

A New Beginning at Life

"But this is the new covenant...I will put my instructions deep within them, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people." Jer. 31:33 NLT



- Do you ever wish you could have a "do over" in life?

Jeremiah chapters 30-33 are messages of hope in a book that contains a significant amount of judgment. This section of Jeremiah is God's offer of a **new beginning** to those who will turn to Him. God offers hope and restoration to Israel in Jeremiah's day and at Christ's return before the Millennium (Rev.20).

Warren Wiersbe explains, "Jeremiah 30-33 describes the glory of the dawning of a new day for the people of Israel, not only for the exiles in Babylon but also for the Jewish people in the latter days before the Lord returns. As you study, you'll discover that Jeremiah had two horizons in view: the nearer horizon of the return of the exiled to Judah and the farther horizon of the regathering of Israel in the end times from the nations of the earth." (OT 1244).

The majority of Jeremiah's messages were to Judah, the Southern Kingdom. However, in chapters 30-33, he speaks to Israel and Judah. God had not forgotten the Northern kingdom of Israel. Everyone matters to Him. *"For the time is coming when I will restore the fortunes of my people of Israel and Judah. I will bring them home to this land that I gave to their ancestors, and they will possess it again. I, the Lord, have spoken!"* (30:3)

Central Lesson:

God Gives A New Beginning to Everyone Who Turns to Him.

1. God removes the **YOKE** of bondage when people turn to Him (30:7-8).

"7 In all history there has never been such a time of terror [the Tribulation period—described in Matt. 24:21-31; Mark 13:19-27; Rev. 6-19]. It will be a time of trouble for my people Israel [Heb. Jacob]. Yet in the end they will be saved! 8 For in that day,' says the Lord of Heaven's Armies, 'I will break the yoke from their necks and snap their chains. Foreigners will no longer be their masters.'"

The ultimate fulfillment of this freedom from bondage will be after "Jacob's trouble" when Christ returns and establishes His millennial reign. However, it was *partially fulfilled* when Judah returned to Jerusalem after 70 years in Babylon. Also, it applies to us today! God offers freedom from bondage when people turn from their sins and turn to Him.

2. God's restoration is both a **MOMENT** and a **PROCESS** (30:8-10).

The same is true for us today.

"8...I will break the yoke [a moment] from their necks and snap their chains. Foreigners will no longer be their masters." "10 ...For I will bring you home again from distant lands [a process], and your children will return from their exile..."

God's restoration was both a *moment*—breaking their yoke—and a *process*—the scattered descendants would return to Jerusalem after Christ's return. For us today, God's freedom and restoration from bondage are also a moment and a process.

3. God's restoration brings **JOY, PEACE**, and prosperity (30:18-22; 31:10-14).

"18 This is what the Lord says: 'When I bring Israel home again from captivity and restore their fortunes, Jerusalem will be rebuilt on its ruins, and the palace reconstructed as before. 19 There will be joy and songs of thanksgiving, and I will multiply my people, not diminish them; I will honor them, not despise them. 20 Their children will prosper as they did long ago. I will establish them as a nation before me, and I will punish anyone who hurts them.'"

4. God's forgiveness is a **COMPLETE** forgiveness - (31:4, 21).

"4 I will rebuild you, my virgin Israel. You will again be happy and dance merrily with your tambourines." "21 ...Come back again, my virgin Israel; return to your towns here."

He metaphorically called Israel a "virgin!" He no longer saw them guilty of spiritual adultery from worshipping other gods. He granted FULL forgiveness.

5. God has established a **NEW** covenant and a new relationship with those who turn to Him (31:31-34). We can have a new beginning and relationship with God when we turn to Him.

"31 'The day is coming,' says the Lord, 'when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. 32 This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a husband loves his wife,' says the Lord. 33 'But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel after those days,' says the Lord. 'I will put my instructions deep within them, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.' 34 '...And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins.'"

Israel repeatedly broke the Old Covenant (31:32). In the New Covenant, God's laws are written on people's hearts rather than stone tablets (31:33). Redeemed people will have a personal relationship with God (31:33). God will permanently forgive all sin (31:34).

Warren Wiersbe provides an overview of the New Covenant: "...The New Covenant isn't just another renewal of the Old Covenant that God gave at Sinai; it's a covenant that's new in every way. The New Covenant is *inward* so that God's law is written on the heart and not on stone tablets (2 Cor. 3; Ezek. 11:19-20; 18:31; 36:26-27). The emphasis is *personal* rather than national, with each person putting faith in the Lord and receiving a 'new heart' and with it a new disposition toward godliness.

The Old Covenant tried to control conduct, but the New Covenant changes character so that people can love the Lord and ...want to obey God's will. ...It is this covenant that the Jews will experience in the last days when they see their Messiah [Christ's return] and repent (Zech. 12:10-13:1).

The basis for the new covenant is the work of Jesus Christ on the cross (Matt. 26:27-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20). Because the church today partakes in Israel's spiritual riches (Rom. 11:12-32; Eph. 3:1-6), anyone who puts faith in Jesus Christ shares in this new covenant (Heb. 8:7-13; 10:14-18). It's an experience of regeneration, being born again into the family of God (John 3:1-21)." (OT 1246-1247).

Central Lesson: God Gives A New Beginning to Everyone Who Turns to Him.

- Accept Christ as your Savior. ► As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ► Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ► Attend a small group. ► Read the Bible. ► Pray for friends that need Jesus.