

## September 12

**Scriptures:** Read Jeremiah 31 & 32

**Key Verse:** "...I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts". (Jeremiah 31:33)

### Overview

Just as Jeremiah's message, recorded in chapter 31, was relevant to the exiles, giving them hope, so too it is relevant to the people of God today who are living in "the latter days" (beginning at Pentecost, 30:24; 31:1; cf. Acts 2:16-17). We are now seeing fulfilled the prophecy to Abraham concerning the whole earth being blessed through his Seed; that is Jesus, through whom all, by faith in Him, are children of promise and will be spiritually blessed (31:1; Gen. 12:3; 17:7; 22:18; Gal. 3:7-9,16; Rom. 9:8).

Jeremiah encouraged the exiles, including those from the Northern Kingdom of Israel ("Ephraim"), that God still loved them, even though they did not deserve it, just as He loves us today. God's unconditional love was expressed in the greatest way when He sent Jesus, His "grace in the wilderness", through whom He has given rest to His people and has drawn them nearer to Himself (31:2-3; John 3:16; 1 John 4:8-10,15-16; Rom. 5:8). Jeremiah prophesies about the wonderful peace and prosperity the Lord will bring, when the division of Israel and Judah will no longer exist and when they will worship the Lord together in Zion (31:4-6). The Lord Jesus is the source of this unity among the children of God, and although there does not appear to be much unity today, this promised unity will be fully realized when Jesus returns to rule upon the earth.

The Lord's people, "the remnant of Israel", will one day come in repentance as a great throng, weeping with joy "to the goodness of the Lord" in Zion (31:9, 12). With poetic imagery, Jeremiah tells Rachel, the mother of Joseph (Ephraim), to stop weeping, for there is hope for her lost children (31:15-16). That hope is found only in Jesus who satisfies and refreshes the weary souls (31:14, 25; cf. Isa. 58:11). Matthew saw a partial fulfillment of this passage in Herod's killing of the boy babies, but even in this sad situation a hope emerged, for Jesus' life was saved (Matt. 2:17-18).

Jeremiah foresaw the dawning of a new day when the Lord would no longer have to "pluck up, break and throw down" His people in order to chastise them; yet through this correction Ephraim, who was once far from God, would come to repentance and be ashamed of his rebellion (31:18-19, 28). That "new thing" will be the institution of God's New Covenant given to a people whom He will build up and plant. They are the Bride of Christ (spiritual Israel/the Church) who will now draw near to her husband the Lord, to encompass Him and love Him with all her heart (31:22). They will no longer make excuses, saying that they were suffering for the sins of their fathers and not their own (misunderstanding Moses, Ex. 20:5). Every individual is to be responsible for his own actions and sins (31:29-30; Ezek. 18:2-4; Deut. 24:16; Gal. 6:5, 7; John 9:3).

Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel saw that something more was needed to help restrain mankind from their tendency to sin (2:22; 13:23). Israel had miserably failed to obey the Old Covenant given

from Mount Sinai. Therefore, they were deprived of the blessings of the covenant, and they did not attain righteousness through the law. The answer came through the New Covenant of God's grace instituted through the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ, in which His law would be written upon the new hearts of His people who have been forgiven of their sins and taught by Him (31:33-34; Ezek. 18:30-31; John 6:45; Matt. 26:28; Heb. 7:22; 8:7-13; 9:15; 10:15-22).

Chapter 32 gives evidence of Jeremiah's great faith and trust in God to restore the people in fulfillment of His promise. The fact that Jerusalem was presently under siege by the Babylonians should have proven to everyone that Jeremiah was indeed a true prophet of God. Wicked King Zedekiah, however, had not heeded Jeremiah's warnings, nor had he humbled himself and repented; rather he was angered by the doom that Jeremiah had prophesied against him, and he threw Jeremiah into prison. Meanwhile, the city was greatly distressed with famine because of the siege which by that time had gone on for many months.

All the land around Jerusalem including Anathoth, Jeremiah's hometown had been taken and plundered by the Babylonians. Such a piece of land at that time was worthless, but in an act of faith and in obedience to God, Jeremiah purchased the land from his relative who had lost all hope. Through this, Jeremiah illustrated that although Jerusalem would fall and the people would be scattered, the Lord would bring the people back to once again buy the fields which had lain desolate for seventy years; for as Jeremiah boldly prayed, "There is nothing too hard for You" (32:17, 27).

## **Prayer**

Lord, make us people who are bound together in unity by Your Spirit. We anticipate the dawning of the day You return to earth, when we will reign with You in complete unity and peace.