen of the South travelled far to hear his wisdom. When standing amidst His own nation, in grace and lowliness doing works of power and mercy and speaking words of Divine instruction, the Lord Jesus said, "Behold, a Greater than Solomon is here" (v. 42)! All this surpassing greatness and pre-eminence was plentifully proved for those who truly saw and heard by the works which He did, and by the words which He spake, as well as by His heavenly ways amongst men. There stood the Son of God before their eyes as

The Son of Man, Sabbath (v. 8);

The One who was the temple (v. 6);

The Prophet and Preacher Greater than Jonah (v. 41);

In wisdom the Greater than Solomon (v. 42).

This is the Son of Man whose dominion is greater than Nebuchadnezzar's! This is the Great King whose kingdom shall have no end! This is the One whose yoke the believer loves.

In the last verse of the previous chapter of Matthew He Himself says, "My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (Matt. 11:30). God has given all things into His hands, and though this is hidden from the wise and prudent of the world, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has revealed it to true believers, yea, even to babes in the faith. The Son receives all things from the Father, and reveals Him now to His own in all that the precious Name Father means; whilst the Son Himself, in the impenetrable depths of His peerless Person, is only fully known by the Father. So great and glorious is our gracious Saviour, our beloved Lord, that He is beyond our finite comprehension, although so well known to us in His grace and love. Nevertheless, the Father knows and loves the Son perfectly, and has given all things into His hands, and ourselves also. We are His through redemption--through His blood! We are His, too, as the Father's love-gift to the Son! The weakest believer can wear His yoke with facility and felicity, with comfort and cheerfulness! Indeed, the least in the kingdom now is greater in privilege and position than the greatest who went before. The law and the prophets prophesied up to John the Baptist, and no one greater was born of woman; but He who is greater than all had then come to open up the new way; and the least now, who has come to our Lord Jesus Christ, is greater than John, as this chapter tells us (Matt. 11:11). It is an honour given to such to take His yoke upon them. Many benefits accrued to those who willingly accepted Nebuchadnezzar's yoke; but the Son of God is greater than Nebuchadnezzar; yea, greater than all! and those now in the kingdom where He is supreme are also greater than the greatest of men who went before in the way we have said, in privilege and position. It may not be understood fully at first, but this yoke is intended to prove pleasant to those who accept it, giving ease and quietness to the soul in tranquil restfulness; and that we might rightly understand it, this Pre-eminent One graciously says, "Learn of Me." The soul rest we speak of has never been found in connection with the yoke of the best of kings. Oppression, and burden, and toil, and trouble, and bloodshed, and sorrow have characterized the continued story of the nations--sometimes worse than at other times--but tens of thousands have responded to and proved the preciousness of these wealthy words of our great and gracious Saviour: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour And are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. FOR MY YOKE IS EASY, AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT."--(Matt. 11:29-30)

What grace and glory shine here! One who is meek and in heart lowly, yet the Supreme One in might, and in majesty, and in dominion, and in power, inviting the weary to come to Him, and to learn from Him, and gratefully to prove the gentleness and blessedness of His Divine yoke. Nothing to compare with this has been known before or since.

We are also told afterwards that He will show forth judgment, not to Israel only, but to the nations (Matt. 12:18). Nebuchadnezzar failed, but after the assembly is taken to heaven, our Lord Jesus Christ will take up the government of the nations, ordering everything aright, "and in His Name shall the nations trust" (v. 21). His yoke will then be accepted publicly and generally, not as now in faith by the few who are privileged and honoured to own Him during the time of His rejection before He returns in royal splendour and majesty.

Jeremiah 29: God's Present Mind

And now the remarkable letter which Jeremiah wrote to the captives in Babylon concerning Nebuchadnezzar's yoke, is given, a chapter which stands alone. The letter was sent to encourage them to peacefully rest under the yoke, for this was God's mind concerning them, and those who spoke otherwise in the Name of the Lord would be punished, for it was rebellion against Him. Ahab and Zedekiah are specially singled out (vv. 20-23), also Shemaiah (vv. 24-32). The two former were not only active as lying

prophets, but they also committed villainy in Israel. Shemaiah attempted to silence Jeremiah, who, he said, had made himself a prophet. Severe judgment was to come upon them, and upon all such, and likewise upon those who heeded them (vv. 15-19).

In the former part of the letter, it is instructive to notice the way God orders matters for the good of His people, even when they are captives in Babylon, in the place which is to become most obnoxious to Him, and from which He afterwards calls upon them to flee. This is an important principle for believers today, in the midst of Christendom (which will eventually develop into the corrupt system of Babylon), whose awful judgment is described in Revelation 18. We are to pursue that which is good, whilst avoiding what is evil. The Lord through Jeremiah tells them to build houses, plant gardens, eat the fruit, take wives, and beget sons and daughters, that they may be increased; also to "Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace" (vv. 5-7); and they were to be careful not to allow anyone to deceive them as to this; even though it be a prophet who came and spake to them in the Lord's Name (vv. 8-9).

To be happy, and to be peacefully pursuing what was good, was God's mind for them then: it is no less His mind for us now. This does not mean that either they or ourselves are to become Babylonish. We see in Daniel, who was one of those who were at Babylon, the sort of behaviour which was pleasing to God. He said "No" to the king's meat, yet he sought the good of those about him, according to the Word of the Lord. We do well to grasp this principle and have grace to put it into practice.

Verses 10 to 14, however, show the limitations of this abnormal state of things. After seventy years it would be God's mind that they should return to Jerusalem. This shows the importance of making sure of the mind of God for us at this moment. It was evidently from these very verses that Daniel gathered God's mind concerning this return, and it set him praying with his whole heart (see Daniel 9:1-4). The wonderful fulfilment of this restoration, "after seventy years," is so well known that we need not dwell upon it here (see 2 Chr. 36:21-23 and Ezra 1:1). It should, however, be remarked that Daniel himself did not return though his face was constantly turned towards Jerusalem. He was used in regard to it in prayer, as Cyrus was in providence, and as our prophet Jeremiah was in prophecy, whilst God Himself was behind all working in purpose and in power. We are to know what it is to stay ourselves upon God at all times, having grace and peace multiplied to us in the knowledge of Himself, for He keeps in perfect peace the one whose mind is stayed upon Him, because he trusteth in Him. He can raise up servants, kings and prophets as He wills: we are to know Himself, His love, His grace, His purpose, and His power. He works all things after the counsel of His own will. Cyrus did not know Him though He raised him up and even surnamed him before he was born (Isa. 44:28; 45:1-4). Those who are called in grace today are called to "know Him," and to know Him too as Father, and to know His present mind and will. This leads the heart to confide implicitly in Himself.

"Deep in unfathomable mines

Of never-failing skill,

He treasures up His bright designs,

And works His sovereign will."

Jeremiah 30: Jacob's Trouble and Salvation

Chapters 30-33 are linked together and contain truths of transcendent excellence, truths involving new things of such unparalleled importance that they not only affect the nation of Israel, whose glorious restoration and revival in Christ is immediately in view, but they also affect those who belong to the assembly today. It is in Jeremiah 31 that the "New Thing" is spoken of, and likewise the "New Covenant." In Jeremiah 32 we learn that the fields of the land shall be possessed and prosper according to an everlasting covenant, and Jeremiah 33 shows us that the glory and gladness and greatness of that day of blessing will be enduring, because of the Branch of righteousness, the Man of the house of David, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The story begins in chapter 30, and Jacob's name becomes prominent at once, for, like his, the nation's way to the glory is through trial and trouble, and this too is further indicated by the reference to Rachel's anguish (Jer. 31:15) but "Benoni"--the son of her sorrow--becomes "Benjamin"--the son of the right hand. The story of the nation is enigmatically contained in the stories of Jacob, Rachel and her children, and in the last, the sorrow and suffering connected with the birth of their great and glorious King is foreshadowed, as we see in the use made of it by the Holy Spirit of God in Matthew 2:18, where we are told of Herod slaying all the boys from two years old and under in Bethlehem and its borders, and of the Royal Child being Divinely preserved.

These four chapters begin then with the declaration of the full deliverance both of Israel and Judah (Jer. 30:1-3). God had given the land to their fathers, and it shall yet be possessed by them according to God's Word; but immediately we are reminded of a moment of great anguish which must come just before this is fully accomplished. It will be like the travail of a woman before the joy of a man-child's birth (vv. 4-6). "Alas!" cries the prophet, "for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE; but he shall be saved out of it" (v. 7). It was so with Jacob personally: it shall be so with his descendants. There was a certain night which stands out in Jacob's history: there will be a certain time of tribulation, of great tribulation, which shall distinguish Israel's history. It will indeed come upon all the world after our Lord Jesus Christ has taken from the world the assembly, His bride, to be with Him. It will truly be "the great tribulation" (Rev. 7:14), not simply "tribulation" as now, or a time of tribulation as sometimes happens, but it will be unparalleled; yet, though the whole world will be affected by it, the heaviest weight will fall upon the Jews; and even they, who have suffered so much, will never have known before such "a time of trouble" (Dan. 12:1); nevertheless, as Jacob was freed from serving another, so we are told in verse 8, Israel also shall be freed from the future yoke of Babylon, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him. The Jews, however, shall not only be freed from bondage, but as being thus liberated, they shall have their long-looked-for Messiah as their glorious King; the true David, the beloved One shall return to them, and "they shall serve the Lord their God and David ['The Beloved'] their king" (v. 9). They shall then know that our Lord Jesus Christ whom they rejected is truly the preserved Seed of David, raised as He was from among the dead by God, who had hidden Him in the heavens until this time, when His appearing shall show Him again to the troubled and repentant of Israel, when in deep distress and anguish they will gladly receive Him, owning Him like Thomas to be their Lord and their God.

"Therefore," it is said, "Fear thou not, O my servant Jacob" (v. 10). Even if others were brought to an end, it should not be so with him. Chastening and correction he needed, and should receive, but the Lord was with him, though his false lovers had failed and forgotten him. Zion, like Jacob, had been called "Outcast," but the Lord who had smitten him would restore health and healing to him (vv. 10-17). Carrying on the thought of Jacob's typical history, it is said, "Jacob's tents" shall appear again (v. 18). The city and the palace shall resound with gladness and thanksgiving, with the voice of them that make merry. The people

shall be multiplied and glorified. Their Illustrious One (as "nobles" should read in verse 21) and their Governor shall not be any more of another nation, He shall be truly of Israel, He shall be the One who is also entirely devoted to God, not only their King and Ruler, but with full qualification, such as no king ever had before, to approach as Priest to God, as He says, "I will cause Him to draw near and He shall approach unto Me" (v. 21). This illustrious King and Priest, the Governor of Israel, can only be found in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then, when He governs them, it shall be abidingly true of Israel--they shall be His people, and He shall be their God (v. 22). Through the distressful storms and bitter trials of the time of Jacob's trouble they shall be brought to this desired haven, to be blessed under the royal rule of their glorious Governor, and to rest and rejoice in Him they had once rejected. "In the latter days ye shall consider it" (v. 24).

"Crown the Saviour! Israel own Him!

Rich the blessing Jesus brings!

In the seat of power enthrone Him!

While the vault of heaven rings."

Jeremiah 31: The New Thing and the New Covenant

The Holy Spirit continues to encourage the heart with bright expectations of the coming glory in chapter 31, and makes known that the underlying secret of it all is the unchanging and eternal love of God, as He says, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee. Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel: thou shalt again be adorned with thy timbrels, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry" (vv. 3-4).

If, however, the Holy Spirit used Jacob's name in the previous chapter, here He brings in Rachel, and gives prominence to one of her grand-children, the chief representative of the ten tribes--Ephraim. We see Divine wisdom guiding the prophet here very strikingly, for Israel and Judah are to become one under the New Covenant, under our Lord Jesus Christ. A new thing is to come to pass. The woman Israel (including both Judah and Israel) centring at Jerusalem shalt no more compass the ark of the covenant--that is to be forgotten (Jer. 3:16)--but she shall compass a Man (Gebor--a mighty Man), our Lord Jesus Christ. He supersedes all that went before. In an entirely new way, such as has never been known in any nation, this strong Man, in resurrection power, shall become their centre and their strength, though in themselves they are like a feeble woman. Speaking naturally, in the multitude of people is the glory of a king, and his destruction is through the lack of them (Prov. 14:28); but they are not His strength here; He is theirs. This alone can be the explanation of the "New thing in the earth" (v. 22); for it is something which has never been before. A temple, a throne, or an ark may have been owned, or a dynasty supported by nations--one man after another passing away--but here is a Man of strength who continueth ever. This is new altogether.

Doubtless the virgin birth is involved in this "New Thing," just as the suffering connected with Christ's birth is enigmatically contained in Rachel's anguish. This is specially referred to in verses 15 to 17 and cited by the Spirit in Matthew 2:18, but even this anguish points on also to the future travail of the nation just before their labour is rewarded (v. 16) by the presence of Christ with them, their Messiah in resurrection life, the Man Child who has been brought forth before their travail (see Isa. 66:7). The comforting truth, that joy comes in the morning, though weeping may endure for a night, is exemplified in all this as to Rachel and

her children.

As to the birth of the Mighty Man, our Lord Jesus Christ, being involved in what is said as to the "New Thing," we should note the language of the Spirit in Luke as to it. There we read, "the power of the Highest" should overshadow the Virgin Mary (Luke 1:35) and that the holy thing which should be born of her should be called the Son of God. This is indeed a "New Thing in the Earth," and this One is to possess the throne of His father David (v. 32). In this we read, "He has wrought strength with His arm" (v. 51) and "raised up an Horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David" (v. 69), as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, Jeremiah among them. Again we read of this Child--"The glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke 2:32). The multitude of the heavenly host also praised God concerning Him and said, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men" (N.Tr.). The promised Man was at last found amongst men, and God could now find pleasure where He had found none before. This also was a new thing.

God had moreover said in Isaiah 42:6, and 49:8, in regard to Him--"I will give Thee for a Covenant of the people." This promise involves both the New Thing and the New Covenant. The truth as to our Lord Jesus Christ solves these Old Testament enigmas. With Christ, the "Gebor" of God (Jer. 31:22) as their Centre, their metropolis, the city of the great King, Jerusalem, shall become the habitation of justice, and the mountain of holiness (v. 23). Such a city has never yet been seen. Men have longed for it; Abraham by faith saw it was to come in with Christ's day and he rejoiced; Jeremiah in verse 26 having previously spoken of it, says, "Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet to me." Whilst this would surely be the prophet's personal experience, yet it must signify the long prophetic sleep, the cessation of prophetic activity, till the New Thing is "beheld," and Jerusalem is permanently built according to the last three verses of the chapter. Sweet indeed will their rest seem to them when they awake to behold the good things they foretold now accomplished in and through our Lord Jesus Christ, their promised Messiah.

The New Covenant shall then be established with both Israel and Judah (Jer. 31-34). No longer standing on the ground of responsibility merely before God, but blessed sovereignly by the Lord, all shall know Him from the least to the greatest. He will be their God and they shall be His people in very truth. His law shall be engraved within them--in their inward parts--it will be in their hearts and in their minds,--not simply in the Pentateuch. With love and with intelligence they shall then serve Him and know Him. Having pardoned all their iniquity He will remember no more their sin, for the atoning work of our blessed Saviour, their Messiah, has put all away according to Isaiah 53. Their sin, once remembered at the Cross in atonement, will now be remembered no more. It is not simply forgotten.

This New Covenant is as sure as the ordinances of day and night, of sun, moon and stars, of heaven and earth. God made them; man cannot alter them; so is it with the New Covenant. The "I WILL" of the Unchanging One has fixed it. It must be. Israel and Judah shall be blessed together in Christ, the Surety and Mediator of this New Covenant. All is established in Him. He sums it all up. Therefore believers now are also blessed according to it, for they have believed on Him during the time of His rejection. The Gospel, and the cup at the Lord's Supper both remind us of this. His blood is the blood of the New Covenant, and all the promises of God are Yea and Amen in Him. The New Thing and the New Covenant are both explained in Christ, the Messiah of Israel, the Son of Man and the Son of God.

"God's record does for ever stand

Of life and blessing, from His hand,

To all in Him the Son."

The Lord alone is exalted in the blessing of Israel and of ourselves now, that according as it is written, we may glory not in the flesh, but in the Lord Himself, who is worthy to be exalted and extolled by all. Praise, endless praise, to His holy Name.

Chapters 32-33: Jerusalem's New Name--Jehovah Tzidkenu

Very vividly do chapters 32 and 33 picture the public metropolitan and national pre-eminence of Jerusalem and Israel in the time of the coming glory, when King David's greater Son shall reign in regal right according to the divine decree. The city shall then dwell safely beneath His royal rule; taking her character too so entirely from Him, her once rejected Lord, that she shall even be called by His own Name--Jehovah Tzidkenu, the Lord our righteousness (Jer. 33:26). As the happy bride receives the name of the rejoicing bridegroom, so here Jerusalem is given the Name which is exclusively her Lord's in Jeremiah 23:6.

The precious promises in these two chapters were given at a moment specially signaled by the imprisonment of the prophet of God (see Jer. 32:2 and 33:1). Jerusalem was then besieged by the king of Babylon's army; Zedekiah sought to stop prophetic utterance, God was shut out, and everything looked very black--despair and desolation faced them. At such a moment God illustrates His redemption and grace by instructing the prophet to purchase the field of Hanameel, for "the right of redemption" belonged to Jeremiah (Jer. 7:12). Just so it is with God--the right of redemption is His. Here is a fine subject for gospel preachers. "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land" (v. 15), and that in the right of redemption and according to "an everlasting covenant" (v. 40). "Man's extremity is God's opportunity!" Those who have proved His redeeming love know this.

Jeremiah turns to God at this moment and speaks of His former ways with Israel, of His bringing them out of Egypt with great power and giving them the land, but they had not obeyed His voice, and now the city was about to fall into the hands of the Chaldeans. Yet Jeremiah had obeyed and bought the field for money when all looked hopeless, for God was his confidence--He had made the heavens and the earth: the Great, the Mighty God, Jehovah of hosts is His Name says the prophet to Him, "There is nothing too hard for thee!" God then assuringly enquires, "Is there anything too hard for Me?" "Behold, I am Jehovah, the God of all flesh." The city is to be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, for the people, princes, priests and prophets had sinned and done evil from their youth to provoke Him to anger. Yet are they to be regathered. "Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with My whole heart and with My whole soul." The fields and lands and cities are again to be possessed and prosper plenteously (vv. 26-44). What a God is Israel's! What a God is ours!

"This is our redeeming God!

Ransomed hosts will shout aloud:

Praise, eternal praise be given

To the Lord of earth and heaven!"

Continuing in chapter 33 the Lord encourages the heart to call unto Him, for He will show great and unfathomable things previously unknown. He will grant cleansing and pardon to those who had sinned against Him, and bring health and abundance of peace and truth to the once wicked city (vv. 1-8). "And it shall be to Me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them" (v. 9). They shall say, "Praise the Lord of hosts: for the Lord is good; for His mercy endureth for ever" (v. 11). Many voices shall harmoniously blend in blessing the Lord, whilst peace and prosperity shall be on every hand. Both houses shall be blessed together--Israel and Judah: God will give them one heart and one way. They are "the two families which the Lord has chosen" (v. 24). To this end we see divine wisdom in the terms and names used in these chapters which lead up to the exalted hour when our Lord Jesus Christ, raised from among the dead, of the Seed of David, shall bless the people, the land, and the city, and she shall be called Jehovah Tzidkenu--"The Lord our righteousness."

Verses 17 and 18 tell us that David should never want a man for the throne, nor the Levites a man for approach and sacrifice to God. Why? Verses 15 and 16 answer this and other questions also which may arise in connection with what we have said. The Man spoken of in these verses is altogether righteous. In resurrection, after having died to secure an eternal redemption, He establishes kingship and priesthood in Himself according to God. In the day of the coming glory "He shall be a priest upon His Throne" (Zech. 6:13), uniting in Himself both kingship and priesthood. The present cry of the nations--"Wanted a man!" will be heard no more,--the Man has found! True believers know Him already in a more intimate way as the Bridegroom of the assembly to which they belong. Notice how the Holy Spirit distinguishes this Man of David's royal line in two expressive scriptures in Jeremiah, viz., Jer. 23:5-6, and 33:15-16. They help to solve many problems, so read these verses carefully.

The first scripture speaks of our blessed Lord in a way that involves His resurrection, though not specifying it--He is "a" righteous Branch raised up unto David. The second Scripture views His birth and life more--He is "the" righteous Branch caused to grow up unto David. In both He is designated righteous and of David's line. This could only be said of Christ, for there is none righteous in an absolute way save Him. His resurrection after He had suffered and made atonement for sin declared it. So both scriptures looking on to His coming reign of glory, tell us that He shall execute "righteousness." The first Scripture specifies the salvation of Judah and Israel at that time: the second that of Judah and Jerusalem, for the metropolis of Israel is specially in view--the city of this great King. So in this second Scripture we read, "SHE shalt be called Jehovah Tzidkenu," whilst in the first we are told "HE shalt be called Jehovah Tzidkenu" This divine designation means, as we know, "The Lord our Righteousness." Here we have the climax of terrestrial governance.

Christ, in resurrection of David's seed, will come again to take guilty Jerusalem for Himself. The city that stoned the prophets, that gave Jeremiah a dungeon, that refused the Lord, shall yet be His administrative centre on earth, and bear His Name and His character. We are told this is as sure as the ordinances of the heavens and the earth. God's covenant with David His servant (v. 21) must be fulfilled, for it is impossible for the ever blessed God to lie. Then will flow forth world-wide blessing, and the glory of the Lord shall fill the rejoicing earth. Amen. Hallelujah!

Chapters 34 and 35: Divine Faithfulness and Human Failure

The illustrative incidents so interestingly brought together in chapters 34 to 39 give a special character to this second main division of our section, and as we have said these 6 chapters divide again into 3 and 3.

The stories of the broken covenant, the Rechabite faithfulness, and the burning of the rod of Scripture are given to us in the first 3, whilst the raising of the siege, the imprisonment of Jeremiah in the dungeon and the capture of Jerusalem are given in the second 3. The peculiar order of the book is strikingly seen in these 6 chapters. Zedekiah the last king is first spoken of, then in the next chapter we are taken back to the time of Jehoiakim, and again to his fourth year in the next chapter. After that we have various incidents in Zedekiah's days, but in an ordered way all is ranged in regard to the destruction of Jerusalem.

Desolation and darkness were to cover the scene of destruction, as God had long foretold. This is illustrated in the case of the last king. His "eyes" are often in the prophetic mind (see Jer. 34:3, also 32:4; 52:10 etc.). The light was to become darkness, so this section, which begins with speaking of Zedekiah's eyes (Jer. 34:1-3) tells us at the end that they were put out (Jer. 39:7), and this is significantly repeated in the final chapter of the book (Jer. 52:11). Israel is blind, darkness covers the people, and they must await the coming again of the One who opens the eyes of the blind, and opens the prison doors for those who like Zedekiah are bound in chains. They must now learn to hope in the Lord, who shall yet be exalted in their coming salvation.

Jeremiah 34 illustrates the unfaithfulness of the people. They made a covenant to liberate their servants who were Hebrews. This they did, but afterwards they turned from their covenant and brought back their servants. Upon this the Lord reminds them of His covenant which they had transgressed to that very day; therefore He proclaims "liberty" for them--to destruction, desolation, famine and dispersion!

Jeremiah 35 contrasts the obedience of the house of the Rechabites with the disobedience of the house of Israel. This illustrative incident is introduced here from the time of Jehoiakim. It most suitably follows the subject of the previous chapter. The Rechabites obeyed the commandment of Jonadab their father. They kept all his precepts, but Israel hearkened not to the Lord. "Therefore thus says the Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold I will bring upon Judah and upon all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them" (v. 17). On the other hand we have an instructive word concerning the Rechabites, showing how the blessed God approves the obedience of children to parents, or of descendants to the good word of their forefathers. "Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before Me for ever" What a high honour! To be represented at court before the king would be a mark of dignity, but to be represented before God Himself, and that for ever, is an exalted and surpassing honour. This strikingly shows what value God sets upon obedience. May we be marked by it at all times.

But what a contrast we see in Christ Jesus who represents us now, before God our Father, in a far greater position of exaltation. We, however, were not marked by obedience like the Rechabites: we were sinners, disobedient, enemies; but we have been reconciled to God by the death of His Son, and now we are taken into everlasting favour in Him, the Beloved: His place is ours. Blessed be God for the exceeding riches of His grace!

"Saviour and Lord! we own

The riches of Thy grace,

For we can call Thy God our God--

Can bow before His face.

Thy Father, too, above,
We worship as our own,
Who gave with Thee the Spirit's cry
To us His sons foreknown."

Jeremiah 36 records the profane way in which the writings of God were treated. It is a solemn lesson. This mutilation and destruction of the prophetic roll happened before the destruction of Jerusalem. The same sort of thing will take place before the judgment of Christendom. Not that man can get rid of the Word of God: He knows how to preserve it just as He did in this case, but man by his treatment of it manifests his guilt and profanity, and secures for himself the judgments of which God's word speaks, even as we read of the Scripture-mutilating king in our chapter. "Thus says the Lord, Thou hast burned this roll, saying, Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast? Therefore thus says the Lord of Jehoiakim king of Judah, He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David; and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost. And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity" (Jer. 29:31).

God is not mocked! He knows the way men are treating His own God-breathed records, profaning and humanizing them, and He will treat them accordingly. Here Baruch wrote the words of God from the mouth of Jeremiah, and read them in the hearing of the people, and of the princes, afterwards. They showed a certain respect to them, but feared to withstand the king. "Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire: and there were added besides unto them many like words" (v. 32). This is God's answer; none of His words shall perish; they increase and prosper in that for which they are sent.

Chapters 37-39: The Metropolis: Its fall and its rising again

Stirring scenes now come before us. The armies of the Chaldeans are before the gates of Jerusalem! They demand admission. They are God's messengers of judgment, for the city had refused to bear His prophetic messenger. Neither King Zedekiah, nor his servants, nor the people of the land, did hearken unto the words of the Lord which He spake by the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 37:2): contrariwise, they put him in prison, and it was only when the city fell that he got liberty, being treated better by the king of Babylon than by the king of his own people whom he served so faithfully. This is often the case with true servants of the Lord.

For a time it looked as if the judgment of God upon the city would be frustrated. Pharaoh's army came forth out of Egypt, and Jerusalem was relieved. The Chaldeans retired. The prophet warned them not to deceive themselves, for the Chaldeans would return, and supported his prophecy by his action, in departing from the city to be amongst God's people in Benjamin. However, they took Jeremiah, and falsely accusing him of falling away to the Chaldeans, they put him in a dungeon, though the vacillating king sent for him later, and granted him a measure of relief, after listening to his words (vv. 17-22).

The army of the Chaldeans, as the prophet said, returned with determination, to accomplish without further delay the destruction of the city. A touching personal incident is recorded as having taken place

within the walls at that time. Jeremiah having been let down into a miry dungeon (Jer. 38:6) after further false accusation by certain who sought to compass his death (vv. 1-4), Zedekiah being too weak to withstand them, one named Ebed-melech, an Ethiopian, having some sense of right and wrong, when it seemed to have departed from Israel altogether, engaged himself to effect the prophet's deliverance from the miry pit. He reasoned with the king as to the evil done to Jeremiah, and having secured the monarch's consent, he tenderly with the help of thirty men drew Jeremiah out (vv. 6-13). Thus the Lord cared for His servant even amidst the fiery trials of a siege: nor did He forget Jeremiah's kind helper, for at the end of Jeremiah 39 we find a special word from the Lord to Ebed-melech, the Ethiopian, saying, "I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey to thee, BECAUSE THOU HAST PUT THY TRUST IN ME, SAITH THE LORD." Blessed indeed are all they that trust in Him!

The prophet earnestly and compassionately counselled the weak king to recognize God's hand and yield to Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 33:14-33), for he had sent again for Jeremiah. He listened, but sad to say, being afraid of the princes he did not obey (vv. 24-26). He does not seem to have seen the king again, as he remained in the court of the prison till the city fell before the besieging army. "In the eleventh year of Zedekiah in the fourth month the ninth day of the month, the city was broken up" (Jer. 39:2). Zedekiah fled when he saw the princes of Babylon sitting in the middle gate, but he was overtaken; his sons were slain "before his eyes"; then those "eyes" were put out, taken with chains he was carried to Babylon, Jerusalem was burned, and Jeremiah was left free to dwell with the remnant of his people (vv. 11-14). Thus was fulfilled the word of the Lord.

Destruction and desolation fell upon the true metropolis of Israel and of the whole earth. Its light was withdrawn, its rightful ascendancy was taken away, and given over by God to the Gentiles, with whom it has been ever since, whilst a veil darkens the thoughts of the Jew still (see 2 Cor. 3:14); but Jerusalem shall rise from her ruin, shaking off her shame, and yet shine with resplendent radiance as never before. Truly she failed under the old covenant, but she shall be established and blessed under the new. Christ, raised from the dead, shall return to her with the sure mercies of David. Then shall she arise and shine, for her light will be come and the glory of the Lord will be risen upon her.

If in that day the glory of the earthly metropolis will be so great, what words can express the supernal splendour of the heavenly metropolis, Jerusalem above, the Lamb's wife, the assembly which is being built now while He is rejected? It will then shine forth with the glory of God, of which our Lord Jesus Christ is the Lamp, for none other could bear that glory immediately, though, wonderful to say, the assembly will transmit its beauty and thus benefit mediately the nations of the earth. WELL MAY WE REJOICE IN HOPE OF THE GLORY OF GOD!

"Then the wide earth in glad response,

To the bright world above,

Shall sing in rapturous strains of joy

In memory of His love."

Section 3--The Historical Section (Jeremiah 40-45)--In Babylon or Egypt?

The short section which we now come to consists of six chapters only. We have called it the historical section.

Chapters 40 to 45 are embraced in this third section of the book, and they give the history of the remnant which was left after the destruction of Jerusalem, also Jeremiah's words to them in the land and in Egypt, where we last hear of them and the prophet. A special word is given to Baruch in Jeremiah 45. These six chapters naturally subdivide into three twos. The first two giving us the story of the remnant and Gedaliah in the land; the second two that of the remnant with Johanan and their going down to Egypt; the third two give the words of Je

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