

## The Power of His Name (Jeremiah 17:5–13)

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (4/19/2020)

### Introduction

Our investigation covers the portion of Jeremiah from 16:14 to 17:18. This portion will involve 2 or 3 messages. As we have noted, Jeremiah was called to deliver a message of judgment to Judah for which there was no hope of repentance or revival on either Judah's or Yahweh's part. This raises a question. If Israel's spiritual success was God's original and primary aim, why, in all His infinite wisdom, did He not work His will in the hearts of these people and cause them to remain faithful to Him and His covenant?

We know that in the new-covenant era God worked spiritual grace in the hearts of His people to form a new and holy nation (1 Peter 2:9). Two considerations guide this investigation; (1) the physical nation of Israel was but a *conduit* for His true King to enter the world, do His redemptive work, be raised from the dead, and be seated on high as King of kings. One day He will be enthroned on His holy hill, Zion.

The most important principle that interpreters of Scripture must employ is that *everything* God does has as its ultimate design the exaltation of Christ as supreme over all (Colossians 1:18). Thus, *Christ* was the true aim of all God's activity with respect to Israel and her sordid history. Psalm 2 proves this point by showing God's resolve, decree, and determination (Psalm 2:6–8).

(2) The nation of Israel demonstrated the reason why Christ must come and do what no sinful human could ever do—make himself right with God. None of the sons of Adam can do what God requires, not because they are physically incapable, but, because of their evil hearts, they are spiritually destitute (16:18). Unless they experience the miracle of regeneration they cannot and *will* not do right.

In 16:14 and 15, the Lord promised to restore the nation to the land given Israel following the exodus from Egypt. If He already fully rejected and disowned them, how can He promise to restore them? The immediate reference for this restoration was under Zerubbabel in 538 B.C. However, the near/far principle of fulfillment would point to the coming of Christ and the gospel age.

### I. Purpose Prophesied

1. In the midst of the gloom of judgment, the Lord gave a glorious promise of restoration (vv. 14, 15).
2. The purpose of the Lord in restoring the people in the land was ultimately to honor His name through a truly holy people in a holy place (16:14–20).
  - a. What is described is a *second* Exodus far more glorious than the first.
  - b. This prophecy refers to Judah's return to the land after the Persians defeated the Babylonians. Long before he existed, King Cyrus was named by God (Isaiah 45:1) to be His agent to restore Jerusalem and the temple. Nevertheless, this return was a mere *pattern* for the ultimate exodus.

## II. Purpose Patterned

1. The ultimate aim of the promise would be a future gathering of a holy people to reflect God's glory in the earth. This is evidenced in a *pattern* established by the first exodus. This pattern consists of three things God used in the first exodus, which will be repeated in the gospel age and fully and finally realized in the eternal kingdom.
  - a. God displayed great power in saving His people from Egyptian bondage, occasioning great praise in the Song of Moses. That song is to be sung by the warriors of the Lamb at the end of the gospel age: "*They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb*" (Revelation 15:3, 4). This song reflects the song of Moses sung in triumph over the defeat of the king of Egypt (Exodus 15).
  - b. God defeated mighty enemies in providing His people a permanent homeland. Jesus is doing that now for His people and will continue this work until He comes (1 Corinthians 15:24, 25).
  - c. God will then *elevate* His people by His dwelling among them in the holy city and sanctuary on Mount Zion (Hebrews 12:22).

## III. Purpose Pictured

1. Cyrus illustrated the method God will use in gathering a people for His name.
  - a. The means of *evangelism* is here pictured by which the King will search out His people (16:16). Note this New Testament text (Matthew 4:18–20).
  - b. The gathering of the people requires the rectifying of their sins that originally brought about their deportation (16:17, 18). The immediate reference is to the evil nation; however, the true people of God are under the same condemnation, and their sins, too, must be judged. The sins of believers of both eras were purged at the cross (Isaiah 53:5, 6).
2. The New Testament *pictures* the rejection of the old to establish a new and faithful people as new exodus.
  - a. Paul describes this transition as "*the removal of things that are shaken . . . in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain*" (Hebrews 12:27).
  - b. Paul warned the wavering Jewish Christians (Hebrews 12:15, 16). Esau, the brother of Jacob pictured the nation of Israel rejected by her Lord because of the sins she committed (Hebrews 12:17; see Galatians 4:24–26). In other words, God rejected the people who abandoned their covenant responsibility under the old covenant in order to establish an obedient people zealous to enjoy and glorify the Lord in a new gracious covenant. New-covenant saints have grace not available to the rejected Esau-Israel (Hebrews 12:18–24).
3. The Lord concluded His statement with a resolution in 16:21. Here is a divine recognition formula, connecting the Lord's acts with the people's acknowledgement of Him as God.

## What Can We Conclude?

Jeremiah understood God's purpose and praised Him (16:19, 20).

Has the Lord worked His marvelous grace in you (1) bringing you to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, (2) sanctifying you to holiness through the indwelling of the Spirit, (3) enabling obedience and fruit to the glory of God and the furtherance of His kingdom?