

THRIVING



IN THE WORD . IN PRAYER . IN FELLOWSHIP

Jeremiah 31

Israel's Mourning Turned to Joy

"At that time," declares the LORD, "I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people." 2 Thus says the LORD, "The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness-- Israel, when it went to find its rest." 3 The LORD appeared to him from afar, [saying,] "I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness. 4 "Again I will build you and you will be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel! Again you will take up your tambourines, and go forth to the dances of the merrymakers. 5 "Again you will plant vineyards on the hills of Samaria; the planters will plant and will enjoy [them.] 6 "For there will be a day when watchmen on the hills of Ephraim call out, 'Arise, and let us go up [to] Zion, to the LORD our God.'"

7 For thus says the LORD, "Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise and say, 'O LORD, save Your people, the remnant of Israel.' 8 "Behold, I am bringing them from the north country, and I will gather them from the remote parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and she who is in labor with child, together; a great company, they will return here. 9 "With weeping they will come, and by supplication I will lead them; I will make them walk by streams of waters, on a straight path in which they will not stumble; for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn."

10 Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare in the coastlands afar off, and say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him and keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock." 11 For the LORD has ransomed Jacob and redeemed him from the hand of him who was stronger than he. 12 "They will come and shout for joy on the height of Zion, and they will be radiant over the bounty of the LORD-- over the grain and the new wine and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; and their life will be like a watered garden, and they will never languish again. 13 "Then the virgin will rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old, together, for I will turn their mourning into joy and will comfort them and give them joy for their sorrow. 14 "I will fill the soul of the priests with abundance, and My people will be satisfied with My goodness," declares the LORD.

15 Thus says the LORD, "A voice is heard in Ramah, Lamentation [and] bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more."

16 Thus says the LORD, "Restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears; for your work will be rewarded," declares the LORD, "And they will return from the land of the enemy. 17 There is hope for your future," declares the LORD, "And [your] children will return to their own territory. 18 "I have surely heard Ephraim grieving, 'You have chastised me, and I was chastised, like an untrained calf; bring me back that I may be restored, for You are the LORD my God. 19 'For after I turned back, I repented; And after I was instructed, I smote on [my] thigh; I was ashamed and also humiliated because I bore the reproach of my youth.'

20 "Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a delightful child? Indeed, as often as I have spoken against him, I certainly [still] remember him; Therefore My heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him," declares the LORD. 21 "Set up for yourself roadmarks, Place for yourself guideposts; direct your mind to the highway, The way by which you went.

Return, O virgin of Israel, Return to these your cities. 22 "How long will you go here and there, O faithless daughter? For the LORD has created a new thing in the earth-- A woman will encompass a man."

23 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, "Once again they will speak this word in the land of Judah and in its cities when I restore their fortunes, 'The LORD bless you, O abode of righteousness, O holy hill!' 24 Judah and all its cities will dwell together in it, the farmer and they who go about with flocks. 25 For I satisfy the weary ones and refresh everyone who languishes." 26 At this I awoke and looked, and my sleep was pleasant to me.

A New Covenant

27 "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and with the seed of beast. 28 "As I have watched over them to pluck up, to break down, to overthrow, to destroy and to bring disaster, so I will watch over them to build and to plant," declares the LORD. 29 "In those days they will not say again, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.' 30 But everyone will die for his own iniquity; each man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth will be set on edge."

31 "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. 33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

35 Thus says the LORD, who gives the sun for light by day and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; the LORD of hosts is His name: 36 "If this fixed order departs from before Me," declares the LORD, "Then the offspring of Israel also will cease from being a nation before Me forever." 37 Thus says the LORD, "If the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth searched out below, then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done," declares the LORD.

38 "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when the city will be rebuilt for the LORD from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. 39 The measuring line will go out farther straight ahead to the hill Gareb; then it will turn to Goah. 40 "And the whole valley of the dead bodies and of the ashes, and all the fields as far as the brook Kidron, to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east, shall be holy to the LORD; it will not be plucked up or overthrown anymore forever."

1. What does this passage teach us about God?
2. What does this passage teach us about ourselves?
3. How do you think we are supposed to respond to this passage?
4. What are you excited to share with others?

Pray whatever the Lord lays on your heart as a result of this passage.

"This passage has always been to me like a beautiful diamond waiting for a setting. The Old Testament saints longed for the day that it would be fulfilled. However, New Testament saints also wait ... When Jesus quoted this passage in the Upper Room, it was as if He took the diamond, set it in a ring, and placed it on His fiancée's/bride's finger. It was as if He was saying, 'These truths are yours, but just like engagement, there is more to come!' This entire passage will someday be fulfilled ... Just as He said. (Selah)" - *Pastor Justin Greene*