

**Jeremiah 33: 10-16; “The Voice of the Bride”, Sermon # 38 in the series – “Heart Lessons Learned for a Prophet and the People of God”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018, in the Morning Worship Service.**

We must remember, once again, where Jeremiah is. He is in the prison in the court of king Zedekiah’s house, because he was faithful to preach God’s word to the king, just as it was given to him by the Lord. And in the midst of this difficult situation he has been told by the Lord to call upon Him, and God would show him great and mighty things which he did not yet know. And he has heard what the Lord will do, and yet he does not comprehend how these things can come to pass. I have been trying to show you that our God is truly free and great and sovereign in the way that He brings to pass what He has purposed in terms of His salvation – both redemption accomplished and applied. He often does His greatest works to fulfill His promises, when all seems black and hopeless to men. At this point Jeremiah can only see destruction coming, and desolation to follow. At this point he probably thinks that his ministry to these people is barren and hopeless. And surely it is true that sin and disobedience, persevered in, will always lead a nation and the people in it, to that state.

But God would build the faith of His elect among His chosen people, the Jews. And so, He has Jeremiah publish predictions in the form of promises, of the New Covenant relationship with Jesus Christ our Lord. There are, here in our verses, 3 predictions of Christ’s Church which picture the relationship of our Lord to all of His saints. They are intended to bring comfort and joy to all who will believe in them. And, I am sure that if they are believed, they will accomplish a work of bringing you closer to God Himself, and into saving relationship with Christ, if you know Him not.

**The 1<sup>st</sup> Prediction which Jeremiah publishes is that of the voice of the Bride as realizing that she has received great promises in both Old Testament and New.**

(verses 10 and 11a)

“Thus says the Lord: ‘Again there shall be heard in this place – of which you say, ‘It is desolate, without man and without beast’ – in the cities of Judah, in the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man and without inhabitant and without beast, the voice of joy and the voice of gladness...” I have tried to show you over and over again, in my preaching to you the word of God, that the prophecies which we find in the Old Testament have a more immediate fulfillment to the nation of Israel, and they also have a New Testament fulfillment in relation to our Lord Jesus Christ and His spiritual kingdom, which is farther off. The Old Testament sets the stage for the New by God’s giving promises to His people through Abraham and now in this chapter, later on, to David. And these promises pertain to all of God’s elect people in both Old Testament and New.

And so, when Christ came fulfilling those promises given to Abraham and to David concerning Him, and fulfilling the whole law of God along with the whole Old Covenant of Israel, then we find that the New Testament Church, which is spiritual Israel, is built on better promises than those given to Israel in the Old Covenant. But the New Covenant promises were not better promises than those He had already given to Abraham and David, inasmuch as they refer to Christ, for they are the same promises fulfilled. For those promises were prophesying of the institution of the New Covenant which would take place when Christ came. They were the promises concerning what Christ would come to do, and to bring, to all of God’s elect people, and they were not at all affected by the giving of the law and the Old Covenant to Moses. The apostle Paul expressly says this in Galatians 3: 16. “Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made.” “He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ.” “And this I say, that the law which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.” “For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.”

We do need to receive this truth as it is very important to our understanding many things, in terms of the Lord's building His Church all the way down through this age until Christ returns. What I am speaking of is not dispensationalism, for God's salvation has always in every time been the same. It was based upon a promise – the promise related to Christ. People are always saved by faith in Christ whether it was by faith in the promise of the Christ who was to come, as in Old Testament times, or whether it is by faith in the promise of salvation in the Christ who has already come, has died for our sins, and has been raised to glory to be our High Priest and Advocate with the Father. God has designed His word to actually save people and to accomplish everything in every generation which He purposes to do.

We can apply this truth in this good way: God would have His people, when they are undergoing various trials, to exercise faith in Him, and to trust that His purposes are good, and to look forward to all that He will do; even if they do not see everything that they would like to see come to pass in their lifetime. All of these Old Testament saints died in faith, not having received the promises; that is, they did not get to see the actual fulfillment of them in Christ's First Coming. They obtained a good testimony through faith, and but they did not receive the promise (that is the fulfillment of getting to actually see Christ in their days), or to see Him fulfill God's word by His death and resurrection. It says in Hebrews chapter 11: 39 and 40 – “And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.” The “better thing” that is mentioned in verse 40 was Christ Himself in His incarnation, fulfilling all of the promises given to the fathers. It included His sufferings, His death, His resurrection, and the setting up of His kingdom through the apostles; this kingdom which would be everlasting. But notice, that both Old and New Testament saints will be made perfect together, through Christ. That is, they all belong to the same Universal Church.

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> Prediction that Jeremiah publishes is the voice of the Bride telling of great fulfillments of those promises in both Old Testament and New.** (verses 10b and 11)

“In the cities of Judah, in the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man and without inhabitant and without beast, the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who will say: ‘Praise the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good, for His mercy endures forever.’” Now, we should understand that these words did have an Old Testament fulfillment. We find it recorded for us in the book of Ezra, chapter 1, verse 1, if you will turn over there with me. “Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, ‘Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the Lord God of heaven has given me.’ “And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah.” “Who is there among you of all His people?” “May his God be with him!” “Now let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (He is God), which is in Jerusalem.” “And whoever remains in any place where he sojourns, let the men of his place help him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, besides the freewill offerings for the house of God which is in Jerusalem.”

Now, notice that Cyrus' ordering the rebuilding of the house of the Lord God of Israel, the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, was done in order that the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah the prophet might be fulfilled. So this first fulfillment would come to pass at the end of the seventy years prophecy of Jeremiah, when the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia so that he might make a proclamation concerning this great thing. Please notice that the fulfillment of prophecy on the level of nations and kingdoms was a historic fulfillment according to exact prophecy. It was not simply an idealistic fulfillment or a fulfillment in principle, but it was to be an actual historic fulfillment at a certain point in time according to the will of the Lord. This is important because we will come to see in our study, that in New Testament times prophetic

fulfillment also comes in terms of historic fulfillment in regard to all nations in relation to the Church; the nation of Israel included. And so, Israel continues to have a very great role in the fulfillment of the prophecies as to how the nations will come to Christ, and the way the spiritual temple of the Lord will be built in these New Testament times.

Look with me now, over at Ezra chapter 3, verses 8-13 and you will see the first fulfillment of the voice of the Bridegroom and the Bride. “Now in the second month, the second year of their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the rest of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all those who had come out of the captivity to Jerusalem, began work and appointed the Levites from twenty years old and above to oversee the work of the house of the Lord.” “Then Jeshua with his sons and brothers, Kadmiel with his sons, and the sons of Judah, arose as one to oversee those working on the house of God: the sons of Henadad with their sons and their brethren the Levites.” “When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests stood in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the Lord, according to the ordinance of David king of Israel.” “And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the Lord: ‘For He is good, for His mercy endures forever toward Israel.’” “Then all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.” “But many of the priests and Levites and heads of the father’s houses who were old men, who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes; yet many shouted aloud for joy, so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard afar off.”

Now, I want you to observe that this was the first fulfillment of the “voice of the Bridegroom and the Bride”. Here were these Jews, at the building of the foundation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> temple in Old Testament times, singing responsively, praising and giving thanks to the Lord: ‘For He is good, for His mercy endures forever toward Israel.’ Not just that He is good and His mercy would endure forever toward physical Israel. But in their being able to lay the foundation of the second temple, they were looking forward to the time when their Messiah would come and walk in this temple and teach in this temple, and fulfill His ministry in relation to the nation of Israel in this temple. And even though there were a number of them who were weeping, realizing that the physical temple that was to be built would not be as grand a physical edifice as the first one had been, for they had seen the first one still standing on its foundations before it was destroyed, there were others who were shouting aloud for joy.

I believe that we should conclude from this, that they were shouting aloud for joy in the Spirit, because God would have them show forth the fact that in the building of this second temple it would mean that the fulfillment of the promises of the coming of Christ were sure. And this meant that the building of a spiritual temple unto the Lord God Almighty would take place in the future, on the basis of Christ’s finished work in laying the foundations of the New Testament Church; this spiritual temple, in His life, death, and resurrection. The Jews who lived in that day did not know all of these details that we now know, because of the fuller revelation of Christ and the New Testament scriptures, but they rejoiced at the promise of Christ and His kingdom; Christ and His glory, in relation to what God would have them to build then. And they would eventually bring their sacrifices of praise into this literal physical temple that they were laying the foundations of. But their praise was none the less from their hearts, and it was based upon the grace of Christ, for those who believed.

At the point of Jeremiah’s writing these verses of prophecy, however, the sin of Judah and Jerusalem had made them desolate. And God had taken away from them, the voice of the Bridegroom and the voice of the Bride. You see this expressly mentioned by Jeremiah in Jeremiah 7: 34 – “Then I will cause to cease from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride.”

“For the land shall be desolate.” But now after the 70 years captivity were fulfilled, 42,360 people were brought back and under Ezra and Zerubbabel and Jeshua’s leadership, and sacrifices were offered, and the rebuilding of the temple was begun. This was all of God’s grace and mercy that this came about. Once again, God was bringing about conditions conducive to peace and blessing. Once again there would be joy and gladness and the sound of weddings taking place. But again, to understand this prophecy we must look not only for a literal physical fulfillment to the nation of Israel, but also for a greater literal spiritual fulfillment of great proportions.

So, turn with me over to John chapter 3 and verses 22-29. “After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized.” “Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there.” “And they came and were baptized.” “For John had not yet been thrown into prison.” “Then there arose a dispute between some of John’s disciples and the Jews about purification.” “And they came to John and said to him, ‘Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified – behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!’” “John answered and said, ‘A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven.’” “You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ,’ but, ‘I have been sent before Him.’” “He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice.” “Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.”

The bridegroom whom John is speaking of, is obviously our Lord Jesus Christ. John’s appointed position was not to unite the people to himself as his disciples, but to unite people to Christ. He himself would prepare the way by a baptism unto repentance. In verse 30, John says that it was his joy to see Christ’s interests increase, and his own decrease. In earthly marriage, the two are made one flesh. In salvation a person is savingly and spiritually united to Jesus Christ. You are joined to the Lord by faith, and you are one spirit with Him. Now turn over to Ephesians 5, verses 25-30. “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.” “So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.” “For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.” “For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.” “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” “This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”

You can see here that Christ loved the Church. And how did He love her? He loved her by giving Himself for her; by keeping all of God’s commandments perfectly on her behalf, and by laying down His life for her, at the cross, for her sins. He did this, Paul says here, so that He might sanctify her and cleanse her, with the washing of the water by the word; that He might present her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. But there is more. When we believe in Christ, we have spiritual union with Him. We are one spirit with Him in spiritual marriage. The Universal Church is married to Him, and every individual believer is betrothed to Him. (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 11: 2) “For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ,” Paul says. We have exceeding joy that has been brought to us, in that we belong to Him, and we were bought with a price. It makes us exceedingly glad that we are members of His body; that we are His flesh and bones, in a spiritual sense. We are united to Him in His death and resurrection. Therefore our vow is to glorify Him in all that we say and do. Our vows are vows of love, and our relationship with Him is exceedingly precious and exclusive. Do you have this precious Lord Jesus as your spiritual husband this day? Have you taken Him to be your only lawful spiritual husband, to have Him and to hold Him, spiritually speaking?

Are you concerned to be united to His church, so that your interests become one with His? Will you now pursue peace with all men and holiness, so that you will see the Lord? This is the voice of joy, when you utter vows to give yourself to Him forever, to live to His glory and His interests and His kingdom and receive spiritual love from Him, and give spiritual love to Him. Will you take this Man? Will you go with this Man? In this regard, Isaac was a type of Christ. When Abraham sent his servant over to Haran to take for Isaac a wife, he met Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel, son of Micah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother. And even as he had prayed, and asked that the one whom the Lord had chosen to be Isaac's wife, would give him a drink and water his camels, when he showed up in town and went to the well, she was the first young woman that he met, and she did indeed give him water to drink and drew water for his camels also. He then gave her the presents which showed his master's good intentions; the nose ring, and the bracelets for her wrists. And then he then took him to her father's house to meet all the relatives so that he could obtain their family's consent.

After speaking with them congenially for a while, they all went to bed, and arose in the morning, and Abraham's servant told them that he could not stay, and that they should not hinder him. He wanted to return with Rebekah, to bring her to Isaac. The relatives wanted him to stay a few days; at least 10. And after that, they said, that they would let her go. But he said – "Do not hinder me, since the Lord has prospered my way, send me away so that I may go to my master." And how did they respond to this? They said – "We will call the young woman and ask her personally." "Then they called Rebekah and said to her, 'Will you go with this man?'" "And she said, 'I will go.'" Now, this is the same question which I would ask to each of you who would have Jesus Christ to be your spiritual Husband. Will you go with this Man? Will you follow Him in accordance with His word? Will you love Him and see your loyalty to Him and your service to Him as your highest priority? This is what He is looking for. And if you give Him that, then you will know the spiritual reality of the voice of the Bridegroom speaking His love and peace to your heart.

**There is a 3<sup>rd</sup> Prediction published by Jeremiah. And it is the voice of the Bride who is thankful that her Husband is a Shepherd-King.**

(verses 12-16)

Verse 12 says – "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'In this place which is desolate, without man and without beast, and in all its cities, there shall again be a dwelling place of shepherds causing their flocks to lie down.'" "In the cities of the South, in the land of Benjamin, in the places around Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, the flocks shall again pass under the hands of him who counts them, says the Lord." "Behold the days are coming, says the Lord,' that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah: In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David a Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth." "In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell safely." "And this is the name by which she will be called: The Lord our Righteousness."

Certainly there was a fulfillment of these verses in an earthly sense when they returned after their 70 years captivity. The desolation would cease, and there would again be shepherds causing their flocks to lie down in the cities of the South, in the land of Benjamin. The flocks would again pass under the hands of him who counted them. But the words which are used here speak of a specific time. In those days at that time, God says, God would perform that good thing which He had promised to the house of Israel and Judah; to nation of the Jews. He would cause to grow up to David a Branch of righteousness, and He would execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. This is another indication of the Lord's great mercy to Israel that after 70 years He would prosper their livelihood and their commerce once again. They should once again have shepherds with flocks, as they had before, and at the first. He would bless them in that occupation.

But I hope that you will see that God through His prophet is speaking of much more than physical sheep and earthly shepherds. He is speaking of spiritual sheep and spiritual shepherds. He is referring to the great blessing that would come in the future. Because in those days, the days

when the promises were to be fulfilled, God would cause to grow up to David a Branch of Righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ, and that He would execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. He would deal with the false theology and corrupt system of worship and practice which permeated the nation of Israel and her rulers, and He would fulfill all the righteousness of the holy law of God. And at the end of His ministry, He would, as the Good Shepherd, lay down His life for His sheep. As it says in Daniel chapter 9, verse 24 – “Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy.” We see here that following the 70 years captivity and their restoration to the land, and the rebuilding of their walls, there was going to be 490 years; weeks of years, for the Old Testament people of God, until the coming of the Messiah and the setting up of His kingdom through His apostles. Jesus laid the foundation of the Church; the apostles would build upon it by their writing the Scriptures, and they would on the authority of Christ, initiate the preaching of the gospel and the word of God to all the nations of the world in order to fulfill the Great Commission.

Because of Christ’s great work as the Good Shepherd of the sheep, Jerusalem would again be a dwelling place of shepherds; but this time they would be shepherds who could truly cause their flocks to lie down in spiritual safety. The words of our text are speaking of what Christ would do through His apostles in teaching and leading Christ’s Church, His people, into all the truth of His word. Listen to Ezekiel chapter 34, verses 10-16. “Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Behold, I am against the shepherds, (speaking of all false shepherds in that day and in the days of Christ’s coming and in the days His ministry when He was opposed by the Pharisees, scribes, and rulers of Israel) and I will require My flock at their hand; I will cause them to cease feeding the sheep, and the shepherds shall feed themselves no more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouths, that they may no longer be food for them.’” “For thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out.’” “As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day.”

“And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country.” “I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel.” There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel.” “I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down,’ says the Lord GOD.” “I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment.”

This was, and has been, and is now, the good work of God through Jesus Christ our Lord to all His people in New Testament times; to shepherd His people through His word by means of the apostles and prophets who have written His word, and pastor-teachers in all the churches preaching the truth of that word. And this will continue to have a greater fulfillment as this Church age progresses. For Judah has not yet been saved and the people of Jerusalem do not yet dwell in safety, in these New Testament times as it says in verse 36 of our text. But someday they shall. The Jews as a nation are not yet joined to the New Testament Church of Jesus Christ; the Israel of God. Only a remnant; but not yet as a nation, and as a whole people. But someday they shall be saved and brought into the Church, and at that point, together with many believers in many churches in many places in the world, worship will ascend to our great God and King, because God will do this great thing. And Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this is the name by which she will be called – The Lord our Righteousness.

