

There's a New Day Coming

Jeremiah 31:27-34

Joe and Mike had jobs at a cotton mill. One morning the foreman came along and found Joe reading a letter to his co-worker. "Hey," cried the foreman, "what kind of horseplay you two guys up to?" "Mike got a letter from his girlfriend," explained Joe, "but he can't read, so I'm readin' the letter for him." "Well how come you got the cotton in your ears?" the foreman asked. "Mike don't want me to hear what his girlfriend wrote to him." There are times when we'd all like to put cotton in our ears so we don't have to hear what the preacher is saying (Or what God is saying to us through the preacher.) In the case of Jeremiah, most folks didn't want to hear what he had to say. He was, after all, the weeping prophet. And according to most folks, I'm sure, he was a downright pessimist. Didn't have hardly anything good or hopeful to say. But even in the darkest forest a ray of sunshine peeks through - and that's what we have here in Jeremiah 31 - a ray of hope and cheer to a people who needed it in the worst kind of way. We could a stand to hear a little good news.

I. God's Promise to Plant & Build. (v.27-30)

1.) A certain promise (hope) - "the days come" - no might, maybe or hope-so about it. God says, "I will..." and it "shall come to pass..." God's promises are faithful and trustworthy. We live in a day when, sad to say, so many will not think twice before telling a lie. A day when honor, and integrity are the exception and not the rule. Twisting the truth is happens everywhere (Salesmen, Marriage Vows, Politicians, Business Deals, etc.)

2.) A bountiful promise - the seed sown for the WHOLE house of God (not just Judah, not just Israel). I believe this is a wonderful foreshadow of the bountiful harvest of the gospel sown for all men without regard to race, economic status, education, or nationality. The gospel "new covenant" is to be preached in all the world.

Parable of the Sower who went out to scatter gospel seed in the church. I believe God wants to fulfill this prophecy in our lives as sowers of the seed. We can and will fill our church if and when we scatter the seed.

(Ps.126:5-6) "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves *with him*."

3.) A gracious/merciful promise - (v.28) God declares his sovereignty and providence in watching over the punishment of sin. "plucking up, breaking down, throwing down, destroying and afflicting." **This is what man's sin and disobedience deserves. "The wages of sin is death."** However, note the goodness and grace of God! A day of mercy, grace and kindness is coming that He will bring. He will oversee the re-building and the re-planting.

We can be sure that sin, rebellion and disobedience is met with punishment and chastening - so too, through Jesus Christ we can find forgiveness, cleansing, healing and re-building. He is truly the God of a second-chance!

4.) A "fairness" promise - (v.29-30)

Here you had children born to those God punished - reaping the "rewards" of their parents' waywardness.

True - it is a fact of life that sin does have consequences and those consequences often spill over onto others. Children are born in captivity who were not even around during the time when Israel rebelled against God.

They were beginning to say, "Hey, this isn't fair."

Now, it is a true saying that the sins of the fathers are visited on the children - sometimes to the 3rd and 4th generation. (Ex.34:7) Some sad but true examples can be seen today: **Children of Abusers** often grow up to become abusers. **Children of Alcoholics** often grow up to abuse drugs and alcohol. **Debt & Poverty** often pass from one generation to the next.

Can the cycles be broken? Absolutely! With God all things are possible!

Here in our text, God is pointing out a principle of justice and equity when he says that just because the parents eat sour grapes, the children don't have to have a sour taste in their mouths. Every individual is personally accountable to God for his actions and HIS ALONE. (v.30) This is only fair. This is right. There is no guilt by association. No inherited guilt.

II. God's Promise of a New Covenant (31-34)

In Hebrews 8:8-13 we find this very prophecy of Jeremiah quoted as being fulfilled in the New Testament or New Covenant of Jesus Christ. While some scholars maintain that there are aspects of this prophecy yet to be

fulfilled for the nation of Israel, it is clear that that most important aspects of this new covenant are already enjoyed and experienced by everyone who puts his hope and trust in Jesus.

1) Note the same "certain" promise.

2) God is a covenant making God - a covenant being a solemn contract, promise, or agreement.

He keeps all of his promises. Look back over the scriptures quickly and you see several of the Covenants of God:

- a. Noah - not to flood the world;
- b. Abraham - to bless his nation;
- c. Moses - to bless the people who keep His law;
- d. David - to establish his kingdom forever

2) God's Covenants are a divine Guarantee. With God there are no end or limit on a promise. People today purchase limited or extended warranties or guarantees on products - but after a time it expires. **Not with God.** He makes his covenants to last throughout the generations and eternity. A true - "Lifetime" guarantee.

4) "New" Covenant - The old covenant failed - it was imperfect. The problem was not in the law or the lawgiver - but in the lawbreakers who could not be lawkeepers. The old covenant failed because mankind is sinful and rebellious at heart. The old covenant laws were written on stone - the new covenant laws are written on our hearts. In other words - now God gives his people not just a new way of life - but a new heart to live this new way of life.

5) The old covenant was very "work" centered - the new covenant is "grace" centered. The old covenant hi-lighted what man can do (or cannot do), while the new covenant hi-lights what Jesus has done. The old covenant required ongoing sacrifices - blood sprinkled often, the new covenant requires only one Sacrifice - sprinkled and applied which goes on cleansing forever.

6) The old covenant had God taking Israel "by the hand" and leading them out of Egypt (v.32) whereas the new covenant has God taking hold of our heart - and instead of taking us out of Egypt "the land of slavery", he takes the "Egypt" out of us.