

Exegesis of Jeremiah 33:14-16

OT lesson for Advent 1, Series C, Nov. 29, 2009

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- I. **Background** for the pericope of Jeremiah’s Prophecy of Restoration of David’s Line:
- A. Jeremiah’s prophecies are not found in chronological order within his book. They are arranged topically:

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Chapters</u>	<u>Appr. Dates</u>	<u>Kings</u>
Jeremiah’s Call	1	626 B.C.	Josiah
Oracles of Warning	2-12 13-20	626-597 B.C.	Josiah, Jehoiakim
Special prophecies/Narratives	21-24	598-586 B.C.	Zedekiah
	25-27		<i>(earlier insertions from Jehoiakim)</i>
	27-35		Zedekiah
Jeremiah’s persecutions	36-38	590-587 B.C.	Zedekiah
The Fall of Jerusalem	39-45	586 B.C.	Zedekiah
Oracles Against the Nations	46-51	590 B.C.	Zedekiah
Historical Appendix	52	579 B.C.	No king of Judah

- B. Jeremiah as a type of Christ:
1. The persecutions Jeremiah endured while he prophesied to the nation of Judah made him appear to be the fulfillment of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53:3, because he was “a man of sorrows.”
 2. However, Jeremiah’s sufferings were just another foreshadowing of the Messiah’s ultimate sufferings for our sins.
 3. Other similarities between Jeremiah and Jesus were:
 - Neither were married (Jer 16:1-4);
 - Both betrayed by family and friends (Jer. 11:18-23; 12:6; 18:11-18; 26:1-15; 32:1-3; 38:6-13, 28);
 - Both were priests (Jer. 1 and Heb. 4:14)
 - Both called to be prophets like Jesus (Jer. 1 and Luke 24:20);
 - Both had a close companion: Jeremiah had Baruch (36:4-8) and Jesus had John (John 13:23).
- C. Jer. 33:14-16 is at the end of a section called the “Book of Consolation” (Jer. 30-33) and this pericope is the same prophecy echoing Jer. 23:5-6.
1. The first prophecy was given to King Zedekiah to pronounce hope after the Exile, but Jeremiah was clear that the ultimate fulfillment would be after the Return.
 2. Jeremiah 33:14-26 repeats these earlier prophecies and it may be for that reason that these verses are not found in the LXX, perhaps because they seemed redundant.
 3. However, the repetition of a slightly different version of these verses in the MT shows the importance of **God’s words of hope**. There would be hope for the exiles, as there would be hope for the discouraged disciples on Easter, and ultimately we have hope from the sorrows of this world in heaven, the New Jerusalem (Rev 21)!
 4. The biggest difference between these two prophecies though is in the last line that says “His name will be...” (23:17) vs. “She will be called.” These show that these are two different prophecies: one about the Messiah’s righteousness, and the other about the Church (feminine), whose righteousness is imputed from the Messiah.

II. Interpretation (my own translation from the Hebrew):

- A. v.14—“Behold, days are coming,” says Yahweh, “When I will fulfill the good word [=promise] which I spoke to the house of Israel and unto the house of Judah.”
1. The “days” Jeremiah refers to are the days of the Messiah’s coming, which also have been described in terms of Law as the “Day of the LORD” by Isaiah.
 2. This *promise* God made to David in 2 Sam. 7 that he would always have an heir on his throne would be fulfilled literally by the “Good Word” who is Jesus, the Word made flesh (John 1:1).
 3. Notice that even though Israel in the north had already fallen in 722 B.C., God’s promise is to both Israel and Judah, because God will reunite His people under the Messiah (Jesus extended God’s grace to both the Samaritans, the descendants of the Israelites in the north, and the Jews of Judah during His ministry, and ultimately through grafting the Gentiles into the vine of Christ [Rom. 11:17]).
- B. v.15— “In those days and at that time I will cause to spring forth for David, a Branch of Righteousness and He will execute justice and righteousness in the land.”
1. The image of a Branch coming out of the implied *Stump of Jesse* (Isa 11:1) is a picture of new life and a fulfillment of God’s promise to David in 2 Sam 7, even in the face of the impending Exile and destruction of the royal family of Judah during Jeremiah’s life. Thus the return from Exile is a sort of resurrection which prefigures the final resurrection of Jesus, which is the “first fruits” of those who will rise (1 Cor. 15:20).
 2. The verb “cause to sprout” from the parallel passage in Jer. 23:5 is in the perfect and denotes that this is an accomplished fact. Here in Jer. 33:15 it is in the imperfect: “I will cause to sprout/spring forth” and denoted a repeated action.
 3. The idea that the Messiah King will be righteous (רַקִּיָּצַד), that is do what is right, according to the Law, has parallels in reform declarations made by Babylonian kings, which is echoed in Zedekiah’s proclamation in Jer. 34:8-11 made in 588 B.C. (John Walton. *Bible Background Commentary: OT*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2000. p. 658).
- C. v.16— “In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which she [it] will be called, ‘Yahweh is our Righteousness.’”
1. A future hope for the land of Judah and the city of Jerusalem was a vivid contrast to the external siege and impending Fall of Jerusalem that occurred during Jeremiah’s ministry.
 2. As Jeremiah had done throughout his ministry, he called the people to abandon hope in themselves or any political solutions the king might come up with to avoid the Exile. Instead the only hope was to be found in Yahweh. The point is that nothing God’s people can do is good enough to save us (Isa 64:6; Rom.3:23); God alone can make us righteous again (pure grace!) which is what Jeremiah had foretold earlier in Jer. 31:31-34.
 3. The pronoun “she” is the feminine singular suffix added to the preposition “to” which literally translates as: “This is the name by which will be called to her.” It refers to the city of Jerusalem which is feminine, however, the NIV note has “he” here, referring back to the “Branch” in the previous sentence. This is not what the text says and it forces an interpretation rather than a translation. The feminine pronoun is really identifying Jerusalem with the church which is made righteous by Jesus, the Righteous Branch, as it says in Eph. 5:26.

III. **Applications:**

- A. The powerful promise of grace and hope in the midst of suffering among God's people is seen in these verses. It is more than just hope for bad times. It is hope for the purpose of encouraging faith to witness during hard times, just as the people of Judah did as they went into exile, yet knew that Jerusalem would be restored.
- B. The Messiah's character is explained—Jesus is from David's line, and is more than just a king—He is *the* Righteous King, which means He is God, since no human king (or person) is sinless.
- C. The name by which we (the church) are called “Righteous” is the name of Jesus placed upon us in our baptism.