

1867 - Jer 32:36-38+33:10,11 - RESTORATION

PRELIMS. We can all remember **9/11**! Who could forget it? The **traumatic destruction** of the Twin Towers, symbol of the world's most mighty and powerful nation razed to the ground! Truly an event of **historic proportions**! Almost every nation in the world has had to make **adjustments** especially to their **security policies**!

Well, **that** is the **scene** at the time this passage was written! **Utter devastation** to the world's most famous city, known for its mighty **conquests** over bigger nations! Jerusalem had just been made a **wasteland**! Unbelievable! *The kings of the earth did **not believe**, nor any of the inhabitants of the world, that foe or enemy **could enter** the gates of Jerusalem* [Lam 4:12] But Jerusalem's enemies' did enter!

There was **one great difference** between the tragedies in New York and Jerusalem! At the time, the tragedy of 9/11 was **recognised** as an event that would **change the world** - and thus there was **world-wide publicity**! Every nation in the world was inundated with photos, stories and information about 9/11 - and also the **subsequent consequences** for the **whole world** afterwards! There was great **publicity** and the **significance** of the event was very prominent!

By **contrast**, Jerusalem's tragedy was **not recognised** as **significant** for the world! And yet it was one of the most significant events in all history for the world! (It meant that God's Word was true. God keeps His promises. More of this later). *Jeremiah wept saying *the **enemy** has **triumphed**...the **Lord** has become like an **enemy** (!)...how the **gold** has become **dim*** And yet Jeremiah has to say *Is it **nothing** to you, you, who pass by?* [Lam 1:9c; 2:5; 4:1; 1:12]! He is saying that people do **not realise** the **significance** of this great event! Even the Jews did not realise the seriousness, nor the **message/lesson** from the Lord!*The background to chapters 32,33, is the devastation of Israel/Judah **because** they forfeited their **trust** in God and put their trust in false gods! What had happened was **forecast/prophesied** by God's faithful servants - if Israel/Judah **refused** to **repent** and acknowledge God as their true God, then this judgment was always going to come! It should have been **no surprise** to them that this tragedy happened!

Now that it has happened, the people are zapped/stunned!!
Ultimately when it sunk in, they became **depressed** and **negative** and saw **no hope!** Their dreams of a golden future as God's people had been shattered! Any faith that there was left disappeared altogether! 'How could God, if there is one, allow such a thing to happen to us who were supposed to be His people?' Does He leave His people? So God said to Jeremiah *Have you not observed that these people are saying... 'The Lord has **rejected** the two clans that **He chose**...they are **no longer a nation** in sight sight'* [33:24] That was the way they thought and spoke. They saw **no future** for them - and maybe with good reason - if you **only looked** at it from the **human perspective!** There did indeed seem to be no solution to their problem!

But God's **plan** and God's **promise** cannot fail! These Jews had either forgotten, or more likely, **lost confidence in** what God had said in other places of **His covenant** with them! Several times God had said through the prophets that no situation was beyond the forgiveness of God, and if they **repented** and *returned to the Lord your God* there was pardon and forgiveness for them all, and their fortunes would be **restored**. Look: *when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse...and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, and return to the LORD your God..with all your heart and with all your soul - **THEN** the LORD your God **will restore your fortunes*** [Deu 30:1-3].

APP isn't it true that when some trouble comes our way we become **more skeptical** about our faith? We begin to think ill of God and the Church. We are so fickle! We might **not say** to anyone, but in our **hearts**, we are **offended** and even **doubt** God's existence! Jesus said to His disciples *why do **doubts** arise in your hearts?* [Luke 24:38]

*So God **instructs** Jeremiah to speak to the people and say: *thus says the Lord...concerning **THIS CITY** of which **YOU** say 'It is given into the hand of the king of Babylon by sword, by **famine**, by **pestilence**... and in **THIS PLACE** of which **YOU** say 'It is a waste'* [32:36+32:10] God had a word for them - a very timely and **wonderful Word**. The Jews just **could not see** how Jerusalem could possible be restored to

the great nation it once was! The **physical** destruction looked so **final** and **eternal**. They had **lost all hope** that **God** could, or would, **restore** them and make them a great nation again. But look at what **God** says to them: *For thus says the LORD: 'Just as I have brought all this **great disaster** upon this people, so I will bring upon them all the good that I promise them [32:42]* Isn't that **amazing!**

APP You/I may look around us and see the **spiritual devastation** which **secular humanism** has done to this country and think it is **beyond repair** - not at all! By so thinking, we **deny** the power of God. More - we deny the **promises** made in His Word about the success of the gospel. *All kings shall fall down before Him...All nations shall serve Him...let the whole earth be filled with His glory All nations shall come and worship before Thee O Lord [Psa 72, 86]*

God **promises** to make with them (Israelites) an **everlasting covenant...THAT THEY may not turn from Me [32:40]** as they had **done so many times before!** Israel had constantly turned away from God. But now God promises to do something new He *will put the fear of Me in their hearts THAT they may not turn from Me [32:40]*. You see it is God's grace that **keeps** His people from turning away from Him! It is not our strength but God's grace in us that keeps us in the faith! It is **only** God's grace that **keeps** anyone from turning away from God. **Only** those who are safe in the arms of Jesus will never defect because *no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand [John 10:29]*. So, here God is promising to make an **everlasting** covenant with Israel so that **they will remain** faithful to Him!

Jeremiah goes on to **remind** them of his **own sermons** from God's Word. He told them God's promise that *after 70 years* things would be so different. He told them that God will **visit** them and bless them greatly [25:12cf and 29:10]. God's **plan** and **purpose** will stand sure.

What **encouragement** for us as a **congregation** - in this place - Dundee - where God's blessing was in the days of George Wishart at the Reformation and Robert Murray M'Cheyne and a host of others. We may look around at our community and see little fruit of godliness but God can and will restore and has promised to **restore**

areas that have become waste lands *And I will **restore** your **judges** as at the first, and your **counselors** as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the **city of righteousness, the faithful city** [Isa 1:26]* Imagine **Dundee** having that **wonderful title!** God can return to this wonderful city in power and glory. We may be discouraged at what we see and hear and witness in much need of the gospel

God wanted to **convey** the **certainty** of this blessed promise of **restoration** by giving Jeremiah an **illustration**. God said *If I have not established **my covenant with day and night** and the **fixed order of heaven and earth**, then I will reject the offspring of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his offspring to rule over the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For **I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them** [33:25,26].* Friends, day and night will not change - neither will God's promises! You/I are the **spiritual offspring** of Jacob and David. You/I can **claim** that promise

What an **encouraging** passage for us as **individuals!** I heard of a man who, when asked what line of work he was in, replied 'I am in the **human restoration** business'! He was a **minister!** Well, my friends - God is in the **human restoration business!** He is in the business of restoring human beings to what they once were - made **upright, holy and righteous!** That is God's purpose for us. *And they shall be My people, and I will be their God. I will give them **one heart and one way**, that they may **fear Me forever**, for their **own good and the good of their children after them** [32:38,39]*

In this passage God makes a wonderful promise - and wait for it - it was made to the **most unlikeliest of people!** To the **most unworthy/undeserving!** To those who had flouted again and again, His gracious invitations. And that is the gospel still!

Note when Jeremiah said *The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; **His mercies never come to an end**; they are new every morning; **great is Your faithfulness** [Lam 3:22,23]* It was in the **midst** of the **devastation** of Jerusalem! *So we do **not lose heart**. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being **renewed day by day** [2Cor 4:16]* Jesus Christ **THE Restorer!!**