

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing Part LVII: God's Restoration Of The Southern Kingdom Of Judah (Jeremiah 31:23-26)

I. Introduction

- A. When God's people face hard times, be they trials due to punishment for sin or persecution for the sake of righteousness, the Lord knows they need to be encouraged, so He provides it.
- B. After predicting the Babylonian Captivity, but before its fulfillment, God had Jeremiah predict His promises of not only restoring His people from the Babylonian Captivity, but of restoring the Southern Kingdom of Judah to the Promised Land in Jeremiah 31:23-26. We thus view this passage for our insight and edification:

II. God's Restoration Of The Southern Kingdom Of Judah, Jeremiah 31:23-26.

- A. After predicting the restoration of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, Jeremiah was led of God to predict the restoration of the Southern Kingdom of Judah to the Promised Land in Jeremiah 31:23a.
- B. God thus predicted that again people would use these words of Judah when He restores her fortunes after her captivity: "The Lord bless you, O habitation of righteousness, O holy hill!" (Jeremiah 31:23b ESV), and this saying predicts the protective shepherding ministry of the Lord in the city of Jerusalem (as follows):
 - 1. The Hebrew word for "habitation" here is *naweh*, and it is generally used of "pasture, abode of shepherd, habitation, sheepfold" with a distinctly shepherding connotation, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 627; H. A. W., Theol. Wrkbk. of the O. T., 1980, v. II, p. 561-562.
 - 2. The phrase "habitation of righteousness" in Jeremiah 31:23b also appears in Jeremiah 50:7 where, in the context (Jeremiah 50:6-7 ESV), God's people are likened to "lost sheep" whose "shepherds have led them astray, turning them away on the mountains" to where they had "forgotten their fold," sinning against "the Lord, their Habitation of righteousness."
 - 3. Thus, the "Habitation" in both passages is the Lord Himself pictured as the Protective Fold for His flock, His people of Judah, so that the saying to be given in God's restoration of Judah to the Promised Land (Jer. 31:23b) will be that the Lord bless Jerusalem where **God** dwells as her Protective Fold! In sharp contrast to the city and temple being destroyed by Babylonian invaders and God's people being scattered and sent into captivity, the regathering of Judah will involve God's people returning to the Promised Land to enjoy the Lord God's protective shepherding as He will dwell in their midst in the city of Jerusalem!
- C. Building on this pastoral theme, Jeremiah predicted Judah and all her cities would dwell in the land together, and the farmers and shepherds who wander about the countryside with their flocks would *typically* leave such cities each morning as they headed for the open fields to work unafraid of any threat of a hostile, invading army as in Judah's past history, Jeremiah 31:24; The Wycliffe Bible Com., 1971, p. 678.
- D. God expanded on this pastoral theme, claiming that He would "cause to drink, saturate" (*rawah*, Ibid., B. D. B., p. 924; Hiphil stem = intensive) every "faint, weary" (*'ayep*, Ibid., p. 746) "life principle" (*nepesh* with its emotional, mental, spiritual, physical life (Kittel, Bib. Heb., p. 763; Robert B. Girdlestone, Synonyms of the O. T., 1973, p. 56-59) and "fill" (*male'*, Ibid., Kittel; Ibid., B.D.B., p. 569-570) every "life principle" (*nepesh*) of emotional, mental, spiritual, physical life that "languishes" (*da'eb*, Ibid., p. 178), Jer. 31:25. All that sin and its effects had done to drain His people of emotional, mental, spiritual and physical vigor, God would overcome, causing His people to be nourished and replenished in vigor in the coming Kingdom era much as a shepherd causes his flock to drink of a pasture brook for nurture!
- E. Jeremiah then testified that he received this information in a dream, that at this point he awoke from sleep and his sleep had been pleasant to him! (Jeremiah 31:26) God apparently gave him an experiential foretaste of the great refreshment Jeremiah as a suffering prophet would experience in that coming Messianic Kingdom!

Lesson: *God revealed through His prophet Jeremiah that when He restores His people Judah to the Promised Land in the coming Messianic Kingdom, God as their Shepherd will restore them as in a gentle, peaceful pastoral setting, completely renewing them emotionally, mentally, spiritually and physically from all the drain and pain of sin and its effects of the past.*

Application: *(1) May we rejoice in the hope of future blessing in the Kingdom, and may we take heart as did Jeremiah did in focusing on this hope that we stay fervent for the Lord. (2) God may at times give us a little foretaste of blessing in life's trials as He did here with the "weeping prophet" Jeremiah, so, if this occurs, enjoy!*