

## IMMERSE: PROPHETS

Week 10 - Jeremiah: The New Covenant

August 6, 2023

Jer. 25:8-9 - *Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Because you have not heard My words, (God speaking forth His commandments – all 613) <sup>9</sup> behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,' says the LORD, 'and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land, against its inhabitants, and against these nations all around....*

Jer. 25:11 – *And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.*

Seventy years! SIGNIFICANT? This was the number of years that the people had failed to observe God's Law of a "Sabbath rest" for the land. God had decreed that every seventh year the land was to lie fallow (Lev. 25:3-5). If the people would fail to follow this command, God would remove them from the land to enforce this "Sabbath rest" (Lev. 26:33-35; II Chron. 36:20-21)

For 490 years – one year in each 7-year span of time was NOT kept fallow. Seventy times the land was not kept fallow. For a total span of 490 years the people did NOT observe the "Sabbath rest" of the land. Seventy sevens = 490 years. The people would be in exile for 70 years. For 70 years, while the land remained desolate, enjoying its Sabbath rest, the Jewish people would be inhabiting Babylon.

Isn't this rather harsh? Not when we read about God's restoration!

Jer. 29

V8 MOMENTS

Observations?

Questions?

So – what about...

Jeremiah 29:10-11 - *This is what the LORD says: 'When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'"*

To whom is God speaking? What is the context?

Before Jer. 29:10-11 can be applied, it must first be understood in context.

When interpreting Scripture, we must keep in mind the distinction between a passage's *interpretation* and the same passage's *application*: a passage can have only one meaning, but it may have many applications. Jeremiah 29:10-11 is no different. The verse has only one meaning.

Jeremiah wrote a letter to the Jewish exiles in Babylon. Jer. 29 contains the letter with God's words... *Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon:*

In God's plan they would be in Babylon 70 years. God told the Jewish people to multiply in Babylon. He didn't want them to decrease in number. He told them to seek the peace of the city where HE had caused them to be carried away captive. God told them to be a blessing to

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their Babylonian neighbors. And then we read of God's promise to bring them back to their land! Through Jeremiah, God assured them that His thoughts toward them were of peace, and that in His heart and mind He had a future and a hope for them!

Jeremiah reassures the exiles in his letter that God has not forsaken them. They will be restored. God's plans for His Chosen People were for good and not for disaster, to give them a future and a hope.

Jer. 29 speaks solely to the Jews who were in exile in Babylon during the sixth century BC.

General application: because God is immutable – He does not change, Jer. 29 reflects on God's grace and affections for those on whom He pours His favor.

If, as students of God's word, we get fixated on general application alone, and not know the story of Scripture, how will that look in your life?

Taking into account what we now understand re: the significance of the context...

Jeremiah 30:1 through Jeremiah 33:26 have been labeled as "The Book of Consolation." Following judgment there will be restoration!

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

Jer. 31:31 - *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah.*

This covenant applies to \_\_\_\_\_.

The covenant that Israel had broken was which covenant? \_\_\_\_\_. God gave that covenant to whom? \_\_\_\_\_. Therefore, the New Covenant will be given to the people who broke \_\_\_\_\_.

If the covenant that the children of Israel broke was the Abrahamic Covenant...

- Not possible – God swore by Himself (Heb. 6:13 - *For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,*
- If they even could break the Abrahamic Covenant...all the world would be impacted as God's promise in Gen. 12:3 - *I will bless those who bless you and curse him who curses you, and through you all the families of the earth will be blessed* – would NOT be carried out!

According to Jer. 31:31-40 the establishment of the New Covenant is with the eternal nation of Israel. This passage speaks of the permanent standing of the city of Jerusalem.

What did God promise to the nation of Israel in this New Covenant about which we read?

- Regeneration. A new heart would be given to them (Jer. 31:33; Jer. 32:39-40; Eze. 36:26). Does the nation of Israel have a new heart now? In the OT, the passages that

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announce restoration (esp. Eze. 11:16-20; Eze. 36:16-28; Eze. 37:21-28), we read of the promises of gathered Israel, cleansing and spiritual transformation, and the reign of the Messiah. Has this occurred as yet within Israel as a nation?

- God promised forgiveness of sin to the nation (Jer. 31:34; Eze. 36:25). Has that occurred?
- God promised the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to the House of Israel and the House of Judah (Eze. 36:27). Has this occurred?
- God guaranteed a universal knowledge of Jehovah among the people of Israel (Jer. 31:34). The context of this fourth promise indicated that God was referring to a personal experiential knowledge of Himself. Has this occurred within the entire nation of Israel?
- God promised that Israel would obey Him and have a right attitude toward Him forever (Jer. 32:39-40; Eze. 36:27; 37:23-24).

When God presented the promises of the New Covenant, instead of stating conditions for Israel, He continually said, "I will" (Jer. 31:31-34; 32:37-42; Eze. 36:24-37). This meant that the fulfillment of the promises of the New Covenant would be dependent totally upon God's faithfulness to His Word.

God intended this New Covenant to be an *everlasting* covenant (Isa. 61:8-9; Jer. 32:40; Eze. 16:60; 37:26). The New Covenant could never be abolished or annulled with or by Israel.

### The Relationship Of The Church To The New Covenant

The Old Testament clearly indicated that God would establish the New Covenant with the literal people of Israel, the physical descendants of Jacob.

The Apostle Paul indicated that no revelation concerning the Church was given before the time of the apostles and New Testament prophets (Eph. 3:2-9). This means, then, that the Old Testament contained no information concerning the Church – the Church was a mystery – not before disclosed. God did promise universal blessings through Abraham (Gen. 12:3 – all the families of the earth would be blessed). Israel was given the responsibility of sharing the truth about the one true God with the Gentiles (Isa. 43:10). What was not disclosed in the OT re: the Gentiles was that they would be fellow heirs with the Jews in the same body, the body of Messiah/the body of Christ and partakers of the blessings in the Messiah (Eph. 3:6; Gal. 3:14).

When Jesus instituted the communion service, He stated the following concerning the cup of that service: “This cup is the new covenant in my blood” (1 Cor. 11:25; Lk. 22:20) [literal translation]. Two things should be noted concerning Jesus’ statement. First, since Jesus used the word “the” in the expression “the new covenant,” and since prior to Jesus’ statement God had promised only one New Covenant (the one promised to Israel in Jeremiah 31), it seems evident that Jesus was referring to that New Covenant. Thus, Jesus was saying that the cup of the communion service represented the New Covenant which God had promised to literal Israel in Jeremiah 31.

Second, Jesus made His statement to Jewish men. The only New Covenant of which they would have been aware was the one which God had promised to Israel in Jeremiah 31. Since Jesus did not tell them to think otherwise, they would have understood Him to be referring to that specific New Covenant. AND, Jesus promised that He would not drink the cup of redemption at the Passover Seder again until He drank it anew with them in the Kingdom – the time of restoration for Israel.

Can we who are Gentile believers be celebrating the Gentile inclusion that we’ve been reading about throughout the prophets. The Gentile inclusion is the fulfillment of God using Israel to bless the world.

Consider: Gentile believers who make up the Church along with Jewish believers, partake of the spiritual blessings which God promised as part of the New Covenant in the Old Testament. Church believers have been regenerated (Ti. 3:5), have received forgiveness of sin

(Eph. 1:7; 4:32; Col. 1:14; 1 Jn. 2:12), have been indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19) – all of which is noted in the New Covenant in Jer. 31:31-34.

The New Covenant in Jer. 31:31-34 is founded on Jesus shedding His blood for the payment of our sins! There is only one way of salvation in the OT and in the NT.

The Apostle Paul indicated that the apostles of the Church functioned as ministers of a New Covenant. In writing to the Gentile Corinthian Church Paul wrote, II Cor. 3:1-6 - *Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you? <sup>2</sup> You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; <sup>3</sup> clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart. <sup>4</sup> And we have such trust through Christ toward God. <sup>5</sup> Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, <sup>6</sup> who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*

For the nation of Israel, the New Covenant in Jer. 31:31-34; Eze. 36:24-27 has not yet been fulfilled. It will be fulfilled at Jesus Second Coming and the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom/the Kingdom of God.