

# Jeremiah 31 Commentary

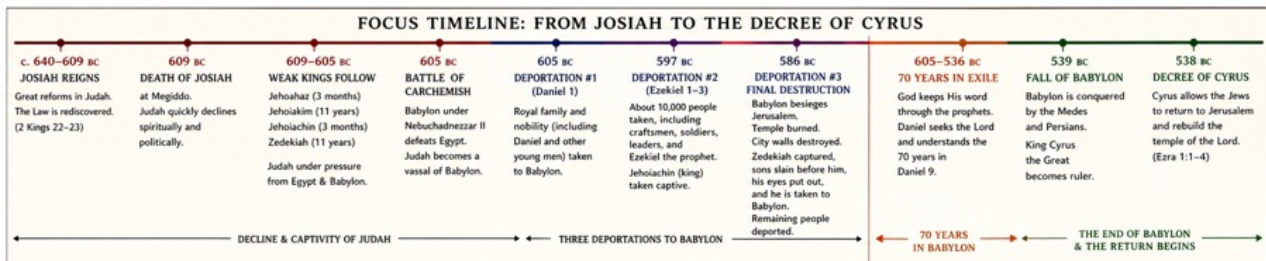
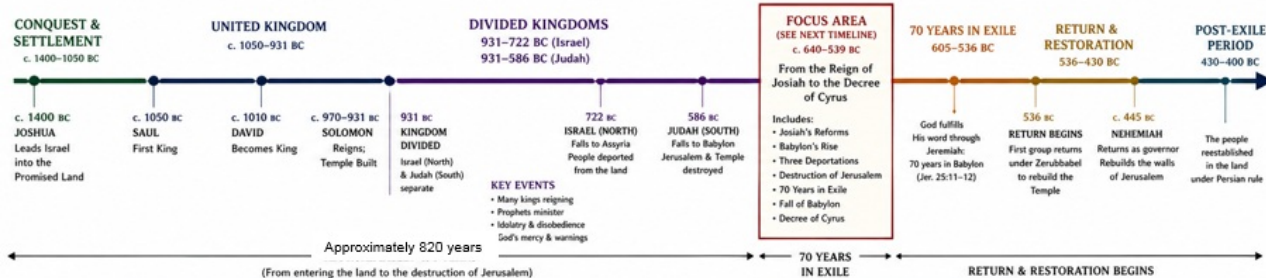
JEREMIAH 30 COMMENTARY, "Jeremiah on the Ruins of Jerusalem"  
(Horace Vernet, 1844)

JEREMIAH 32 COMMENTARY

JEREMIAH OVERVIEW						
Sin - "I Will Punish" (Jer 9:25)						
Hope - "I Will Restore" (Jer 30:17)						
<b>Prophet Called</b> Jer 1:1-1:19	<b>Prophecies to Judah</b> Jer 2:1-45:5				<b>Prophecies to the Gentiles</b> Jer 46:1-51:64	<b>Prophet's Appendix</b> Jer 52:1-52:34
<b>Prophet's Commission</b> Jer 1:1-19	<b>Judah Condemned</b> Jer 2:1-25:38	<b>Jeremiah's Conflicts</b> Jer 26:1-29:32	<b>Jerusalem's Future</b> Jer 30:1-33:26	<b>Jerusalem's Fall</b> Jer 34:1-45:5	<b>Nations Condemned</b> Jer 46:1-51:64	<b>Historic Conclusion</b> Jer 52:1-52:34
<b>Before The Fall Of Jerusalem</b> Jer 1:1-38:28				<b>The Fall</b> Jer 39:1-18	<b>After The Fall</b>	
<b>Call</b>	<b>Ministry</b>				<b>Retrospect</b>	
<b>Nation of Judah</b>				<b>Surrounding Nations</b>	<b>Future of Babylon</b>	
<b>627-582BC</b> <b>Ministered 40+ Years!</b>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Related Blog Post - Jeremiah Overview</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Jeremiah Book Chart</a></li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Another Chart on the book of Jeremiah</a></li> </ul>						

## THE STORY OF ISRAEL & JUDAH: A TIMELINE OVERVIEW

From Joshua to the Return from Exile



## SUGGESTED RESOURCES RELATED TO JEREMIAH 30-33

Supplement your reading with the following conservative sources that use a literal approach in interpretation of the Scriptures:

- [Ray Stedman - Jeremiah 30-31 Commentary - The Secret of Strength](#)

- [Ray Stedman - Jeremiah 32-33 Commentary - Is Anything Too Hard for God](#)
- David Baron - Notes on Jeremiah 30 from his book "The Jewish Problem"
- [Thomas Constable - Jeremiah 30-33 Commentary](#)
- [A C Gaebelein's Annotated Bible - Jeremiah 30-33 Commentary](#)
- [David Guzik - Jeremiah 30-33 Commentary](#)
- [H A Ironside - Jeremiah 30-33 Commentary](#)
- [Henry Morris - Defender's Study Bible Notes \(see links on right side\)](#)
- [NET Bible Notes on Jeremiah 30, Jeremiah 31, Jeremiah 32, Jeremiah 33](#)
- [J Vernon McGee Mp3's - Jeremiah 30 Intro, Jeremiah 30, Jeremiah 31:1, Jeremiah 31:2-7, Jeremiah 31:8-30, Jeremiah 31:31-40, Jeremiah 32, Jeremiah 33:1-13, Jeremiah 33:14-26](#)

#### Commentaries - not free but take a literal approach to interpretation:

- [MacArthur Study Bible](#) (Or borrow [The MacArthur study Bible : New American Standard Bible](#))
- [F. B. Huey-Jeremiah, Lamentations-New American Commentary](#) (Borrow his [related commentary on Jeremiah](#))
- [Charles Feinberg - Expositor's Bible Commentary-Jeremiah \(1986 Edition\)](#)
- [Michael Brown - Expositor's Bible Commentary-Jeremiah \(2010 Edition\)](#)
- [Moody Bible Commentary- Michael A Rydelnik, Charles H. Dyer](#)

#### Commentaries and Study Bibles - not free but can be borrowed

**Explanation** - The following list includes not only commentaries but other Christian works by well known evangelical writers. Most of the resources below are newer works (written after 1970) which previously were available only for purchase in book form or in a Bible computer program. The resources are made freely available by archive.org but have several caveats - (1) they do not allow copy and paste, (2) they can only be checked out for one hour (but can be checked out immediately when your hour expires giving you time to read or take notes on a lengthy section) and (3) they require creating an account which allows you to check out the books free of charge. To set up an account click [archive.org](#) and then click the picture of the person in right upper corner and enter email and a password. That's all you have to do. Then you can read these more modern resources free of charge! I have read or used many of these resources but not all of them so ultimately you will need to be a Berean (Acts 17:11<sup>±</sup>) as you use them. I have also selected works that are conservative and Biblically sound. If you find one that you think does not meet those criteria please send an email at <https://www.preceptaustin.org/contact>. The resources below are in no particular order.

#### [The MacArthur Study Bible](#)

Conservative. Literal. Premillennial. Notes are good but somewhat brief.

#### [The Bible Knowledge Commentary - Jeremiah by Charles H. Dyer](#)

James Rosscup A concise but carefully-researched conservative work that very often provides good help in explaining verses to preachers, students and lay people. Dyer gets to the flow of the message in Jeremiah, mingles summaries and sections on detail in a good balance, and usually has something worthwhile on key verses or problem passages.

#### [Be Decisive : taking a stand for the truth : OT commentary, Jeremiah](#) by Wiersbe, Warren

Wiersbe's insights are always worth checking for good preaching and teaching ideas.

#### [Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament](#) by Wiersbe, Warren W [113 ratings](#)

"Even the most difficult Scriptures come alive as Warren Wiersbe leads you book-by-book through the Old Testament and helps you to see the "big picture" of God's revelation. In this unique volume, you will find: • Introductions and/or outlines for every Old Testament book • Practical expositions of strategic chapters • Special studies on key topics, relating the Old Testament to the New Testament • Easy-to-understand expositions that are practical, preachable, and teachable If you have used Dr. Wiersbe's popular BE series, you know how simple and practical his Bible studies are, with outlines that almost teach themselves. If not, you can now discover a wonderful new resource. This work is a unique commentary on every book of the Old Testament. It contains new material not to be found in the BE series.

#### [With the Word](#) - Devotional Commentary - Warren Wiersbe - [428 ratings](#)

Chapter summaries. Good but resource above is more detailed.

[Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary](#) - Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel

[Isaiah 40-66 and Jeremiah](#) by Cundall, Arthur Ernest

[Jeremiah and Lamentations: an introduction and commentary](#) by Harrison, R. K.

**Rosscup** - This famous Old Testament scholar, a conservative, concludes that we have here the basic teachings of Jeremiah under several kings. Lamentations is done by an eye-witness of Jerusalem's fall. In both books, Harrison offers a brief but well informed commentary that is usually quite helpful in getting at what the text means and not substituting redactional theory from another era.

[Jeremiah : Prophet of judgment](#) commentary by Jensen, Irving (132 pages) (Also has a self-study guide - [Isaiah, Jeremiah : a self-study guide](#))

**Rosscup** - Jensen has written a concise evangelical commentary for those who wish for a simple survey. The work is premillennial in its orientation, and is done by a man well-known for his helpful expositional works.

[Jeremiah \(Bible Study Commentary\)](#) by Huey, F. B. 1981. 157 pp.

**James Rosscup** - Conservative and concise, using a good outline and giving pastors, Sunday School teachers and lay people in general a quick look in a fairly able way. Dyer, Jensen, Kidner and Harrison do it better among the briefer works in overall helpfulness, though this is not to downgrade Huey.

[HCSB Study Bible : Holman Christian Standard Bible](#) -

Conservative. Literal. Brief but good notes. Holman's excellent maps.

[Believer's Bible Commentary](#) - OT and NT - MacDonald, William (1995) 2480 pages. Conservative. Literal.

Often has very insightful comments. John MacArthur, says "Concise yet comprehensive - the most complete single-volume commentary I have seen." Warren Wiersbe adds "For the student who is serious about seeing Christ in the Word." One hour limit.

Rosscup - This work, originally issued in 1983, is conservative and premillennial, written to help teachers, preachers and people in every walk of life with different views, explanation and application. The 2-column format runs verse by verse for the most part, usually in a helpfully knowledgeable manner, and there are several special sections such as "Prayer" in Acts and "Legalism" in Galatians. The premillennial view is evident on [Acts 1:6, 3:20, Romans 11:26, Galatians 6:16](#), Revelation 20, etc.

[The King James Study Bible Second Edition](#) (2013) (Thomas Nelson) contributing editors (only first is listed) include Wayne A. Brindle.

There is no restriction on length of time one can use, but there is no copy and paste function

[Life Application Study Bible: Old Testament and New Testament](#) New Living Translation.

Has some very helpful notes especially with application of texts. [4.445 ratings](#)

[NKJV Study Bible: New King James Version Study Bible](#) (formerly "The Nelson Study Bible - NKJV") by Radmacher, Earl D; Allen, Ronald Barclay; House, H. Wayne (1997, 2007); [917 ratings](#)

Helpful notes. Conservative.

[KJV Bible Commentary Judges](#) - Hindson, Edward E; Kroll, Woodrow Michael.

This is not a study Bible per se, but a one volume commentary with over 3000 pages of comments covering the entire OT/NT. There is no restriction on length of time one can use, but there is no copy and paste function. These are excellent conservative comments that interpret Scripture from a literal perspective. [User reviews](#) - it generally gets 4/5 stars from users.

[ESV Study Bible](#) -

Good notes but not always literal in eschatology and the nation of Israel [6.004 ratings](#)

[Zondervan NIV Study Bible](#) - (2011) 2570 pages

[The David Jeremiah Study Bible](#) - (2013) 2208 pages. [Logos.com](#)

"Drawing on more than 40 years of study, Dr. David Jeremiah has compiled a legacy resource that will make an eternal impact on generations to come. 8,000 study notes. Hundreds of enriching word studies"50+ Essentials of the Christian Faith" articles." [2,272 ratings](#)

[The Defender's Study Bible : King James Version](#) by Morris, Henry M.

Excellent notes by well known creationist. [45 ratings](#)

[Ryrie Study Bible](#) - Charles Ryrie (1978) 2142 pages.

Conservative. Notes are brief. [216 ratings](#)

[Wycliffe Bible Commentary](#) - Charles Pfeiffer - 1560 pages (1962). [214 ratings](#)

Conservative. Notes are generally verse by verse but brief.

Rosscup - Conservative and premillennial scholars here have been experts in their fields. The work contains brief introductions and attempts to give a verse-by-verse exposition, though it does skip over some verses. The treatments vary with the authors, but as a whole it is a fine one-volume commentary for pastors and students to use or give to a layman. Outstanding sections include, for example: Whitcomb on Ezra-Nehemiah-Esther; Culver on Daniel; Ladd on Acts; Harrison on Galatians; Johnson on I Corinthians; and Ryrie on the Johannine Epistles.

[NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible. Bringing to Life the Ancient World of Scripture](#) Keener, Craig and Walton, John. Editors (2017)

[Jeremiah](#) by Davidson, R

**Cyril Barber** - Covers chaps. 1-20. Helps to explain the words of the Lord through Jeremiah. Contains insightful thoughts on the autobiographical and theological passages in these chapters.

[The book of Jeremiah](#) by Thompson, J. A. (John Arthur), 1913-2002

**Cyril Barber** - New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980. This highly competent commentary deals thoroughly with every aspect of the prophet's life and ministry and stresses the importance of Judah's covenant relationship with the Lord. Readers are treated to a careful handling of the Hebrew text ably correlated with the DDS. Also they are given a definitive explanation of the backdrop of the times in the Josianic reformation

**Rosscup** - This is the most detailed evangelical commentary of recent vintage, competent in its lengthy introduction (pp. 1-136) on scholarly issues and views, details of text, exegesis, history and theology. Much of the commentary is lucidly helpful for the general reader as well as teachers and church workers. It does not take up a number of questions some scholars would like or give a bibliography of the length Thompson might offer. But he is helpful on archeology and the Near Eastern treaty concept. The perspective on prophecy is **amillennial**

#### Journal Articles or other discussions related to Jeremiah 30-33:

- [Jeremiah 30 - A Warning to the Palestinians and the Gentiles! - Mal Couch](#)
- [Jeremiah 30:7 The Time of Jacob's Trouble Approaching - David Cooper](#)
- [Michael Brown - Is the Time of Jacob's Trouble Past, Future, or Both?](#)
- [John Walvoord - Jeremiah 30:5-7 - The Suffering Of Israel](#)
- [John Walvoord - Jeremiah 30, 31 - The Promise Of The Land To Israel](#)
- [John Walvoord - Jeremiah 30-31 - The Glorious Restoration Of Israel](#)
- [John Walvoord - Jeremiah 31:31-34 - The New Covenant with Israel](#)
- [John Walvoord - Jeremiah 31:31-34 - Another Discussion of the New Covenant with Israel](#)
- [S Lewis Johnson - Jeremiah 31:31-34 - The New Covenant and Prophecy](#)
- [Dennis Swanson - Jeremiah 31:38-40 The Expansion of Jerusalem- Never, Already or Not Yet?](#)

#### Sermons on Jeremiah 30-33

- [Alan Carr - Jeremiah 32:1-15 The Prison Of His Purposes](#)

- [Alan Carr - Jeremiah 32:16-27 The God of the Impossible](#)
- [Steven Cole - Jeremiah 32:1-25 - The Man Who Bought Property In A War Zone](#)
- [Charles Simeon - Jeremiah 30:10, 11. God's gracious Designs towards his chosen People](#)
- [Charles Simeon - Jeremiah 30:17. The Conversion of the Jews—our Duty to promote it](#)
- [Charles Simeon - Jeremiah 31:7–9. The Restoration of the Jews](#)
- [Charles Simeon - Jeremiah 32:37–42. The future Conversion of the Jews](#)
- [Charles Simeon - Jeremiah 33:6–9. Conversion of the Jews of Importance to God and Man](#)

**Jeremiah 31:1 "At that time," declares the LORD, "I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people."**

## **PROPHECIES OF RESTORATION: A REMNANT RETURNS**

**At that time - When is that time? "in the latter days"** (Jer 30:24), the end of this age when all Israel is saved (Ro 11:26). In fact so closely linked is this statement that the Masoretic Text includes it as verse 25 of Jeremiah 30 and then labels verse 2 as the first verse of Jeremiah 31.

**G Campbell Morgan** on the "Restoration of Israel, Jer 31:1-40". Remember that Morgan wrote this in 1912, long before Israel was reborn as a nation in May, 1948! As an aside, Morgan could hardly be labeled a "Dispensationalist." Morgan interprets the passage as a "literalist" writing:

This is repeatedly promised in Jeremiah and secured by the most solemn asseverations which can be used, but it is minutely described in this and the following chapter. The reason of their restoration is disclosed, Jer 31:3, viz., the unalterable love of God. The extent of the regathering is foretold, Jer 31:8; from every quarter of the earth both the house of Israel and the house of Judah will be brought back again. With deep penitence and supplications for their sins will they come, the Lord Himself leading them, Jer 31:9. Scarcely anything can exceed the pathos, the exquisite tenderness with which the penitents and their Redeemer talk together, as it is foretold in Jer 31:18-20. Of course this is true of all genuine repentance, but it will most emphatically be true in restored Israel, Zech 12:11-14. A New Covenant is made with them in the day they return to God, Jer 31:31-37. That we may be assured that the covenant was not fulfilled at the return from the Babylonian exile, it is quoted once and again in the New Testament and distinctly applied to the Jews of the future, Ro 11:26, 27; Heb 8:8-13; 10:16, 17. A still more convincing proof of the restoration is given in Jer 32:6-15,—the account of the purchase of Hanamel's land by Jeremiah. The Chaldeans were laying siege to the city; and that they would capture it the prophet very well knew. And yet he is bidden buy his cousin's field, pay the money for it, for God gave him the assurance that in due time the people would be restored to their inheritance. Abraham bought a field for his dead; Jeremiah bought one for a nation yet unborn. God led him to commit himself openly to the faith of Israel's final restoration. ([Living Messages of the Books of the Bible - The Message of Jeremiah](#))

**I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people** - This is the language of covenant. Compare the similar divine declaration in Jer 31:33 "**I will be their God, and they shall be My people**" which is clearly in the context of the New Covenant (Jer 31:31). Not to mention that He had just made a similar statement 3 verses earlier = '**And you shall be My people, And I will be your God.**'" (Jeremiah 30:22)

**God of all the families of Israel** - This foreshadows the reunification of the 10 northern tribes (aka, Israel or Ephraim) and the 2 southern tribes (Judah). It also foretells of the time when Messiah returns and "all Israel will be saved." (Ro 11:26-note). This theme of reuniting the divided kingdom is picked up very clearly in Jer 31:27-28 where he mentions the **house of Israel** and the **house of Judah** using the metaphor of them as seeds sown - they will ultimately produce one harvest, not two.

This promise is given repeatedly to Israel by Jehovah by several OT prophets (Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah)...

"And I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the LORD; and **they will be My people, and I will be their God**, for they will return to Me with their whole heart." (Jeremiah 24:7)

"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** (Jeremiah 31:33)

"And **they shall be My people, and I will be their God**, and I will give them one heart and one way, that they

may fear Me always, for their own good, and for the good of their children after them." (Jeremiah 32:38-39)

"And I shall give them one heart, and shall put a new spirit within them **Ed**: The blessings of the New Covenant). And I shall take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances, and do them. Then **they will be My people, and I shall be their God.**" (Ezekiel 11:19-20-note)

"In order that the house of Israel may no longer stray from Me and no longer defile themselves with all their transgressions. Thus they will be My people, and I shall be their God," declares the Lord GOD." (Ezekiel 14:11-note)

"And you will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God. (Ezekiel 36:28-note)

**"And they will be My people, and I will be their God...."**My dwelling place also will be with them; and **I will be their God, and they will be My people.**" (Ezekiel 37:23, 27-note)

"And I will bring them back, and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem, and **they will be My people and I will be their God** in truth and righteousness." (Zechariah 8:8 )

"And I will bring the third part through the fire, Refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, **'They are My people,'** And they will say, **The LORD is my God.**" (Zechariah 13:9)

**All the families of Israel** - The point is that at that time (when God says I will be the God of all the families) (and probably for the first time in the history of Israel) all of Israel is regenerate and redeemed (genuinely "born again").

**Ryrie** has an interesting note stating that "This chapter continues the theme of restoration for Israel. Verses 1-22 concern the Northern Kingdom, verses 23-26 the Southern Kingdom, and verses 27-40 both kingdoms."

**Charles Feinberg** comments that "In chapter 30 the restoration of Judah is foretold; here that of Israel is predicted. The messages of hope and restoration, it will be recalled, carry through chapter 33. The dominant themes in this chapter are the restoration of God's people and the new covenant. The **whole nation** is addressed in Jeremiah 31:1, then the **Ten Tribes** in Jeremiah 31:2–22, then **Judah** in Jeremiah 31:23–26, then **both Israel and Judah** in Jeremiah 31:27–40. (Expositor's Bible Commentary, 1984)

**James Van Dine** outlines Jeremiah 30-31...

- A. Israel and Judah will be **regathered** to the land of promise. Jeremiah 30:1-31:26
- B. Israel and Judah will be **renovated** into a numerous people. Jeremiah 31:27-30
- C. Israel and Judah will be **regenerated** through a new covenant. Jeremiah 31:31-37
- D. Jerusalem will be **rebuilt**. -40

**Warren Wiersbe** divides the audience as follows saying the prophet spoke to...

- To a united people - Jeremiah 31:1, 27-30
- To Israel (10 Northern Tribes) - Jeremiah 31:2-20
- To Judah (2 Southern Tribes) - Jeremiah 31:21-26
- To a united people (Jeremiah 31:27-30)

**Butler's Alliterated Outline of Jeremiah 31**

- A. The Restoration of Israel (Jeremiah 31:1–9)
  - 1. The Possession in the Restoration (Jeremiah 31:1)
  - 2. The Passion for the Restoration (Jeremiah 31:2, 3)
  - 3. The Pleasure in the Restoration (Jeremiah 31:4, 7)
  - 4. The Product of the Restoration (Jeremiah 31:5)
  - 5. The Piety in the Restoration (Jeremiah 31:6)
  - 6. The Praise in the Restoration (Jeremiah 31:7)

7. The People in the Restoration (Jeremiah 31:8, 9)
8. The Protection for the Restoration (Jeremiah 31:9)
9. The Path for the Restoration (Jeremiah 31:9)
- B. The Rejoicing for Israel (Jeremiah 31:10–14)
  1. The Countries in the Rejoicing (Jeremiah 31:10)
  2. The Cause for the Rejoicing (Jeremiah 31:11)
  3. The Cornucopia for the Rejoicing (Jeremiah 31:12, 14)
  4. The Celebrating in the Rejoicing (Jeremiah 31:13)
  5. The Changes for the Rejoicing (Jeremiah 31:13)
- C. The Repining of Israel (Jeremiah 31:15–21)
  1. The Remorse in the Repining (Jeremiah 31:15, 16)
  2. The Return in the Repining (Jeremiah 31:17)
  3. The Repentance in the Repining (Jer. 31:18, 19)
  4. The Remembrance in the Repining (Jeremiah 31:20)
  5. The Recalling in the Repining (Jeremiah 31:21)
- D. The Reaffirmation for Israel (Jeremiah 31:22–26)
  1. The Scolding in the Reaffirmation (Jeremiah 31:22)
  2. The Strength in the Reaffirmation (Jeremiah 31:22)
  3. The Spirituality in the Reaffirmation (Jeremiah 31:23)
  4. The Sojourning in the Reaffirmation (Jeremiah 31:24)
  5. The Satisfaction in the Reaffirmation (Jeremiah 31:25)
  6. The Sleep in the Reaffirmation (Jeremiah 31:26)
  7. The Sowing in the Reaffirmation (Jeremiah 31:27)
  8. The Sureness in the Reaffirmation (Jeremiah 31:28)
  9. The Sentence in the Reaffirmation (Jeremiah 31:29, 30)
- E. The Ratification for Israel (Jeremiah 31:27–34)
  1. The Newness of the Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31, 32)
  2. The Nature of the Covenant (Jeremiah 31:33, 34)
- F. The Reassurance of Israel (–40)
  1. The Continuance of the People (–37)
  2. The City of the People (–40)

(Analytical Bible Expositor)

Here is the **Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible** outline for Jeremiah 30-33...

The Messages of Comfort and Hope to God's People, Jeremiah 30:1-33:26

- A. The Great Trial and Triumph of the Coming Days, Jer 30:1-24
- B. The Great Gift of Restoration: A Picture of Reconciliation Between God and His Backsliding People, Jer 31:1-30
- C. The Great Gift of a New Covenant: A Picture of Regeneration, of Being Given a New Heart, Jer 31:31-40
- D. The Great Faith Needed in the Coming Days, Jer 32:1-44
- E. The Absolute Surety of God's Promises in the Coming Days, Jer 33:1-26

**Charles Briggs** observing the introductory formula of "thus says the Lord" and its expansion, divides Jeremiah 30–31 as follows: (1) The time of Jacob's trouble, Jer 30:1–11; (2) The healing of the incurable wound, Jer 30:12–31:6; (3) Ephraim, God's firstborn, Jer 31:7–14; (4) Rachel weeping for her children, Jer 31:15–22; (5) The restoration of Israel in Judah and the new covenant, Jer 31:23–34; and (6) God's inviolable covenant with the nation of Israel, Jer 31:35–40. (Charles A. Briggs, Messianic Prophecy)

**Jeremiah 31:2 Thus says the LORD, "The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness-- Israel, when it went to find its rest."**

The interpretation of this verse is somewhat enigmatic - some favor allusion to the exodus from Egypt and other commentators apply this "the return of the Ten Tribes from Assyrian captivity, perhaps also including the later captives from Babylon." (Feinberg). Still others feels this passage parallels Rev 12:6 ([note](#)) where "the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she might be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days." It is probably best to not be too dogmatic on this passage. The English rendering of the Septuagint (Lxx) does not shed much light on the interpretation. Lxx = "Thus did the Lord say: I found him warm in a wilderness with people that perished by dagger."

The other question is to whom is Jehovah directing the promises in this next section? Most commentators feels that He is addressed primarily to the Northern Ten Tribes and that they are the main recipient of the message through verse 22 (see Feinberg's Outline in Jer 31:1).

**Constable** has an interesting interpretation seeing this passage as an allusion to Israel in the time of the Tribulation - "When the Israelites would seek rest from the attacks of their enemies (cf. Jer 6:16; Ex. 33:14; Dt. 3:20; Josh. 1:13, 15; 22:4; Isa. 63:14), they would find it in the wilderness (cf. 2:2; Rev. 12:14–16). They will find refuge in the wilderness in the Tribulation, as they did following the Exodus (cf. Ex. 14:5–23; 33:14; Nu 14:20). But Israel's ultimate rest will occur in the Millennium when they rest in the Promised Land."

**David Guzik** has a similar interpretation - The great persecution of the Jewish people in the time of Jacob's trouble (Jeremiah 30:7-note, Revelation 12-[note](#), esp Rev 12:13-17-[note](#)) will afflict many and not all will survive. Yet the great majority of those who survived will receive God's grace and rest, finding it in their Messiah Jesus Christ. ([Commentary](#))

**The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness** - The mention of the wilderness suggests that the interpretation of the sword they survived was the sword of Egypt. Thus this verse seems to allude to the deliverance of the nation from Egyptian bondage.

**Found grace in the wilderness** - Just as in the New Testament, the **grace** of God reflects His bestowal of favor or blessing that is neither deserved nor merited.

If this refers to their 40 years of wilderness wanderings clearly His grace was manifest to them in manifold ways - His leading them, (Ex 13:21, Dt 1:32-33, Nu 9:17, 20-21) protecting them (Ex 14:14, 19-25, Dt 1:30), feeding them (Ex 16:35, Neh 9:20), caring for their needs (Dt 8:4, Dt 29:5, Neh 9:21). If one applies it to the return of the Ten Tribes, it is simply a continuation of His grace.

**Jeremiah 31:3 The LORD appeared to him from afar, saying, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness."**

## **GOD'S COVENANT FAITHFULNESS IN ACTION**

**Appeared to him** - To whom does **him** refer? In context, this refers to Israel. While Israel is often referred to in feminine terms, that is not always the case. For example, in Hosea 11:1 Jehovah says "When **Israel** was a youth I loved **him**, And out of Egypt I called My son."

**From afar** - Some translate this as "long ago" because the Hebrew adjective rahoq can have both a spatial (from afar) and a temporal (long ago) meaning.

**I have loved you** - Note clearly that it is Yahweh Who is the **Initiator** of the love, not Israel. The same principle is reiterated by John who explains "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1Jn 4:10) He latter adds that "We love, because He first loved us." (1Jn 4:19)

Why did He love them? Although we cannot begin to fathom the depths of His love (cp Ep 2:7) one can know that God's unconditional love is based upon His faithfulness to keep His covenant promises. How blessed is the man whose God is THE God and who has personally entered into His covenant with Abraham by faith (of which the New Covenant is in essence an extension). God does just love with an everlasting love but He also draws (mashak = drag) which is the same verb Jeremiah used of his deliverance from the cistern (Jer 38:13). What an awesome picture of the love of God seeking men who do not seek Him! In context of Judah's rejection and apostasy, God continued to love them. The very foundation for the restoration of Israel is the love of God and His faithfulness in keeping His Abrahamic covenant (which comes to fruition in the New Covenant)

God repeatedly affirmed His love for Israel, a love based on the Abrahamic Covenant and a love which demonstrated itself in His acting on their behalf in the past, the present (speaking of their return from exile in Babylon) and the future (which is the main focus of Jeremiah 30-33 is future)....

Deuteronomy 7:8; but because the LORD **loved you** and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers (Abrahamic Covenant), the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand, and redeemed (Israel's first redemption was based on covenant) you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 10:15 "Yet on your fathers did the LORD **set His affection to love them**, and He chose their descendants after them, even you above all peoples, as it is this day.

Hosea 11:1 **When Israel was a youth I loved him**, And out of Egypt I called My son.

**Everlasting love** - Only an eternal God could provide eternal love! And His everlasting love speaks to the unconditional nature of His love for Israel. For most of Israel's existence in the Old Testament they were quite "unlovable," if one bases that evaluation on how often they were obedient versus how often they rebelled. The record in fact shows that they continually rebelled against God (cp 2Chr 36:15-16), Who earlier declared that "**Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day**, I have sent you all My servants the prophets, daily rising early and sending them. Yet they did not listen to Me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck; they did evil more than their fathers." (Jer 7:25-26) And again Jehovah declared "Indeed the sons of Israel and the sons of Judah have been doing only evil in My sight from their youth; for the sons of Israel have been only provoking Me to anger by the work of their hands." (Jer 32:30, cp Jer 22:21)

**David Guzik** has an interesting comment and several quotes on **everlasting love** - Gods great message to Israel was an assurance of His love. Anchored in eternity past, His love for Israel extended to eternity future. It was an everlasting love. God assured Israel of this by starting with Yes. Remarkably, some Christians think that God has said no to an everlasting love for Israel as Israel; that they should now be regarded as the now unchosen chosen people.. It is not, I have pitied thee, nor I have thought about thee, but I have loved thee. God is in love with you. (Spurgeon) " And with the old love I have loved thee. Also, with a love of long standing have I loved thee.-Blayney. But I love thee always --Dahler. I still bear to the Jewish people that love which I showed to their fathers in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in the promised land. (Clarke) This statement was spoken to Israel; but the love it describes is Gods love for every believer. You must go back beyond your birth, beyond Calvary and Bethlehem, beyond the fall of man and the Garden of Eden, and as you stand looking out into the immensity of eternity, dare to believe that you were loved and chosen in Christ, the object of Gods most tender solicitude and pity. (Meyer) ([Commentary](#))

Scripture repeated testifies to the faithfulness of Jehovah to His chosen people Israel...

Jeremiah 46:28 "O Jacob My servant, do not fear," declares the LORD, "For I am with you. For I shall make a full end of all the nations Where I have driven you, Yet I shall not make a full end of you; But I shall correct you properly And by no means leave you unpunished."

Jeremiah 51:5 For neither **Israel** nor **Judah** has been forsaken By his God, the LORD of hosts, Although their land is full of guilt Before the Holy One of Israel.

**Everlasting** (eternal, forever) ([05769](#))(**olam**) is a masculine noun which means a very long time, an indefinite continuance into the distant future. Time immemorial. While **olam** often refers to time future, some uses refer to time past (Dt 32:7, Job 22:15, Jer 6:16, 18:15), without the idea of endless or limitless past. According to some authorities **olam** is derived from 'alam (05956) which means to conceal, hide, be hidden, be concealed, be secret (2Ki 4:27, Ps 10:1). (others say the origin is uncertain) Gesenius feels **olam** refers to that which is hidden, especially "hidden time" the beginning or end of which is either uncertain or undefined = eternity, perpetuity.

**Therefore** - A clear **term of conclusion**. Based on His eternal love, He acted. And even as a husband who loves his wife draws her to himself, even so Yahweh did to Israel doing so with lovingkindness. Lovingkindness is a covenant term and is based (like grace) not on their meriting being drawn but based on Yahweh's faithfulness to His covenant, especially the covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as this covenant was unconditional.

**I have drawn you with lovingkindness** - Absolutely no man seeks after God (Ro 3:11) unless he is drawn, a mysterious truth that Jesus emphasized in John 6:44 declaring "No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me **draws** him; and I will raise him up on the last day." (cp Jn 6:37) Although it is subtle, there would seem to be a difference between drawing versus compelling or forcing Israel to love Him. One is reminded of Paul's great words in Romans 2:4 - "Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that **the kindness of God leads you to repentance?**" (note)

As **Spurgeon** said "The master-magnet of the Gospel is not fear, but love. Penitents are drawn to Christ rather than driven."

**Lovingkindness** ([02617](#))(**hesed/chesed/heced**) is the idea of loyal love or faithful love in action (in Jer 31:3 "drawing" them) and often in the OT refers to God's lovingkindness expressed in His covenant relationship with Israel (His "loyal love" to His "Wife" Israel [cp Hos 2:18, 19, 20- Zechariah 8:8 ) see note , Isa 54:5, Je 31:32] = His "loyalty to covenant"). God's **hesed** His denotes persistent and unconditional tenderness, kindness, and mercy, a relationship in which He seeks after man with love and mercy (cp God immediately seeking man Ge 3:9, who was immediately hiding Ge 3:8 trying to cover their shame Ge 3:7 - contrast God's lovingkindness manifest by spilling blood to provide skins to cover their shame! Ge 3:21). **Hesed** expresses both God's loyalty to His covenant and His love for His people along with a faithfulness to keep His promises.

**W E Vine** writes that "In general, one may identify three basic meanings of hesed, and these 3 meanings always interact -- strength, steadfastness, and love. Any understanding of hesed that fails to suggest all three inevitably loses some of its richness. Love by itself easily becomes sentimentalized or universalized apart from the covenant. Yet strength or steadfastness suggests only the fulfillment of a legal (or similar) obligation. **Hesed** refers primarily to mutual and reciprocal rights and obligations between the parties of a relationship (especially Jehovah and Israel). But hesed is not only a matter of obligation but is also of generosity. It is not only a matter of loyalty, but also of mercy. **Hesed** implies personal involvement and commitment in a relationship beyond the rule of law." (Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words)

**Jeremiah 31:4 "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.**

## **THE FRUIT OF JEHOVAH'S FAITHFUL LOVE AND DRAWING**

**Again I will - Again** means once more or returning to a previous condition. The point of the word **again** is that Jehovah is the One who blessed them in the past and He will do it again. It reminds one of Paul's doxology affirming that "from Him, through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen" (Ro 11:36-note).

**Again I will build you and you will be rebuilt** - This implies that Israel had been "torn down" and this would certainly be true historically. Notice it is the nation (or people) that would be rebuilt, not so much inanimate buildings.

Recall that in Jeremiah's prophetic call God had foretold a dual aspect to his prophetic ministry "See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, **to pluck up and to break down**, to destroy and to overthrow, **to build** and to plant." (Jeremiah 1:10) His prophecy would first be one of tearing down which is the primary thrust of his prophecies through Jeremiah 29, but beginning in Jeremiah 30-33 would then be a ministry of building up as stated in this passage.

And in the previous chapter **Jehovah** declared

"Behold, I will restore the fortunes of the tents of Jacob and have compassion on his dwelling places; And the city shall be rebuilt on its ruin, And the palace shall stand on its rightful place." (Jer 30:18) (Comment - Notice that He will even have compassion on the dwelling places!)

**Jehovah** later reaffirms this prophetic promise in this section of the "Book of Consolation" (Jeremiah 30-33) -

"And I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel, and **I will rebuild them** as they were at first." (Jeremiah 33:7)

The prophet **Amos** also records Jehovah's promise to rebuild -

"In that day (the context is clearly the glorious day of the Millennium) I will raise up the fallen booth of David, And wall up its breaches; I will also raise up its ruins, And **rebuild** it as in the days of old." (Amos 9:11)

Similarly **Isaiah** prophesied

"**they shall build** houses and inhabit them; They shall also plant vineyards and eat their fruit." (Isa 65:21).

**Again you will** - The point is that there had been days of joy in the past history of Israel. But the repeated sins of the nation had diminished their experience of genuine joy. But now in the context of their entrance into the New Covenant, they will once again enjoy joy! In Jer 7:34 (cp Jer 16:9, 25:10) God had said "I will make to cease from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride; for the land will become a ruin." But now Israel basking in the light of His everlasting love and His compassion, was to experience a new joy. As one commentator put it God "was promising to turn the volume back up. Way up!"

**O virgin of Israel** - This description is repeated in Jeremiah 31:21. This phrase was used first by Jeremiah in Jeremiah 18:13 in a negative context of their forgetting Jehovah as shown by their burning of incense to worthless gods (idols) (Jer 18:15).

To what does the phrase **virgin of Israel** refer? The **NET Note** on Jer 14:17 gives us some help explaining that "This is a metaphor which occurs several times with regard to Israel, Judah, Zion, and even Sidon and Babylon. It is the poetic **personification** of the people, the city, or the land. Like other **metaphor** the quality of the comparison being alluded to must be elicited from the **context**. This is easy in Isa 23:12 (oppressed) and Isa 47:1 (soft and delicate) but not so easy in other places. From the nature of the context the suspicion here (Jer 14:17) is that the protection the virgin was normally privileged to is being referred to and there is a reminder that the people are forfeiting it by their actions. Hence God laments for them (in Jer 14:17)." (Bolding added) ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

That said, clearly "**virgin of Israel**" in Jer 31:4 and Jer 31:21 is used in a positive context. Even as a husband would delight in his wife's virginity (cp Jer 31:32), so too Jehovah would seem to be expressing a similar thought in light of the fact that Israel is now regenerate, clothed so to speak in the righteous garments of Jehovah. Israel (who originally was to be a "spiritual virgin" so to speak) had fallen far short of the "ideal" and gone whoring with her lovers in the pagan nations (Read Jer 2:20). And keep in mind that in Jer 31:32 Jehovah described His relationship with Israel under the Mosaic Covenant as "**a husband to them** (Israel)". But now in the New Covenant, she would receive a new heart and be a new creation (cp 2Cor 5:17-note), like a brand new "spiritual virgin" if you will. While this explanation is not meant to be definitive, it would certainly seem to have some merit in this "**Book of Consolation**" in which God reverses Israel's status from spiritual prostitute to sanctified virgin! But as always "Be a Berean" (Acts 17:11-note).

**HCSB Study Bible** - God pictures His love for Israel by calling her His virgin bride (2:1-3; Hos 2:14-23), recalling the early days in the wilderness. ([Select "Library," then Study Bible Notes](#))

**New Bible Commentary** - The **Virgin** image has only been used ironically before (Jer 18:13-15); here (Jer 31:4), it contrasts with the former 'prostitute' (Jer 2:20). In the New Covenant, the former stains have been washed away. The new life, moreover, is one that can be portrayed in images that are homely and joyful. The idea of Israel as Virgin leads into the colorful picture of the young women of the land going out to dance, perhaps at a festival (cf. Jdg. 21:20-21).

**Philip Ryken** alludes to virgins in his comments on the phrase **take up your tambourines...go forth to the dances** writing that "this is the way maidens danced on their wedding day. Once Jeremiah had condemned God's people for their spiritual prostitution (Jer 3:2-3; 4:30). But the day would come when they would dance their way through the city like virgin brides on a fine wedding morning, singing and dancing before the Lord. Imagine how wonderful it would be to live in a city where all the great civic events centered on the worship of Almighty God. Imagine a city where all the memorials, monuments, fairs, parades, parties, concerts, and fireworks were directed ultimately to the glory of God. That is God's ultimate plan for his city." (Preaching the Word - Jeremiah)

**Reformation Study Bible** - Contrast Jer 18:13-15, where Israel's "virginity" has been squandered. See also Jer 2:20, 22. In the New Covenant the stain of defilement is finally cleansed.

**Virgin** is not the word '**almah**' which was used in Isaiah 7:14, but the Hebrew word *betulah*

**Jeremiah 31:5 "Again you will plant vineyards on the hills of Samaria; The planters will plant and will enjoy them**

## **PRODUCTIVE LAND PRODUCES JOY**

**Again you will** - **Again** means once more or returning to a previous condition. Therefore as in the previous verse, the point is that there had been days of wonderful prosperity in the past history of Israel, but their prosperity was destroyed by their sin. But here in the context of the New Covenant, Jehovah promises that they will once again experience prosperity!

**Samaria** - This is a reference to the Northern Kingdom which was also referred to as **Ephraim** as in several of the following passages = Jer 31:6, 9, 18, 20.

**The hills of Samaria** - God truly makes all things new! In the past Samaria had been the capital of the northern kingdom and a center of idolatry including Baal worship and fertility cults. In the cursing section of Deuteronomy Moses had warned that when Israel disobeyed "you shall plant a vineyard, but you shall not use its fruit." (Dt 28:20). Now Israel would plant fertile fields that brought joy to their planters -- a complete turn-around under the New Covenant of grace.

Through the prophet **Amos** Jehovah describes the glorious, grace filled Millennial Kingdom declaring

Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "When the plowman will overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; When the mountains will drip sweet wine, And all the hills will be dissolved. Also I will restore the captivity of My people Israel (a promise to literal Israel, not the church!), and they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them, They will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, and make gardens and eat their fruit. I will also plant them on their (Israel's) land (The Land was promised to Abraham, then to Isaac and then to Jacob - Read Ge 12:7, 13:15, 15:18, 17:8, 26:3-4 = to Isaac, Ge 35:12 = to Jacob), and they will not again be rooted out from their land which I have given them," Says the LORD your God." (This is the last verse of Amos!) (Amos 9:13-15)

**Micah** prophesied of this glorious time writing "And each of them will sit under his vine And under his fig tree, With no one to make them afraid (**Ed**: Because the Millennium will be ruled by **Jehovah Shalom**, the Lord our peace!), For the mouth of **Jehovah Sabaoth** has spoken." (Micah 4:4)

**Zechariah** adds that "In that day (the Millennium),' declares **the LORD of hosts** , 'every one of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and under his fig tree.'" (Zech 3:10)

**NET Note on enjoy them** - The terms used here refer to the enjoyment of a period of peace and stability and the reversal of the curse (contrast, e.g., Deut 28:30). The Hebrew word translated "enjoy its fruit" is a technical one that refers to the owner of a vineyard getting to enjoy its fruit in the fifth year after it was planted, the crops of the first three years lying fallow, and that of the fourth being given to the LORD (cf. Lev 19:23–25). ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

**Enjoy them** - The Septuagint renders this phrase as command (aorist imperative) using the verb **aineo** which means to praise or extol and in the NT is used only of praise for God.

David spoke of these glorious days that would come to Israel in the Millennial kingdom -

"Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When the LORD restores His captive people (When? In the Messianic Kingdom), Jacob will rejoice, Israel will be glad (Note both Southern and Northern kingdoms mentioned together foreshadowing their reunification in the Millennium)." (Ps 14:7)

**Jeremiah 31:6 "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.'"**

## RESTORATION OF WORSHIP

**For - Term of explanation** - He is explaining how it is that celebration and joy would be present again in the land. It is because they have a personal relationship with Jehovah their God, the One Who is the source of all genuine joy (cp Neh 8:10, Gal 5:22, Ro 15:13, 1Thes 1:6). Indeed, as David so beautifully said "Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; In Thy presence is fulness of joy; In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever."

**Guzik on watchmen** - "The **watchmen** were posted high on vantage points in time of war to warn of an approaching enemy (cf. Jeremiah 6:17). But here the watchman's call is for a nobler purpose, Up! Let us go up to Zion." ([Ibid](#))

**Ryrie** relates that **watchmen** included "those who signaled the first appearance of the crescent moon in connection with Passover or new moon celebrations. In the **Millennium** the schism between North and South will be healed and all will go to Zion (Jerusalem) to worship. Ephraim stands for the 10 tribes of the Northern Kingdom (cf. Jer 31:9; Hos. 9:3).

**Watchman** ([05341](#)) (**natsar**) means to guard, keep, observe, hide, preserve, hide. Many of the uses of natsar are nuanced by the object that is being watched or guarded. The first use in Ex 34:7 speaks of God keeping His faithfulness! Natsar is used with a

similar sense of keeping faithfulness in "keeping" the covenant (Dt. 33:9); "keeping" the law (Ps. 105:45); "keeping" the rules of parents (Pr. 6:20).

**Watchman** - One who stands guard. Ancient cities had watchmen stationed on the walls. Their responsibility was to sound a warning if an enemy approached (2Ki 9:17; Ezekiel 33:2-3). Israel's prophets saw themselves as watchmen warning the nation of God's approaching judgment if the people did not repent. Vineyards and fields also had watchmen, especially during harvest. Their responsibility was to guard the produce from animals and thieves. (Holman)

**NET Note on watchmen** - Watchmen were stationed at vantage points to pass on warning of coming attack (Jer 6:17; Ezek 33:2, 6) or to spread the news of victory (Isa 52:8). Here reference is made to the watchmen who signaled the special times of the year such as the new moon and festival times when Israel was to go to Jerusalem to worship. Reference is not made to these in the Hebrew Bible but there is a good deal of instruction regarding them in the later [Babylonian Talmud](#). ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

**Let us go up to Zion...to the LORD our God**- Who would dare take such a journey if they were not themselves holy? As David asks rhetorically "Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? And who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood, And has not sworn deceitfully." (Ps 24:3-4)

**Zion** - The city of Jerusalem, the site of the rebuilt Millennial Temple (Ezek 40:5-43:27; cp Joel 3:16-17 = "Dwelling in Zion My holy mountain").

**To the LORD our God** - The clear implication is that He is present in Zion, a fact to which Messiah attests in Ezek 43:7 (speaking of the Millennial Temple) "this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell among the sons of Israel forever." Indeed, in the Millennial era, Messiah will rule the whole world from the city of Jerusalem. His Temple will be rebuilt (Ezekiel 40-48) Notice how they *now* readily affirm "possession" of God referring to Him as "**our** God," a reflection of their having entered into the new covenant relationship with Him.

**NET Note** adds that "Not only will Israel and Judah be reunited under one ruler (cf. Jer 23:5-6 = "Righteous Branch...the LORD our righteousness"), but they will share a unified place and practice of worship once again in contrast to Israel using the illicit places of worship, illicit priesthood, and illicit feasts instituted by Jeroboam (1Ki 12:26-31) and continued until the downfall of Samaria in 722 B.C." ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

**Jeremiah 31:7 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.'**

**KJV** For thus saith the LORD; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O LORD, save thy people, the remnant of Israel.

**NET** Moreover, the LORD says, "Sing for joy for the descendants of Jacob. Utter glad shouts for that foremost of the nations. Make your praises heard. Then say, 'LORD, rescue your people. Deliver those of Israel who remain alive.'

**ESV** For thus says the LORD: "Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, 'O LORD, save your people, the remnant of Israel.'

**NIV** This is what the LORD says: "Sing with joy for Jacob; shout for the foremost of the nations. Make your praises heard, and say, 'O LORD, save your people, the remnant of Israel.'

**NLT** Now this is what the LORD says: "Sing with joy for Israel. Shout for the greatest of nations! Shout out with praise and joy: 'Save your people, O LORD, the remnant of Israel!'

**LXE** For thus saith the Lord to Jacob; Rejoice ye, and exult over the head of the nations: make proclamation, and praise ye: say, The Lord has delivered his people, the remnant of Israel.

**See Charles Simeon's sermon** (recall he lived from 1759-1836) - [Jeremiah 31:7-9 The Restoration of the Jews](#)

**For thus says the LORD** - Jeremiah uses this phrase 26x out of 51 total uses in the OT - Jer 4:3, 27; 6:6; 10:18; 16:3, 5, 9; 20:4; 22:6, 11; 27:19; 28:14; 29:8, 10, 16; 30:5, 12; 31:7; 32:15, 42; 33:4, 17; 42:18; 48:40; 49:12; 51:33

**Sing aloud...shout among...proclaim, give praise...say** - "It is unclear who the addressees of the masculine plural imperatives are in this verse. Possibly they are the implied exiles who are viewed as in the process of returning and praying for their fellow countrymen." ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

**Chief** (head, "foremost,"= NIV "greatest"= NLT) **of nations** - Referring to Israel. Moses speaking to Israel prophesied "that He shall set you high above all nations which He has made, for praise, fame, and honor; and that you shall be a consecrated people to the LORD your God, as He has spoken." (Dt 26:19, cp Dt 28:1). Throughout Israel's history, she has only transiently fulfilled this prophecy, but it will be fully fulfilled in the last days when Messiah delivers the remnant and Jerusalem becomes the leading city of the world (cp Isa 62:12NLT which speaks of Israel and Jerusalem in the Millennium).

**O LORD save Your people** - Some versions see this not as a prayer but as a declaration - "The LORD will rescue His people. He will deliver those of Israel who remain alive." This rendering follows the **Septuagint** (see LXE above). The **NET Note** adds that this latter reading "appears more appropriate to the context of praise presupposed by the preceding imperatives." ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

**Charles Simeon** (1759-1836) - **That the Jews shall be restored to their own land, is, I think, as plainly declared in Scripture, as any truth in the Bible:** though, if any be disposed to doubt it, I am not anxious to maintain a controversy respecting it; because, however important it may be to the Jews, it is to us a matter of small moment. To me it appears, that the preceding chapter, together with that before us, is fully upon this point. But, at all events, **the future conversion of the Jews is absolutely certain, and indeed is universally admitted...**The manner in which it shall be effected—"With weeping and supplication shall they come;" as says the Prophet Zechariah also, "God will pour out upon them a spirit of grace and of supplication: and they shall look on Him whom they have pierced, and mourn, and be in bitterness, as one is in bitterness for his first-born [Note: Zechariah 12:10." ([Jeremiah 31:7-9 The Restoration of the Jews](#))

**The remnant of Israel** - This refers to the believing **remnant**, those described by Zechariah who quoted Jehovah's prophetic promise -

"And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the **Spirit of grace** and of **supplication**, so that (purpose clause - he now presents the purpose of the grace and the pleading prayers) they will look on Me whom they have pierced (Isa 53:5, cp Rev 1:7, Mt 24:30); and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly (marar) over Him, like the bitter weeping over a first-born." (Zechariah 12:10)

Even though Ro 11:26-note says "**all Israel will be saved**," other passages clearly define the "**all Israel**" as only a remnant of Jews who chose to receive Messiah as their Deliverer, Redeemer and Lord (contrast Messiah's first encounter with most of the Jews - Jn 1:11-13-note). Zechariah 13:8 is more "quantitative" specifying (note that Jehovah is speaking this prophecy)

"And it will come about in all the land...that two parts in it will be cut off and perish; but the third **will be left** (Hebrew = **yathar** = same word translated elsewhere as "**remainder/remaining**") in it." (Zech 13:8) (cp similar but less quantitative idea of "purged, purified and refined" in Da 12:10-note where "many" refers to the Jews)

Earlier Jehovah had given a parallel prophetic promise declaring

"Then I Myself shall gather the **remnant** of My flock out of **all the countries** (**Ed:** This "geographic phrase" signifies this is indeed a prophecy and is not referring to the return of the exiles from Babylon - the Northern tribe did not return from Assyria at that time!) where I have driven them and shall bring them back to their pasture; and they will be fruitful and multiply." (Jer 23:3)

In Jer 6:9 we read about Babylon gleaning and leaving a **remnant** -

Thus says the LORD of hosts, "They will thoroughly glean as the vine the **remnant** of Israel; Pass your hand again like a grape gatherer Over the branches."

**Bryan Chapell** - The **doctrine of the "remnant"** is the way the prophets refer to the faithfulness of God in tension with the overwhelming faithlessness of the chosen nation. God will save a people out of the mass of humanity. Paul takes up the remnant doctrine in his concerns over unbelief among his fellow Jews. A remnant is being saved as the true Israel (Ro 9:6-8, 27; 11:1-7). (Gospel Transformation Bible)

Here is a summary of the **doctrine of the remnant** as it applies to the nation of Israel from **C I Scofield** (while I do not agree with everything he teaches, this summary seems very sound and scripturally saturated) -

**Remnant, Summary:** In the history of Israel a remnant may be discerned, a spiritual Israel within the national Israel. In Elijah's time 7000 had not bowed the knee to Baal (1Ki 19:18). In Isaiah's time, Israel had been reduced to only a few godly "survivors" (Isa 1:9), for whose sake God still forebore to destroy the nation. During the captivities the remnant appears in Jews like Esther, Mordecai, Ezekiel, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach,

and Abednego. At the end of the seventy years of Babylonian captivity it was the remnant that returned under Ezra and Nehemiah. At the advent of our Lord, John the Baptist, Simeon, Anna, and those "who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38) were the remnant. During the Church Age the remnant is composed of believing Jews (Ro 11:4-5). But an important aspect of the remnant is prophetic. During the Great Tribulation a remnant out of all Israel will turn to Jesus as Messiah."

"Israel was not created in order to disappear - Israel will endure and flourish." – President John F. Kennedy

## THE FOREMOST OF NATIONS

**John Weldon - The Future Global Dominion of Israel** - "Thus says the Lord God, 'This is Jerusalem; I have set her at the center of the nations, ...' (Ezekiel 5: 5)....The future dominion of Israel is discussed in many passages (such as Isaiah 60:3, 5, 11-12, 14-22). Israel will one day receive "the wealth of the nations" and indeed will rule the world: "And the house of Israel will possess the nations..." (Isaiah 14:2, cf. Isaiah 49:23; 60:5, 10-12, 16-22) "... the wealth on the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come. Your gates will always stand open, they will never be shut, day or night, so that men may bring you the wealth of the nations -- their kings led in triumphal procession. For the nation or kingdom that will not serve you will perish; it will be utterly ruined." (Isaiah 60:5, 11-12) According to Isaiah 60:21, "they will possess the land forever." Because of God's faithfulness to His covenant, during the Messianic age, Israel will be "**the foremost of the nations.**" (**Jeremiah 31:7**) **All this would be impossible if God had truly and ultimately abandoned the nation of Israel.**

But the Bible teaches that God even loves the physical land of Israel, and that he chose it for His namesake as his land. God refers to the physical land of Israel as "my land." (e.g., Jeremiah 2:7). In fact, Israel is the land where he dwells. "Do not defile the land where you live and where I dwell, for I, the LORD, dwell among the Israelites." (Numbers 35:34). God describes himself as "the holy one of Israel," and "the God of Israel." In the Messianic age, God himself reigns from Jerusalem. "At that time they will call Jerusalem, The Throne of the LORD, and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the LORD. No longer will they follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts." (Jeremiah 3:17) According to the book of Revelation, at the end of the Millennium, God's love for Jerusalem remains, for as indicated previously, what comes down from heaven is the eternal magnificent city, "the new Jerusalem." (Revelation 21:1-5) True indeed, praise God. **To be sure, again, given the truth of God's sovereignty over all things, why, in 1948 would the Jews have returned to the land at all, if God were really through with the nation of Israel?** Finally, it may be well to remember that apart from God himself, the nation of Israel is the dominant theme of the Bible. Virtually the entire Old Testament is about Israel – about 77% of the Bible. God loves Israel simply because he loves Israel; it is God's perfect right to do so, as he pleases, and He has permanently wedded his faithfulness toward Israel to his own character -- after that, what else can be said? But obviously, God is not only committed to Jerusalem and Israel; he is even more committed, if that were possible, to his own dear children who have believed in his Messiah, his one and only Son. ([God's Heart for Israel and Us](#))

**Jeremiah 31:8 "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.**

## A SUPERNATURAL REGATHERING OF ISRAEL

**Behold** ([02009](#))(**hinneh**) is an interjection meaning behold, look, now; if. "It is used often and expresses strong feelings, surprise, hope, expectation, certainty, thus giving vividness depending on its surrounding context." (Baker) **Hinneh** generally directs our mind to the text, imploring the reader to give it special attention. In short, the Spirit is trying to arrest our attention! And so **hinneh** is used as an exclamation of vivid immediacy (e.g., read Ge 6:13)! **Hinneh** is a marker used to enliven a narrative, to express a change a scene, to emphasize an idea, to call attention to a detail or an important fact or action that follows (Isa 65:17, Ge 17:20, 41:17).

**Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, behold is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

**Zuck**, et al on **I am bringing them** - From all directions would come a great throng, including even those normally considered unable or unfit to travel (Jer 31:7–8). [Jeremiah's description of the return from exile transcends the historical return of the sixth-fifth centuries BC; and includes the future restoration of the nation. It is typical of prophetic eschatology to blend chronologically distant

events into one picture.] This mighty act of deliverance would make the nation forget about the ancient Exodus under Moses. No longer would they swear, "As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt." Rather they would declare, "As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them" (cf. Jer 16:14–15; Jer 23:7–8).

**I am bringing...I will gather...they will return here** - As discussed below, Jehovah first brought Nebuchadnezzar from the **North** to defeat Judah and to destroy the Temple and Jerusalem. Now Jehovah prophesies that He is bringing His chosen people back to their land (they will return here -Where? the land of Israel). Note that although this is clearly a prophecy (cf. ESV translation = "I will bring"), the phraseology in the NAS of "*I am bringing*" (the Lxx leans us toward the NAS rendering because "*bringing*" in the Greek text is in the present tense) speaks as if it is already occurring so sure is the future fulfillment of this prophecy. As a side note, remember that prophecy is given not to be a platform for arguing the end times, but for encouraging our faith, assuring us that God will indeed accomplish all the intents of His heart (Jer 30:24). We can stake our life on that truth, in this short time on earth and forever with Him in the future!

One might consider that there was a partial fulfillment of **bring them** back in the [rebirth of the nation of Israel](#) in May, 1948 after almost 2000 years without a country! **Guzik** points out that indeed "A great miracle happened in 1948, when Israel was once again established as a Jewish state in their ancient land. As wonderful and miraculous that was, it does not yet fulfill the glory of this promise. Israel is now gathered in unbelief; this will only be completely fulfilled when Israel comes to faith in Yahweh and His Messiah." (cp Ro 11:26).

Here is what the prince of preachers **C H Spurgeon** said in a sermon in 1855 (about a century before the nation was reborn) - "I believe in the restoration of the Jews to **their own land** in the **last days**. I am a firm believer in the gathering in of the Jews at a future time. Before Jesus Christ shall come upon this earth again, the Jews shall be permitted to go; to their beloved Palestine." (Wow! Spot on as the Brits would say!) (Bolding added)

**From the north country...from the remote parts of the earth** - If we just read the first phrase, this might be interpreted as God bringing the exiles back from Babylon. The last phrase however broadens the scope of this gathering to the encompass Jews throughout the entire world. Furthermore, only a relatively small company of Jews returned to Judah from Babylonian exile and here we read a great company, which supports a regathering of the Jews from their worldwide dispersion.

**North** (used 25 in Jeremiah but not all in same sense = Jer 1:13-15, 4:6, 6:1, 22, 10:22, 13:20, 15:12, 25:9 = These speak of the Babylonians; Jer 3:12, 18; 16:15; 23:8; 26; 31:8; 46:6, 10, 20, 24; 47:2; 50:3, 9, 41; 51:48) - In Jeremiah 3:18 we read a prophecy related to the "**north**" which is yet to be fulfilled -

"**In those days** (What days? The last days which will be consummated at the return of Messiah the Deliverer Who will save "all" Israel = all those who believe - Ro 11:26-note) the **house of Judah** will walk with the **house of Israel**, and they will come together **from the land of the north** to the land ("[Promised Land](#)") that I gave your fathers as an inheritance."

Earlier Jeremiah had prophesied of this yet future worldwide regathering of Jews writing

'As the LORD lives, who brought up the sons of Israel from **the land of the north** and from all the countries where He had banished them.' For I will restore them to their own land which I gave to their fathers." (Jer 16:15)

This divinely enabled regathering was reiterated in Jeremiah 23:8 -

"As the LORD lives, who brought up and led back the descendants of the household of Israel **from the north land** and from all the countries (this speaks of a yet future regathering) where I had driven them. **Then** (**expression of time**) they will live on their own soil." (Jer 23:8).

The other exilic prophet Ezekiel also prophesied of the regathering -

"I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken, and strengthen the sick; but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with judgment." (Ezek 34:16)

**Blind** - (cp Isa 42:16) The point is that so complete is His supernatural ingathering that none of the redeemed remnant are excluded or missed, even if they are blind or lame. If He can assure their return, there is no one He can not help! God will make sure all His faithful chosen people return to the Promised Land in the last days!

**Lame** - In the present context Jehovah speaks positively to the **lame**. Compare this to Jeremiah's earlier question "Is there no [balm in Gilead](#)? Is there no physician (**rapha**) there? Why then has not the health of the daughter of my people been restored?" (Jer 8:22)

**Ryrie** commenting on Jer 8:22 says the **balm** was "A resin used medicinally and available little more than a day's journey away in Gilead (cf. Ge 37:25). Though it was near, the people refused God's help."

**Micah** gives a parallel prophecy writing

"**In that day** (eschatological day - the last days, the day when Messiah returns as King of kings [Rev 19:16 -[note](#)] - see Millennium)," declares the LORD, "I will assemble the **lame**, and gather the outcasts, Even those whom I have afflicted. I will make the lame a (believing) remnant, and the outcasts a strong nation, and Yahweh will reign over them in Mount Zion (earthly Jerusalem) from now on and forever." (Micah 4:6-7 -note)

**Zephaniah** has a similar prophecy in which Jehovah promises

"**Behold**, I am going to deal at that time With all your oppressors, I will save the lame And gather the outcast (those forcibly driven out, as into exile), And I will turn their shame into praise and renown In all the earth." (Zephaniah 3:19-note)

**Jeremiah 31:9 "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."**

**With weeping they will come** - Are these tears of regret (Jdg 21:2), of repentance (as in Joel 2:12) or of joy, or some combination? As one studies the definitions of the two words **weeping** and **supplication**, it seems that these words do not generally reflect joy. I agree with the NET Note that "The ideas of contrition and repentance are implicit from the context (cf. Jer 31:18–19) and are supplied for clarity." ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

As noted below, the same Hebrew noun (tachanun) is used for supplication here and in Zechariah 12:10. We do know from this passage in Zechariah that when Messiah returns God says

"I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of **supplication** (tachanun), so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and **they will weep bitterly** (Hebrew = marar = not same word Jeremiah uses for weeping = **beki**) over Him, like the **bitter weeping** over a first-born." (Zechariah 12:10)

**Weeping** (01065)(**beki** from **bakah** = to bewail, weep, weep bitterly) is a masculine noun expressing sorrow with noise and tears. Used of trickling water (small flow) in Job 28:11 and of teardrops in Ps 102:9. First use describes Joseph weeping after his brothers had come to him in Egypt (Ge 45:2). In Dt 34:8 Israel wept at the death of Moses. In a famous use the psalmist writes "For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; **Weeping** may last for the night, But a shout of joy comes in the morning." In his brokenness Hezekiah "wept bitterly" (2Ki 20:3). In Ezra 3:13 weeping is juxtaposed to the sound of joy. When the Jews heard Haman's decree that they would be murdered there was great weeping (Esther 4:3). Job described his face had become flushed because he had wept so much (Job 16:16). There was wailing in Moab when she was devastated and ruined (Isa 15:2-3). Isaiah juxtaposes joy and weeping writing "I will also rejoice in Jerusalem, and be glad in My people; And there will no longer be heard in her The voice of **weeping** (beki) and the sound of crying (outcry, cry of distress)." (Isa 65:19). It should probably come as no surprise that the most frequent occurrences of weeping are in Jeremiah and Isaiah (both with 7 in NAS). **Beki** is used of the "lament with bitter weeping" in Ramah (Jer 31:15).

The **Septuagint** translates **beki** in Jer 31:9 with the noun **klauthmos** which means weeping, bitter crying, even wailing.

**Beki** is rendered in the **NAS** as - bitterly(1), bitterly\*(3), continual weeping(1), flowing(1), tears(1), weep(2), weeping(19), wept\*(1).

**Beki** - 28 v - Ge 45:2; Dt 34:8; Jdg 21:2; 2Sa 13:36; 2Kgs 20:3; Ezra 3:13; Esther 4:3; Job 16:16; 28:11; Ps 6:8; 30:5; 102:9; Isa 15:2-3, 5; Isa 16:9; 22:4, 12; 65:19; Jer 3:21; 9:10; 31:9, 15-16; 48:5, 32; Joel 2:12; Mal 2:13

Jehovah repeats this promise in Jeremiah 50 promising "In those days and at that time," declares the LORD, "the sons of Israel will come, both they and the sons of Judah as well; they will go along weeping as they go, and it will be the LORD their God they will seek." (Jer 50:4) Notice that the association of Israel with Judah in Jer 50:4 vaults the fulfillment of this prophecy into the future, for only a remnant of Judah returned to the promised land after the 70 year Babylonian exile.

**Weeping in Jeremiah** - Jer 3:21; 9:10; 31:9, 15-16; 48:5, 32

**Supplication** (08469)(**tachanun** from **chanan** = extending favor which is neither expected nor deserved) is a masculine noun that describes one asking for favor. In Daniel's great prayer in chapter 9, he seeks the Lord God by "prayer and supplications, with

fasting, sackcloth and ashes." (Da 9:3) and in Da 9:23 we see his supplications were heard immediately. In the first use Solomon prays "And listen to the **supplications** of Thy servant and of Thy people Israel, when they pray toward this place; hear Thou from Thy dwelling place, from heaven; hear Thou and forgive." (2Chr 6:21) In the psalms supplications reflect a plaintiff cry on one hand (Ps 28:2, 86:6, 130:2, 140:6, 143:1) and a gratitude for divine answer on the other (Ps 28:6, 31:22, 116:1). Proverbs speaks of the sense of humility of the one making supplication (Pr 18:23). In Jer 3:21 Israel is making supplication because they are beginning to feel the wrath of God's displeasure. Zechariah 12:10 was discussed above -- notice that both Jer 31:9 and Zechariah 12:10 use this same noun. The **Holman Standard** version (and others) translate **tachanun** with more variety than the NAS (all uses in NAS = supplication) and so renders it as pleading, plea for mercy, appeal for mercy, cry for help.

**Supplication** (Latin *supplex* ~ entreating for mercy; plead humbly, kneel down) - describes the the action of asking or begging for something earnestly or humbly. The idea of **pleading** conveys the sense of making an emotional appeal.

**Tachanun** - 18v - 2Chr 6:21; Job 41:3; Ps 28:2, 6; 31:22; 86:6; Ps 116:1; 130:2; 140:6; 143:1; Prov 18:23; Jer 3:21; 31:9; Dan 9:3, 17-18, 23; Zech 12:10

**I will lead them** - Notice this is a promise from Jehovah. He will regather the remnant back to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Recall that He led them through from Egypt through the wilderness for 40 years ending in their entrance into the promised land. While He went before them in "a pillar of cloud by day....and in a pillar of fire by night" (Ex 13:21-22), how He would lead them in the future is not stated.

**Criswell** suggests that "Joy and providential care will accompany the pilgrims on their way home. They will weep tears of contrition and rejoicing because of the divine consolation provided for them."

**I am a father to Israel and Ephraim is My firstborn** - Jehovah is speaking, explaining why He will lead them and why they will not stumble.

**Ephraim is My Firstborn** - see Jer 31:20. In Jeremiah 7:15 it is clear that Ephraim is used in that context not just as the name of a single tribe but as a representative of the entire Northern Kingdom (composed of 10 tribes, of who Ephraim was one). That also appears to be the meaning of Ephraim in this section. In Exodus 4:22 Moses was to tell Pharaoh that "Israel is my son, My **first-born**." The idea of first-born does not necessarily mean first chronologically, but can mean first in rank, first in preeminence with all the rights, privileges and responsibilities of a **firstborn**.

**NET Note on Ephraim** - Ephraim was the second son of Joseph who was elevated to a place of prominence in the family of Jacob by the patriarch's special blessing. It was the strongest tribe in northern Israel and Samaria lay in its territory. It is often used as a poetic parallel for Israel as here. The poetry is not speaking of two separate entities here; it is a way of repeating an idea for emphasis. Moreover, there is no intent to show special preference for northern Israel over Judah. All Israel is metaphorically God's son and the object of his special care and concern (Ex 4:22; Dt 32:6). ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

**Guzik** - Ephraim was not the **firstborn** son of Jacob (**Ed**: Specifically Ephraim was Joseph's son but he was not literally the one born first - that was **Manasseh**), yet God regarded him as firstborn. This shows that **firstborn** referred to more than birth order, it communicates the concept of preeminence.

**NET Note** - Jer 31:8-9 are reminiscent of the "**New Exodus**" motif of Isa 40-66 which has already been referred to in Jer 16:14-15; 23:7-8. See especially Isa 35:3-10; 40:3-5, 11; 41:17-20; 42:14-17; 43:16-21; 49:9-13. As there, the New Exodus will so outstrip the old that the old will pale in comparison and be almost forgotten (see Jer 23:7-8). ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

**Jeremiah 31:10 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."**

## LISTEN UP WORLD!

**Hear the word of the LORD, O nations** - This word is addressed to the Gentile nations, who for the most part had historically hated and continually sought to destroy Israel.

**He Who scattered Israel** (Jer 50:17) - Jehovah had scattered them but He knew where to find them even the so-called **Ten Lost Tribes!** And Jehovah will gather them to the promised land in the last days when the Chief Shepherd (aka "The Stone" - Da 2:34-35 -note) returns to crush the Gentile powers (cf Da 2:44-45-note).

In Isaiah Jehovah declared "For a brief moment I forsook you, But with great compassion I will gather you." (Isa 54:7) This is God's heart toward Israel!

**He...will gather** - This prophecy parallels the prophecy by Moses in Deut 30:4-5 - "If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back. And the LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers." (cp Isa 27:12, Ezek 11:17-20, Ezek 20:34-35)

As **Guzik** says on **scattered...will gather** "The themes are repeated for emphasis. God will not be finished with Israel as Israel until they are gathered again in the land in the latter days."

**As a shepherd keeps his flock** (cp Isa 40:11) - This is a term of comparison ([Simile](#)). So even as ancient shepherds guarded and protected their flocks, so too would Jehovah in this new era. He would not lose any.

**Jeremiah 31:11 For the LORD has ransomed Jacob and redeemed him from the hand of him who was stronger than he**

### **DIVINE DELIVERANCE:**

### **CAUSE FOR REJOICING**

NET = For the LORD will rescue the descendants of Jacob. He will secure their release from those who had overpowered them.

ESV = For the LORD has ransomed Jacob and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

NIV = For the LORD will ransom Jacob and redeem them from the hand of those stronger than they.

NLT = For the LORD has redeemed Israel from those too strong for them.

**For - term of explanation** - Jeremiah is explaining how scattered Israel would be gathered. First they had to be ransomed and redeemed implying they were enslaved or captive. In this spiritual sense this would refer to their enslavement to "Sin" as their master, as is true of all who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

**Ransomed...redeemed** - This rescue operation is made possible by the Messiah (specifically His death, burial and resurrection) Who is Israel's (and our) **Kinsman-Redeemer or Goel**.

**Ransomed** ([06299](#))(**padah**) means to redeem, ransom, to buy. The idea is to cause the freedom or release of a person from bondage or ownership and it often speaks of delivering or rescue of a person in distress. **Vine** adds that "**Padah** indicates that some intervening or substitutionary action effects a release from an undesirable undesirable condition. In more secular contexts, it implies a payment of some sort."

The **Lxx** translates **padah** with the verb **lutroo** which means to redeem (Lk 24:21) or set free (1Pe 1:18) by paying a ransom price.

**Redeemed** ([01350](#))(**goel/ga'al**) primarily means "restored to an original state." The redeemer was a "goel" who not only delivered but who effected restoration to an original, sometimes ideal, state. In the book of Ruth, Boaz served as Ruth's kinsman-redeemer or goel redeeming her from difficulty by the payment of a price (Ru 4:1 where "close relative" = goel/ga'al). The Lxx translates goel/ga'al with the verb **exaireo** (from **ek** = out + **aireo** = to take, remove, seize) which literally means to take out (used literally the Lxx of Jdg 14:9KJV) and usually conveys the sense of to deliver or rescue one from a perilous or confining circumstance, setting them free. (Gal 1:4-note = "**deliver** us out of this present evil age," cp Peter's deliverance from Jail in Acts 12:11). It is notable that most of the uses of **exaireo** in the Lxx (as here in Jer 31:11) and NT are in the **middle voice** a fact that **W E Vine** says "suggests that He who thus delivers us has an interest in the result of His own act."

**Goel/ga'al** describes Israel's deliverance from Egypt with this rhetorical question "Was it not You who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep; Who made the depths of the sea a pathway for the redeemed (**goel/ga'al**) to cross over?" (Isaiah 51:11, in context part of a prayer beginning in Isa 51:9)

**NET Note** on **ransomed** - Two rather theologically significant metaphors are used in this verse. The Hebrew word (**padah**) translated "will set...free" (**Ed**: NAS, ESV = ransomed) is a word used in the legal sphere for paying a redemption price to secure the freedom of a person or thing (see, e.g., Ex 13:13, 15 = **padah**). It is used metaphorically and theologically to refer to Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage (Deut 15:15; Mic 6:4 = **padah**) and its deliverance from Babylonian exile (Isa 35:10 = **padah**). ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

**NET Note on redeemed** - "The word translated "secure their release" (**Ed**: NAS/ESV = **redeemed** = **goel/ga'al** ) is a word used in the sphere of family responsibility where a person paid the price to free an indentured relative (Lev 25:48, 49) or paid the price to restore a relative's property seized to pay a debt (Lev 25:25, 33). This word, too, was used to refer metaphorically and theologically to Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage (Ex 6:6) or release from Babylonian exile (Isa 43:1-4; 44:22). These words (**padah** and **goel/ga'al**) are traditionally translated "ransom" and "redeem" and are a part of traditional Jewish and Christian vocabulary for physical and spiritual deliverance." ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

**From the hand of him who was stronger than he** - The point is that Israel was helpless to effect a release from bondage. It is only God's grace that frees any man from the tyranny of the harsh taskmaster Sin! As Jesus taught in Luke "When a strong man (Satan), fully armed, guards his own homestead, his possessions are undisturbed; but when someone stronger (Christ - cp Lk 4:18) than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away from him all his armor on which he had relied, and distributes his plunder." (Luke 11:21-22)

**Jeremiah 31:12 "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.**

## **THE REUNITED, REDEEMED NATION RETURNS REJOICING TO JERUSALEM**

**They** - The **ransomed** and **redeemed** of Jacob (Jer 31:11). As the **ransomed** and **redeemed** they have good reason now to shout for joy on the height of [Zion](#).

**Shout for joy** ([07442](#))(**ranan**) indicates the utterance or crying out of someone, giving forth a ringing cry of joy (not distress). The Lxx uses euphraino which speaks of social and festive enjoyment (as when one is merry) and in this context speaks of spiritual jubilation (cp Acts 2:26 - "my heart was glad"). The first use of ranan is in Lev 9:24 at consecration of Aaron and sons to the priesthood, when fire fell and consumed the sacrifice people "shouted and fell on their faces." So clearly the first use speaks of a shout of jubilation connected with a divinely appointed sacrifice. About one half of uses in Psalms with special emphasis on "singing" and "shouting" praises to God. The cessation of such emotion is portrayed as one of the grimmest aspects of Moab's fall.

**Radiant** ([05102](#))(**nahar**) means to shine, beam and thus be radiant. Only other uses of nahar meaning to be radiant are Ps 34:5 and Isa 60:5. There are two other uses of nahar with a completely different meaning = to flow or stream all 3 uses figuratively speaking of people are nations "streaming." = Jer 51:44, Isaiah 2:2, Micah 4:1

**NET** = They will be radiant with joy over the good things the LORD provides.

**The bounty** (KJV, ESV = goodness) ([02898](#))(**tub**) means goods, good things, goodness. The Lxx translates **tuwb** with **agathos** which describes the beneficent quality of something.

Notice the source of the **bounty** or goodness - **of the LORD**. As the psalmist testifies "No **good** thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly." (Ps 84:11) This is a strong statement concerning God's ample and abundant providential care of the righteous!

**Their life will be like a watered garden** - KJV has "soul" instead of "life." This verse describes not just their physical abundance but their spiritual abundance as well. Isaiah describes a similar condition....

"And the LORD will continually guide you, and satisfy your desire in scorched places, and give strength to your bones; and **you will be like a watered garden**, And like a spring of water whose waters do not fail. (Isaiah 58:11)

**Spurgeon** applies Jeremiah 31:12 - "**Their soul shall be as a watered garden**" (Jeremiah 31:12). Oh, to have one's soul under heavenly cultivation; no longer a wilderness but a garden of the LORD! Enclosed from the waste, walled around by grace, planted by instruction, visited by love, weeded by heavenly discipline, and guarded by divine power, one's favored soul is prepared to yield fruit unto the LORD. But a garden may become parched for want of water, and then all its herbs decline and are ready to die. O my soul, how soon would this be the case were the LORD to leave thee! In the East, a garden without water soon ceases to be a garden at all: nothing can come to perfection, grow, or even live. When irrigation is kept up, the result is charming. Oh, to have one's soul watered by the Holy Spirit uniformly -- every part of the garden having its own stream; plentifully -- a sufficient refreshment coming to every tree and herb, however thirsty by nature it may be; continually -- each hour bringing not only its heat, but its refreshment; wisely -- each plant receiving just what it needs. In a garden you can see by the verdure where the water flows, and you can soon perceive when the Spirit of God comes. O LORD, water me this day and cause me to yield Thee a full reward for Jesus' sake. Amen.

**They will never languish again** - This describes the glorious conditions of the reign of Messiah on earth. The idea of languish is to lose vitality, to grow feeble, to waste away, to suffer from being forced to remain in an unpleasant situation. The NIV renders it "they will sorrow no more."

**Languish** ([01669](#))(**daeb**) means to become faint. The **Lxx** translates **daeb** with the verb **peinao** which means to hunger. While this description may be literally true (that they will never again be physically hungry), it is more true spiritually, for as Jesus declared (using the verb **peinao**) "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not **hunger**, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." (John 6:35)

**Constable** has an interesting comment that Jer 31:12-14 "may be referring to the eschatological banquet that will occur on earth at the beginning of the Millennium (cf. Isa. 25:6–10). Then the Israelites will appreciate Yahweh as their father (Jer 31:9), shepherd (Jer 31:10), redeemer (Jer 31:11), and king (Jer 31:12).

**Jeremiah 31:13 "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.**

## JOY IN THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

**NET** The LORD says, "At that time young women will dance and be glad. Young men and old men will rejoice. I will turn their grief into gladness. I will give them comfort and joy in place of their sorrow.

Notice that the **NET** version adds the words "**the LORD says**" the **NET Note** explaining that "This phrase has been brought up to the beginning of Jer 31:13 from the end of Jer 31:14 to introduce the transition from third person description by Jeremiah to first person address by the LORD....The translation follows the reading of the LXX (Greek version). The Hebrew reads "will dance and be glad, young men and old men together." ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

**Then - expression of time - When?** When the conditions described in Jer 31:12 prevail in the promised land, in the Messiah's **Millennial Kingdom**. Such wonderful descriptions make one wonder why there is such resistance to the truth of a literal Millennium.

**For - term of explanation** - Explaining why all those in this future time will be rejoicing (there are 3 reasons stated).

**Rejoice** (gladness, pleasure, delight) ([08057](#))(**simchah**) speaks of exceeding joy affecting one's whole disposition and was used earlier in Jer 31:7 (= gladness) (Simchah also used twice in parallel passage in Isa 35:10). The Lxx translates **simchah** with the verb **chairo** which means to be "cheer" full, calmly happy or well-off, to enjoy a state of gladness, to be delighted. **Chairo** is used in a whole range of situations in which the emotion of joy is evoked. It means to be in a state of happiness and well being (often independent of what is happening when the Source is the Spirit!).

**Simchah** is the word used in the wonderful passage in Zephaniah 3:17-note = "The LORD your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exult over you with **joy**, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy."

**Rejoice with dance** - "Dancing was an essential part of Jewish life in Bible times. According to Ecclesiastes 3:4, there is "a time to mourn, and a time to dance." Dances were performed on both sacred and secular occasions, though the Hebrew mind would not likely have thought in these terms....Dances were performed for different purposes. The mood behind the dance was one of celebration and praise....Dances were customary at weddings. On some occasions young ladies, dressed in their best clothing, danced in a bride-choosing ceremony (Judges 21:1)." (See full article on [Dancing](#)).

**I will turn their mourning into joy** - Israel's present mourning (as they historically experienced over their destruction by Babylon and in the future when they will mourn in the time of Jacob's distress - Jer 30:7-note) will not last but be replaced by joy. This prophetic promise is a complete (supernatural) reversal of the words of Jer 7:34, Jer 16:9 and Jer 25:10 (cp Isa 16:10 describing Moab)!

- [Grief and Mourning - Holman Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Mourning Customs - Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible](#)

**Isaiah** gives a parallel description of the conditions in the Millennium (cp similar wording in Jer 35:10-11 above) -

"So the **ransomed** (**padah**; Lxx = **lutroo**) of the LORD will return and come with joyful shouting to Zion, and everlasting joy (and this Millennial joy will give way to everlasting joy of the New Jerusalem) will be on their heads. They will obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away." (Isa 51:10 in context part of a prayer beginning in Isa 51:9)

**Ed Young** rightly remarks that "A God who can deliver from such an obstacle is a God Who can deliver at any time, no matter what the obstacles may be." **Dear Reader do you find yourself in a time of mourning and sorrow, in need of deliverance? Remember that He is able!**

**Will comfort** (console) ([05162](#))(**naham/nacham**) is used 109x in the OT most often in Jeremiah and essentially means to have a change of heart or disposition (as in Jer 4:28, 8:6, 15:6, 18:8, 20:16, 26:3, 13, 19, 31:19, 42:10). In other contexts such as the present passage **nacham** means to comfort (cp Jer 16:7, Jer 31:15, cp Isa 40:1, 49:13).

**Isaiah** reiterates this prophetic promise declaring "Indeed, the LORD will comfort Zion; He will **comfort** all her waste places And her wilderness He will make like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the LORD; Joy and gladness will be found in her, Thanksgiving and sound of a melody....Break forth shout joyfully together, You waste places of Jerusalem; For the LORD has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem." (Isa 51:3...Isa 52:9)

**In a parallel prophecy the Messiah Himself proclaims...**

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me (Yeshua the Messiah is speaking), because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news (the Gospel) to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives, And freedom to prisoners; 2 To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD (**Fulfilled at Messiah's First Advent in** Luke 4:18-20, 21), And the day of vengeance of our God; **Tocomfort (nacham)** all who mourn (**This prophecy is yet to be fulfilled at Messiah's Second Coming**), 3 To grant those who mourn in Zion, Giving them a garland instead of ashes, The oil of gladness instead of mourning, The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified. (Isaiah 61:1-3)

**Give them joy for their sorrow** - This is the "fruit" that will be borne when Messiah returns to ransom captive Israel. Until that day may our song and prayer (cp Ps 122:6) daily (not just as a Christmas carol!) be...

O come, O come Emmanuel  
And ransom captive Israel  
That mourns in lonely exile here,  
Until the Son of God appear.

[Play and pray this vocal version](#)

**Maranatha!**  
**Hosanna!**

**Jeremiah 31:14 "I will fill the soul of the priests with abundance, and My people will be satisfied with My goodness," declares the LORD.**

## **THE PROMISE OF SUPERNATURAL SPIRITUAL SATIETY**

**I will fill the soul of the priests with abundance**- Literally it reads "I will satiate the priests with fat (**deshan**)" but clearly conveys a figurative meaning of abundance, profusion or plenty. In this case it speaks of spiritual satiation! Full souls are always superior to full stomachs! Are you hungry? More directly is your soul hungry? Do you sense you are missing something, that your soul is empty? If so beloved, then imitate Jeremiah's example in Jer 15:16-note and your soul will experience Spirit wrought abundance as you digest the pure milk of God's Word (1Pe 2:2-note).

**Fill...with abundance...satisfied with My goodness** - These promises picture a future bliss for the nation of Israel which await consummation (the point at which something is complete or finalized) in Messiah's **Millennial Kingdom**.

**Abundance** ([01880](#))(**deshan** from **dashen** = to be fat) is a masculine noun that means fatness or ashes (First use - Lev 1:16). **Deshan** refers to the spiritual blessings of God freely bestowed on His people who will respond (Ps. 36:8; 63:5; Isa. 55:2).**Deshan**

refers to ashes of fat (fatty ashes) representing burned wood on the altar fire soaked or mixed with fat of animal sacrifice (Lev 1:16; 4:12; 6:10,11; 1Ki13:3, 5; Jer 31:40). In Ps 22:29 the adjective form of **deshan** refers to the rich as a class of people. **Deshan** is translated (in NAS) as abundance (3), ashes (8) and fatness (4).

**Deshan** - 14v - Lev 1:16; 4:12; 6:10f; Jdg 9:9; 1 Kgs 13:3, 5; Job 36:16; Ps 36:8; 63:5; 65:11; Isa 55:2; Jer 31:14, 40

Ps 36:8; They drink their fill of the **abundance** of Thy house; And Thou dost give them to drink of the river of Thy delights.

Ps 63:5 My soul is satisfied as with marrow and **fatness**, And my mouth offers praises with joyful lips.

Isaiah 55:2 "Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And delight yourself in **abundance**.

**Satisfied with My goodness** - Only Jesus fully satisfies our soul! And while "My people" includes the redeemed of Jacob, it would certainly include the redeemed Gentiles who survived the Great Tribulation and entered into the Messiah's One Thousand Year Kingdom on earth.

**Satisfied** ([07646](#))(**saba**) means to be satiated with food or drink and figuratively to be filled to satisfaction, to have enough. Clearly Jehovah is speaking here of spiritual satisfaction as David described in Ps 17:15 declaring "I will be satisfied with Your likeness" and in Ps 63:5 "My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness." In Ps 65:4 David affirmed "We will be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, Your holy temple." A good prayer for us to pray is Ps 90:14 - "O **satisfy** us in the morning with Your lovingkindness, that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days." Is this not in a sense a prayer that we be filled with His Spirit considering that the fruit of filling is singing (Eph 5:18-note, Eph 5:19-note) and joy (Gal 5:22-note)? In Ps 103:5 we see that Jehovah "satisfies your years with good things So that your youth is renewed like the eagle."

All the uses of **saba** in Jeremiah - Jer 5:7; 31:14; 44:17; 46:10; 50:10, 19; Lam 3:15, 30; 5:6

**Goodness** ([02898](#))(**tub**) is a masculine noun meaning property, goods, goodness, fairness, and beauty. The basic idea of tub speaks of desirability for enjoyment whether material or spiritual. **Tub** is translated by the **NAS** as best(3), best things(1), bounty(2), comeliness(1), fair(1), glad(2), good(2), good thing(2), good things(3), goodness(10), goodness'(1), prosperity(3), well(1).

The first use in Ge 24:10 describes Isaac's servant going to look for a wife for his master and setting "out with a variety of **good things**." Pharaoh offered Joseph the "**best** of the land" for his brothers. When Moses asked God ""I pray Thee, show me Thy glory!"" God answered and said "I Myself will make all My **goodness** pass before you." (Ex 33:18-19, cp His "great goodness toward the house of Israel" - Isa 63:7) In Dt 28:47 **tub** describes the character of our heart with which we should serve the LORD (= "a **glad** heart", cp Isa 65:14). Neh 9:35 laments how despite God's giving His "great **goodness**" they still did not serve Him! Can any of us identify with that sad statement?(!) In Job 20:21, 21:16 **tub** describes **prosperity** (goods). Solomon says that "When it goes **well** with the righteous, the city rejoices. (Pr 11:10). In the context of God's gracious offer in Isaiah 1:16-18-note, He adds that ""If you consent and obey, You will eat the **best** of the land." (Isa 1:19-note). The other two uses in Jeremiah refer to "**good things**" of the land (Jer 2:7) and "the **bounty** of the LORD" in the Millennium Kingdom (Jer 31:12). Hosea gives a prophetic promise that "Afterward the sons of Israel will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king; and they will come trembling to the LORD and to His **goodness** in the last days (When Messiah returns to set up His **Millennial** Kingdom) (Hos 3:5). In another prophecy given to Israel, Zechariah records that "the LORD their God will save them **in that day** (of Messiah's return - cp Ro 11:26) as the flock of His people; for they are as the stones of a crown, sparkling in His land. For what **comeliness** (tub) and beauty will be theirs! Grain will make the young men flourish, and new wine the virgins." (Zech 9:16-17, cp context Zech 9:13-15 = "The initial historical fulfillment of this prophecy came when the Maccabees defeated the Greeks ca. 167 B.C.; the final, complete fulfillment will occur at His Second Advent. The Maccabean triumph is only a pledge and a preview of final triumph over all enemies." - John MacArthur - Study Bible. Lindsey adds "The divine appearance was through providential means in the Maccabean period but will be literal and visible when Christ appears victoriously at His Second Advent. - Bible Knowledge Commentary).

**Tub** is translated in Jer 31:14 with **agathos** which means intrinsically good, inherently good in quality but with the idea of good which is also profitable, useful, benefiting others, benevolent (marked by or disposed to doing good).

**Tub** - 31 verses - Gen 24:10; 45:18, 20, 23; Exod 33:19; Deut 6:11; 28:47; 2 Kgs 8:9; Ezra 9:12; Neh 9:25, 35f; Job 20:21; 21:16; Ps 25:7; 27:13; 31:19; 65:4; 119:66; 128:5; 145:7; Prov 11:10; Isa 1:19; 63:7; 65:14; Jer 2:7; 31:12, 14; Hos 3:5; 10:11; Zech 9:17. Here are the uses in Psalms...

Ps 25:7 Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; According to Your lovingkindness remember me, For Your **goodness'** sake, O LORD.

Ps 27:13 I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the **goodness** of the LORD In the land of the living.

Ps 31:19 How great is Your **goodness**, Which You have stored up for those who fear You, Which You have wrought for those who take refuge in You, Before the sons of men!

Ps 65:4 How blessed is the one whom You choose and bring near to You To dwell in Your courts. We will be satisfied with the **goodness** of Your house, Your holy temple.

Ps 119:66 Teach me **good** discernment and knowledge, For I believe in Your commandments.

Ps 128:5 The LORD bless you from Zion, And may you see the **prosperity** of Jerusalem all the days of your life. (**A GOOD PRAYER TO PRAY FOR YOUR FAMILY AND OTHER SAINTS**).

Ps 145:7 They shall eagerly utter the memory of Your abundant **goodness** And will shout joyfully of Your righteousness.

**Swanson** on **tub** - **1.** good thing, i.e., something which has good, attractive, or beneficial qualities (Ge 24:10), note: this can refer to produce, fine wares, etc.; **2.** goodness, i.e., the state of moral goodness with absolutely no evil (Ex 33:19); **3.** prosperity, wealth, i.e., the condition or state of having an abundance (Pr 11:10); **4.** beauty, fairness, i.e., the state of attractiveness, pleasant to look at (Zec 9:17); **5.** unit: לִבְּבוּב gladness, joy, formally, goodness of heart, i.e., the state or condition of being in a joyful, glad attitude or feeling (Dt 28:47; Isa 65:14)

**Jeremiah 31:15 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."**

**A voice is heard in Ramah** - Rachel, the mother of Benjamin and Joseph (and as such was representative of all Israelite mothers as Benjamin and Joseph's sons Ephraim and Manasseh were representative of all Israelites, both southern and northern divisions), was buried in Ramah (1Sa 10:2) and we hear her voice in a poetic picture, weeping over the exiled tribes (from her grave so to speak), only to be comforted in Jer 31:16-17 that her "children" will be supernaturally returned to her.

This famous verse is quoted by Matthew when magi did not return to King Herod who became enraged and "sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its environs, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the magi." (Mt 2:16-18) **Harrison** comments "Cf. Matthew 2:18, where the words are cited, not as a prophecy but as a type, in connection with the killing of the infants by king Herod." (See comment below by Dyer).

**NET Note** - **Ramah** is a town in (the land allotted to the tribe of) Benjamin approximately five miles (8 km) north of Jerusalem. It was on the road between Bethel and Bethlehem. Traditionally, Rachel's tomb was located near there at a place called Zelzah (1Sa 10:2). Rachel was the mother of Joseph and Benjamin and was very concerned about having children because she was barren (Ge 30:1-2) and went to great lengths to have them (Ge 30:3, 14-15, 22-24). She was the grandmother of Ephraim and Manasseh which were two of the major tribes in northern Israel. Here Rachel is viewed metaphorically as weeping for her "children," the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh, who had been carried away into captivity in 722 B.C. ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

**Ramah** was apparently used as an assembly point for the Jewish captives who were to taken into exile in Babylon (Jer 40:1).

**Bitter weeping...weeping** - Both uses are the noun **beki** ([01065](#)) expressing sorrow with noise and tears. (cp use of beki in Jer 31:9). The Septuagint translates **beki** in with the noun **klauthmos** which means weeping, bitter crying, even wailing.

**Scalise** writes that "'Rachel's life story sets her apart from the other Israelite ancestors. She alone had only a grave and never a home in the promised land (Jer 30:3). She died 'on the way' (Gen 35:19), and her last words express her sorrow (Gen 35:18). Not every mother will give up her own life for her child's (e.g., Jer 19:9; Lam 2:20; 4:10; 2Ki 6:28-29). Rachel's death in childbirth makes her deeply credible as an example of the profound extent of a mother's love. Rachel is a mother who does not forget her children (cf. Isa 49:15)." ([Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 27, Jeremiah 26-52](#))

**Criswell** - Rachel, the mother of Benjamin, continues to live through the descendants of that tribe. Rachel's tomb, according to tradition, was located near Bethlehem, and her weeping represents the overwhelming sorrow of the families of these slain infants (cf. Mt. 2:18). These babies are not lost forever, though, and will be honored as members of the covenant nation (cf. Jer 31:16; 1Cor 15:25, 26).

**Dyer** asks "In what sense was Herod's slaughter of the babies (Matt. 2:17-18) a "fulfillment" of Jeremiah 31:15? Jeremiah pointed to an Old Testament deportation of children from a town north of Jerusalem; Matthew used the passage to explain the New Testament slaughter of children in a village south of Jerusalem. The answer to the problem hinges on Matthew's use of the word "fulfilled" (**pleroo**). Though Matthew did use the word to record an actual fulfillment of an Old Testament prediction (cf., e.g., Mt. 21:4-5 with

Zech. 9:9), he also used the word to indicate that the full potential of something in the Old Testament had been realized (cf. Mt. 3:15; 5:17). In these latter instances there is no prophetic significance to the word "fulfill," which is how Matthew used the word to associate the slaughter in Bethlehem with the sadness in Ramah. Matthew used Jeremiah 31:15 in his book (Mt. 2:17–18) to explain the sadness of the mothers of Bethlehem. The pain of those mothers in Ramah who watched their sons being carried into exile found its full potential in the cries of the mothers of Bethlehem who cradled their sons' lifeless bodies in their arms." (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

As an aside it is interesting that the ESV Study Bible offers no study notes for most of Jeremiah 31 with notes only on Jer 31:1, 15, 31 and specifically no notes regarding the clearly eschatological passages in this great chapter!

**Jeremiah 31:16 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.**

Rachel is **weeping** over the exiles in Jer 31:15 but here is told to cease weeping because of the assurance that the exiles will return.

**Your work** - weeping and refusing to be comforted.

**Will be rewarded** - "The **reward** for Rachel's work is that her children will come back from exile from all over the world, just as Jacob and Rachel returned from serving Laban with all their children as their "**reward**."" ([Select "Library," then Study Bible Notes](#))

**Rewarded** ([07939](#))(**sakar**) is masculine noun indicating wages, a reward, pay. The first use in Ge 15:1 Jehovah speaks words of comfort to Abram "After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your **reward** (**misthos**) shall be very great."

**Return** ([07725](#))(**shub/sub**) means to turn back or return and is translated in the Lxx in Jer 31:16 with the verb **epistrepho** which describes a physical movement, in this can a return or turning back (cp Jn 21:20).

Clearly this Hebrew verb **shub/sub** is a key word in Jeremiah 31 occurring 8x in 7 verses - Jer 31:8, 16-17 prophesy Israel will return to the promised land. Jer 31:19 speaks of Israel's choosing to turn away from or straying from God. Jer 31:21 is God's call for her to return (twice in this passage). Jer 31:23 speaks of restoration of Israel's fortunes.

**Rob Morgan** has a story related to Jeremiah 31:16-17 - In chapter 31, there's a passage that proved absolutely remarkable in a true story that Sarah Fletcher shared with me recently. Verses 16-17 say this: This is what the Lord says: "Restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, for your work will be rewarded," declares the Lord... "There is hope for your future," declares the Lord. "Your children will return to their own land."

The Japanese occupation of China during World War II was brutal, not only for the Chinese but for missionaries like John and Edith Bell of Canada. They were serving the Lord in China's western regions when their three children, far away in Chefoo, were suddenly seized and imprisoned at Weihsien Concentration Camp. You can imagine the parents' anxiety, hundreds of miles from their imprisoned young children. They longed for any scrap of news about them. But the Lord gave Edith these verses, Jeremiah 31:16-17, and she claimed them for her children.

One day a man arrived on the Bell's doorstep with news that the children were well cared for with food and clothing. Some time later, he came again. This time he said, "Mrs. Bell, I have some very sad news. All the students in the Weihsien Camp have been murdered."

Edith's mind reeled, and she fought to stave off total panic. Suddenly she remembered Jeremiah 31:16-17: "Refrain your voice from weeping, And your eyes from tears... they shall come back from the land of the enemy. There is hope in your future, says the Lord, That your children shall come back to their own border."

She quickly found the verses in her Chinese Bible and said to the man, "Doctor, you read this." He read it, then angrily threw down the Bible and stomped from the house. As it turned out, he was a lying infiltrator, a spy, trying to destroy the Christians' morale with lies.

Sometime later, John and Edith had to flee through India. They eventually booked passage to America without knowing the condition of their children. As they disembarked in New York, a Red Cross worker greeted them with news their children had been liberated and had arrived back in Canada ahead of them.

"I was completely overcome," Edith said. "My children not only came from the land of the enemy, they came to their own border as the verse in Jeremiah had promised." The Bells caught the next train to Ontario where "we stepped down and were almost knocked

over by our three children. It was joy unspeakable and full of glory. God's "I wills" had not failed, and we knew they never would."

**Jeremiah 31:17 "There is hope for your future," declares the LORD, "And your children will return to their own territory**

## **A FUTURE AND A HOPE**

**Hope...future** - Earlier Jehovah in that famous passage in Jer 29:11 promised "I know the plans that I have for you," declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a **future** and a **hope**.' Jehovah is speaking to Israel and explains that "Then (in the last days, when Messiah returns) you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart (No one seeks for God, so clearly this seeking is supernaturally enabled). And I will be found by you,' declares the LORD, 'and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,' declares the LORD, 'and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile." (Jer 29:12-14). While there may be a partial historical fulfillment in the return of exiles from Babylon, that return does not entirely explain the passage for God says He "will gather (them) from all the nations" not just from Babylon. So ultimately this re-gathering awaits the last days when Jehovah "will gather them from the remote parts of the earth." (Jer 31:8; cp 31:10, 32:37).

Even the ancient writer **Jerome** (circa 347-420AD) agrees (commenting on the regathering of Israel in Jer 32:37) - "This promise, taken in its full extent was not made good to those that returned from captivity; because they were frequently infested with wars, as well by the kings of Syria and Egypt as by the rest of their neighbours; and they were finally subdued and destroyed by the Romans." The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge adds this comment - "God's word cannot fail; therefore there remaineth yet a rest for the ancient people of God."

**Hope** (08615)(**tiqvah**) is a feminine noun referring to a hope or expectation that something will happen (Ru 1:12 referring to the hope of bearing children). In the psalms we see the writer recognize that "**hope** is from" God (Ps 62:5), that He is "**myhope**." (Ps 71:5)

**Tiqvah** - 31v - Ruth 1:12; Job 4:6; 5:16; 6:8; 7:6; 8:13; 11:18, 20; 14:7, 19; 17:15; 19:10; 27:8; Ps 9:18; 62:5; 71:5; Prov 10:28; 11:7, 23; 19:18; 23:18; 24:14; 26:12; 29:20; Jer 29:11; 31:17; Lam 3:29; Ezek 19:5; 37:11; Hos 2:15; Zech 9:12

**Morris** has an interesting note on **your children** - This promise seems to assure us that the slaughtered children of Bethlehem will finally be restored to life and service, in the age to come after the resurrection

As **Ryken** said "Sorrow and grief do not have the last word, either in Jeremiah or in Matthew. A mother may refuse to be comforted, but God will comfort her nonetheless.."

**Jeremiah 31:18 "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.**

## **EPHRAIM RECOGNIZES REBELLION AGAINST JEHOVAH**

**KJV** I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my God.

**NET** I have indeed heard the people of Israel say mournfully, 'We were like a calf untrained to the yoke. You disciplined us and we learned from it. Let us come back to you and we will do so, for you are the LORD our God.

**ESV** I have heard Ephraim grieving, 'You have disciplined me, and I was disciplined, like an untrained calf; bring me back that I may be restored, for you are the LORD my God.

**NIV** "I have surely heard Ephraim's moaning: 'You disciplined me like an unruly calf, and I have been disciplined. Restore me, and I will return, because you are the LORD my God.

**NLT** I have heard Israel saying, 'You disciplined me severely, like a calf that needs training for the yoke. Turn me again to you and restore me, for you alone are the LORD my God.

**Septuagint-NETS** - In hearing I heard Ephraim mourning: "You instructed me, and I was instructed; I was not trained like a calf. Bring me back, and I shall come back, because you are the Lord my God.

**I have surely heard** (I have indeed = NET) - Jehovah is speaking. The literal Hebrew is "Hearing I have heard." Even the Lxx has "In hearing I heard." (akoen ekousa)

**Ephraim** (cp Jer 31:6)- Represents the nation of Israel and is often the name given to the 10 Northern tribes after the division of Israel. The question one might ask is when does this occur? It is spoken as if in the past tense (I have heard) but is there any evidence that the 10 Northern Tribes (Ephraim) grieved and recognized the LORD's chastening? I can find no evidence that this has occurred in history and therefore by default it must refer to a time in the future when Ephraim comes to his senses (Jer 31:19NET) and repents which almost assuredly will be at the return of the Messiah, Israel's Deliverer (cp Zech 12:10, Ro 11:26). It is only at that time Israel will declare "You are the LORD my God." While Israel is in the land again, the majority of Jews are in unbelief and would not acknowledge Jehovah as their God, substantiating that this passage speaks about a future event. The fact that it is spoken in the past tense reflects the certainty of the prophecy - it is so certain, that it is described as if it had already occurred!

**Grieving** - Lxx has the verb **oduromai** which means to bewail, lament or grieve and the **present tense** pictures this as their continual mourning. In short, in this context Ephraim is expressing godly sorrow for sins.

**You have chastised me, and I was chastised** - **Ephraim** (Israel) recognizes that her punishment was not random or accidental but represented intentional discipline from the hand of the Almighty.

**Like an untrained calf** - Israel acknowledges the need for spiritual training even as an untrained calf who had not been broken needed to be trained so that they might accept the yoke.

**Hosea** has similar metaphors...

Hosea 4:16 Since Israel is stubborn **Like a stubborn heifer**, Can the LORD now pasture them Like a lamb in a large field?

Hosea 10:11 And **Ephraim is a trained heifer** that loves to thresh, But I will come over her fair neck with a yoke; I will harness Ephraim, Judah will plow, Jacob will harrow for himself.

**NET Note** - Jer 2:20; 5:5 already referred to Israel's refusal to bear the yoke of loyalty and obedience to the LORD's demands. Here Israel expresses that she has learned from the discipline of exile and is ready to bear his yoke. ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

## **EPHRAIM'S CRY FOR RESTORATION**

**Bring me back that I may be restored** - This prayer underscores the fact that they perceived their sin had made a rift between them and Jehovah. They were no longer deceived by their sin and so they pray for the Lord to restore. The NET Note adds that "The verb "bring back" and "come back" (be restored) are from the same root in two different verbal stems and in the context express the idea of spiritual repentance and restoration of relationship not physical return to the land.

The prophet Hosea describes Ephraim's recognition of her guilt and her repentance -

(God is speaking) "I will go away and return to My place until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face; In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me (cp Jer 3:21-22)...(Ephraim speaking) "Come, let us return to the LORD. For **He has torn us**, but He will heal us; **He has wounded us**, but He will bandage us. 2 "He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, That we may live before Him." (Hosea 5:15, 6:1-2)

**Henry Morris** - Note the picture of restoration after backsliding, as presented in these verses and v22. "Ephraim" represents the ten tribes of the northern kingdom whose rebellious wickedness had finally caused them to be carried into captivity by Assyria. Yet God still loved them (Je31:20), and eventually, at the second coming of their Messiah, they will acknowledge Him, though with great mourning (Zec 12:10-13:1; Ro 11:26,27).

**Jeremiah 31:19 '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.'**

## **EPHRAIM REPENTANCE**

## CAUSES A SENSE OF SHAME

**NET** For after we turned away from you we repented. After we came to our senses we beat our breasts in sorrow. We are ashamed and humiliated because of the disgraceful things we did previously.'

**ESV** For after I had turned away, I relented, and after I was instructed, I struck my thigh; I was ashamed, and I was confounded, because I bore the disgrace of my youth.'

**NIV** After I strayed, I repented; after I came to understand, I beat my breast. I was ashamed and humiliated because I bore the disgrace of my youth.'

**NLT** I turned away from God, but then I was sorry. I kicked myself for my stupidity! I was thoroughly ashamed of all I did in my younger days.'

Comparing the above translations, notice that the **NAS** reading suggests they **turned** (returned) **back** but the other versions give a more accurate sense of Ephraim turning away from God.

**Dyer** remarks that "Jeremiah ended this section by recording Israel's cry of contrition that she will recite when she returns to the land. . Though she had strayed (Jer. 31:19) she will repent. When she returns to her God she will be ashamed and humiliated because of her sin. God in turn will express His great compassion for the wayward but returning nation (cf. Hosea 2:16–23)." This great drama will play out in the last days when Messiah returns to deliver His people.

**I repented** ([05162](#))(**naham/nacham**) means to experience a change of mind/heart or disposition, issuing in the change of one's conduct. Recall that God gracious gives us the ability to repent, and yet the individual still has to act on that enablement. The Lxx uses the verb **metanoeo** means literally to have another mind and hence to change one's mind in respect to sin, God, and self. To turn to God and from sin (Luke 15:7 = "one sinner who repents"). It is not an intellectual decision but a divinely enabled change of mind (cp Ro 2:4, Acts 3:26, 5:31, 11:18) that issues in a change of behavior. This change of mind may, especially in the case of Christians who have fallen into sin, be preceded by sorrow (2Cor 7:8, 9, 10, 11); but sorrow for sin, though it may cause repentance, is not repentance. **Darrell Bock** writes "that repentance involves a reorientation of perspective, a fresh point of view. When dealing with God's plan, it means to see that plan in a new way and to orient oneself to it. Luke demonstrates the fruit of repentance expresses itself concretely (Lk 3:10-14). Repentance expresses itself in life, especially in how one treats others." (Gulp!) There can be no genuine conversion without genuine repentance.

**Nacham** is used 14x (out of a total of 100 OT uses) in Jeremiah - Jer 4:28; 8:6; 15:6; 16:7; 18:8, 10; 20:16; 26:3, 13, 19; 31:13, 15, 19; 42:10. Two of the 3 uses in Jeremiah 31 speak not of repentance but of comfort (Jer 31:13, 15).

**After I was instructed** (Hebrew = [yada](#) = to come to know by experience used in Jer 31:34 = **Know** me...will all **know** Me"; Lxx = ginosko) - I like the **NET** rendering - "After we came to our senses we beat our breasts in sorrow." As the NLT renders it "I kicked myself for my stupidity!" Sin causes one to temporarily lose their mind or at least that has been my painful experience!

**Smote on my thigh** - This was a sign among Jews and other nations of deep affliction laced with emotions of shame and humiliation. As **Feinberg** reasons "The Spirit of God had done his effective work so that Ephraim recognized the shame his earlier sinful life brought on him."

In view of the coming judgment on Israel, God instructed Ezekiel to "Cry out and wail, son of man; for it is against My people, it is against all the officials of Israel. They are delivered over to the sword with My people, therefore **strike your thigh.**" (Ezekiel 21:12)

**I was ashamed** - Earlier Jeremiah had convinced the Jews that their idolatry had been their undoing - Jeremiah 3:24-25 "But the shameful thing (Baal identified as the shameful thing in Jer 11:13) has consumed the labor of our fathers since our youth, their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. Let us lie down in our shame, and let our humiliation cover us; for we have sinned against the LORD our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even to this day. And we have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God."

**I was ashamed...humiliated** - This is what happens when one comes to their senses and recognizes their sin for it's heinous nature, a veritable high crime against the Holy One of Israel! As the **NET** says "because of the disgraceful things we did previously." In the last days, Israel will come to their senses and grieve over their past rebellious nature and rejection of Jehovah's many overtures.

Compare a similar description by Ezekiel also in the context of Israel's restoration = "And you will know that I am the LORD, **when I bring you into the land of Israel**, into the land which I swore to give to your forefathers. **NB:** The promised land will be given to Israel and not to the Church) And there you will **remember** your ways and all your deeds, with which you have defiled yourselves; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for all the evil things that you have done.- (Ezek 20:42-43, cp parallel passage in Ezek 36:31)

Jeremiah 31:20 "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.

## JEHOVAH'S FATHERLY CONCERN FOR THE PRODIGAL SON

Now Jehovah answers affirmatively.

**Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a delightful child?** - Two rhetorical questions (questions asked in order to produce an effect or to make a statement rather than to elicit information), both expecting an affirmative reply. "Divine love will not be denied Ephraim in spite of his sin." (Feinberg)

**Thompson** - My dear son, a child in whom I delight or my darling child. Yahweh cannot utter his name (speak of him) without remembering him vividly. ([A Book of Jeremiah The New International Commentary on the Old Testament](#))

**My heart yearns for him** - This is another way of saying what he had declared in Jer 31:3 - "I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness."

**Thompson** adds that "The Hebrew text in the last line reads literally *my bowels rumble for him* but has to be rendered my heart yearns for him. The very vivid anthropomorphism depicts God's stomach being churned up with longing for his son." ([Ibid](#)) While I do not mean to be sacrilegious, this description reminds me of how my stomach used to feel in junior high when I had a serious case of "puppy love." God's love is the Father's love (cp His love for all believers = 1Jn 3:1).

**HCSB** study note - Ephraim will be forgiven and, like the prodigal, will return home. God's love will triumph over Israel's rebellion (Hos 11:1-11). ([Select "Library," then Study Bible Notes](#))

Jeremiah 31:21 "**Set up** for yourself road marks, **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.

## RETURN TO THE LAND RETURN TO YOUR GOD

KJV Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps: set thine heart toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest: turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities.

NET I will say, 'My dear children of Israel, keep in mind the road you took when you were carried off. Mark off in your minds the landmarks. Make a mental note of telltale signs marking the way back. Return, my dear children of Israel. Return to these cities of yours.

NET Note - The words "I will say" are not in the text. They are supplied in the translation to mark the transition from the address about Israel in a response to Rachel's weeping (vv. 15-20) to a direct address to Israel which is essentially the answer to Israel's prayer of penitence ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

ESV "Set up road markers for yourself; make yourself guideposts; consider well the highway, the road by which you went. Return, O virgin Israel, return to these your cities.

NIV "Set up road signs; put up guideposts. Take note of the highway, the road that you take. Return, O Virgin Israel, return to your towns.

NLT Set up road signs; put up guideposts. Mark well the path by which you came. Come back again, my virgin Israel; return to your towns here.

**Set up...place...direct...return...return** - Five imperatives! Jehovah the faithful "Husband" wants His faithless wife Israel back! One might even get a sense of urgency. Unending love! (Jer 31:3).

**Road marks...guideposts...highway...the way** - All these aids so to speak would assure that Israel would successfully find her way back to her cities in the Promised Land, and ultimately to her God.

**Feinberg** - It was the custom of caravans to set up pillars, poles, and heaps of stones to guide them. So the exiles are told to mark out the old route, to set up signs to help them find their way back. They are to pay heed to the way they went into exile in order to be able to retrace their steps (so Streane). The imperatives admonish them not to delay their return by wavering.

What a stark contrast with their unrepentant, rebellious heart in Jeremiah 6:16 - "Thus says the LORD, "Stand by **the ways** and see and ask for **the ancient paths**, Where **the good way** is, and **walk in it**; And you shall find rest for your souls. But they said, **We will not walk in it.**'

**Return...return** - (Heb = shub/sub;) is a command and is translated in the Lxx with apostrophe also an imperative to turn back to the land promised to them by Jehovah. He has not forgotten Israel. Israel is not "replaced" by the Church in God's plan for the ages (as sadly is commonly taught by many who do not interpret Scripture literally!) See [What is replacement theology?](#)

**NET Note on return...return** - The LORD here invites Israel to stop dilly-dallying and prepare themselves to return because he is prepared to do something new and miraculous. ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

Jehovah had called them to return and coupled that call with a promise in Jer 3:14- 'Return, O faithless sons,' declares the LORD; 'For I am a master to you, And I will take you one from a city and two from a family, And (THE PROMISE) I will bring you to Zion.'

**Virgin of Israel** - This is amazing grace! How great His covenant love! Jehovah still sees her as a "Virgin" despite having committed spiritual adultery times without number! How mercy filled and forgiving is our great God! Beloved, perhaps you have back-slidden for a season of spiritual adultery. This passage should give you great encouragement. God grant you ears to hear His plea to "Return to Me!" He is waiting like the prodigal's father with arms wide open! Run to Him. He is merciful to forgive and take you back into intimacy with Himself! That is His nature. Don't put it off one more day. Run to Him today seeking shelter in His great Name Jehovah (Pr 18:10).

This prophecy is in a sense a fulfillment of that in Jeremiah 31:4 - "Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt, **O virgin of Israel!** Again you shall take up your tambourines, And go forth to the dances of the merry-makers."

**Virgin (01330)(bethulah)** is a feminine noun meaning virgin, a mature young woman that has never had sexual intercourse, and under the authority and protection of the father (translated as such 49x and once as maiden in the NAS). Judges 21:12 describes "400 young **virgins** who had not known a man by lying with him." So while the meaning of bethulah is unquestionably a virgin, that is not always the case for in Joel 1:8 we read "Wail like a **virgin** girded with sackcloth for the bridegroom of her youth," which suggests the **bethulah** is mourning for her husband. Bethulah also refers to cities or countries that are personified as females (Isa. 37:22; 47:1; Jer. 18:13; 31:4, 21; Amos 5:2). **Swanson** adds that bethulah also means "young women, i.e., a class of young female, though the class may be virgins, the focus is on the youth group (Dt 32:25; Ps 148:12; Jer 31:13; Am 8:13)." Swanson adds that a third meaning of bethulah is "dear one, one cared for, loved one, formally, virgin daughter, a young woman who is loved by the father, with the associated meaning of being pure, innocent, and under the protection and care of the father (2Ki 19:21; Isa 23:12; 37:22, 22; 47:1, 1; Jer 46:11; La 1:15; 2:10, 13)."

The first use in Ge 24:16 describes "a virgin, and no man had had relations with her." The Lxx translates **bethulah** with the Greek noun **parthenos** which generally refers to a young woman of marriageable age with a focus on her virginity. Figuratively **parthenos** was used by Paul to describe the Church as the bride pledged to Christ (2Cor 11:2). Given the fact that in the OT Israel was often depicted as Jehovah's wife, it is not surprising to see her referred to in this passage as "Virgin of Israel" speaking of the effects of her redemption (Ro 11:26) so that God sees her as a "spiritual virgin" in her regenerated state.

**Bethulah** - 50x in 50v - maidens(1), virgin(32), virgins(17). - Gen 24:16; Exod 22:16f; Lev 21:3, 14; Deut 22:19, 23, 28; 32:25; Judges 19:24; 21:12; 2 Sam 13:2, 18; 1 Kgs 1:2; 2 Kgs 19:21; 2 Chr 36:17; Esther 2:2f, 17, 19; Job 31:1; Ps 45:14; 78:63; 148:12; Isa 23:4, 12; 37:22; 47:1; 62:5; Jer 2:32; 14:17; 18:13; 31:4, 13, 21; 46:11; 51:22; Lam 1:4, 15, 18; 2:10, 13, 21; 5:11; Ezek 9:6; 44:22; Joel 1:8; Amos 5:2; 8:13; Zech 9:17

- [Virgin - Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible](#)
- [Virgin: Virginity - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Virgin virginity - Hastings' Dictionary of the New Testament](#)

Jeremiah 31:22 "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."

**A NEW THING**

KJV How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the LORD hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man.

NET How long will you vacillate, you who were once like an unfaithful daughter? For I, the LORD, promise to bring about something new on the earth, something as unique as a woman protecting a man!"

ESV How long will you waver, O faithless daughter? For the LORD has created a new thing on the earth: a woman encircles a man."

NIV How long will you wander, O unfaithful daughter? The LORD will create a new thing on earth-- a woman will surround a man."

NLT How long will you wander, my wayward daughter? For the LORD will cause something new to happen-- Israel will embrace her God. "

**Faithless daughter** - Note the striking contrast with **virgin of Israel** in Jer 31:21. Israel had begun life as a "virgin" but became an apostate backslidden people, and yet God still chooses to recognize her as "o virgin of Israel." Amazing grace! Amazing love!

**NET Note** on create - Heb "create." This word is always used with God as the subject and refers to the production of something new or unique, like the creation of the world and the first man and woman (Ge 1:1; 2:3; 1:27; 5:1) or the creation of a new heavens and a new earth in a new age (Isa 65:17), or the bringing about of new and unique circumstances (Nu 16:30). Here reference is made contextually to the **new exodus**, that marvelous deliverance which will be so great that the old will pale in comparison (See the first note on Jer 31:9 = Jer 31:8-9 are reminiscent of the "**New Exodus**" motif of Isa 40-66 which has already been referred to in Jer 16:14-15; 23:7-8. See especially Isa 35:3-10; 40:3-5, 11; 41:17-20; 42:14-17; 43:16-21; 49:9-13. As there, the **New Exodus** will so outstrip the old that the old will pale in comparison and be almost forgotten (see Jer 23:7-8). ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

**Jehovah has created a new thing in the earth** - To what does this refer? In context it would appear to refer to the return of Israel to their land, a return in repentance, not in unbelief (as she is now), which speaks of a yet to come "new thing." **Dyer** agrees writing "This time of promised restoration will be so remarkable that it will be as if God will create a new thing on earth." National repentance will not occur until the Messiah returns at which time Israel (1/3 of the nation - Zech 13:8) will repent and return to Him.

**Scalise** sees "'Two things are 'new,' which have not been seen before in the land: (1) Faithless Israel, who is called a whore in chap. 3, will be taken back by God, even though such a thing is never done (Jer 3:1-2). (2) Mourning will be turned to joy."

**A woman will encompass a man** - There is no consensus on the meaning of this enigmatic statement. Some (especially the Early Church Fathers) try to make the words of Jer 31:22 into a prophecy of the Virgin Birth, but this is unsupported by the text. Below are a few suggestions but none are clearly correct.

**Ryrie** - The meaning is uncertain. Some understand it to indicate the security of Israel in the Millennium when a woman can provide all the protection needed. Others take it as a reference to Israel (A woman) embracing a man (i.e., God). Still others relate it to the Incarnation.

**Criswell** - The promise to Israel involves an unusual reversal. Instead of a husband "encompassing" his wife, the wife, even with her weaker physical nature, "encompasses" her husband (cf. 1 Pet. 3:7). "Encompass" is used here in the sense of faithful encompassing love, one which indicates clinging to an object (cf. Gen. 2:24). Israel, the "woman" or "virgin," (v. 21) will "encompass" her divine Bridegroom and cling to Him.

**Cundall** - The reference in verse 22, where, in this new situation, a woman protects (Hebrew compass, as in AV [KJV]) a man, is best interpreted as signifying the absolute security Israel will enjoy. The menfolk will be able to go about their work, for the risk of attack will be so minimal that security can safely be left to the weaker sex! (Cundall)

**Jeremiah 31:23 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!'**

**LXE** For thus saith the Lord; They shall yet speak this word in the land of Juda, and in the cities thereof, when I shall turn his captivity; blessed be the Lord on his righteous holy mountain!

**KJV** Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; The LORD bless thee, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness.

**NET** The LORD God of Israel who rules over all says, "I will restore the people of Judah to their land and to their towns. When I do, they will again say of Jerusalem, 'May the LORD bless you, you holy mountain, the place where righteousness dwells.'

**ESV** Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Once more they shall use these words in the land of Judah and in its cities, when I restore their fortunes: "'The LORD bless you, O habitation of righteousness, O holy hill!"

**NIV** This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "When I bring them back from captivity, the people in the land of Judah and in its towns will once again use these words: 'The LORD bless you, O righteous dwelling, O sacred mountain.'

**NLT** This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says: "When I bring them back from captivity, the people of Judah and its towns will again say, 'The LORD bless you, O righteous home, O holy mountain!"

**Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel**- Jehovah was and will always be the God of Israel, a truth which soundly trumps the tragic teaching of [replacement theology or supersessionism](#)! Jehovah Sabaoth said it and that settles it whether non-literalists believe it or not!

#### Related Resources -

- Jehovah Sabaoth, LORD of hosts (of armies)
- Jehovah Sabaoth: Pt2
- God of Israel

**When I restore their fortunes** - This is the key phrase. Notice it does not say "if I restore their fortunes" but **when.** **Fortunes** can also be translated captivity. Jehovah will accomplish this goal. While this was partially fulfilled in the return of the captive exiles from Babylon, in the overall context of this chapter this clearly has a future fulfillment in view.

**O abode of righteousness, O holy hill!** (holy mountain, the place where righteousness dwells) - This refers to Jerusalem and Temple Mount (Mount Moriah). This description points to a restoration of Temple worship as will occur in the the Millennium (described by Ezekiel 40:4-6 - this description runs from chapter 40-48).

**NET Note** agrees - The blessing pronounced on the city of **Zion/Jerusalem** by the restored exiles looks at the restoration of its once exalted state as the city known for its sanctity and its just dealing (see Isa 1:21 and Ps 122:1-9). This was a reversal of the state of Jerusalem in the time of Isaiah and Jeremiah where *wickedness* not *righteousness* characterized the inhabitants of the city (cf. Isa 1:21; Jer 4:14; 5:1; 13:27). **The blessing here presupposes the rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem and the temple which gave the city its sanctity.** (Bolding added) ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

**Constable** - Instead of Judah being a target for cursing in the future, as she became because of the Babylonian exile, she would be a subject of blessing. She would become a place where righteousness dwelt, a holy hill.

**Nelson Study Bible** on **holy hill** - refers to the ideal city of Jerusalem, the holy mountain home of God, the Righteous One, and Judah, His righteous remnant. As with Israel, Judah's reestablishment would see renewed productivity of its crops and flocks (Jer 31:5, 12). The people would be satiated (Jer 31:14).

The **holy hill** is the Temple Mount and specifically speaks of the rebuilt **Millennial** Temple. Compare these descriptions...

Psalms 2:6 "But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, **My holy mountain.**"

Isaiah 66:20 "Then they shall bring all your brethren from all the nations as a grain offering to the LORD, on horses, in chariots, in litters, on mules, and on camels, to **My holy mountain** Jerusalem," says the LORD, "just as the sons of Israel bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD.

**Jeremiah 31:24 "Judah and all its cities will dwell together in it, the farmer and they who go about with flocks**

LXE And there shall be dwellers in the cities of Juda, and in all his land, together with the husbandman, and the shepherd shall go forth with the flock.

KJV And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they that go

forth with flocks.

NET The land of Judah will be inhabited by people who live in its towns as well as by farmers and shepherds with their flocks.

ESV And Judah and all its cities shall dwell there together, and the farmers and those who wander with their flocks.

NIV People will live together in Judah and all its towns-- farmers and those who move about with their flocks.

NLT Townspeople and farmers and shepherds alike will live together in peace and happiness.

ASV And Judah and all the cities thereof shall dwell therein together, the husbandmen, and they that go about with flocks.

**NET Note** - It is generally agreed that three classes of people are referred to here, townspeople, farmers, and shepherds. ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

Compare the description of this future glorious time which is described again in Jeremiah 33:11-13 (Read parallel descriptions in Ezek 36:10, Zech 2:4, Zech 8:4-8)...

the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who say, "Give thanks to the LORD of hosts, For the LORD is good, For His lovingkindness is everlasting"; and of those who bring a thank offering into the house of the LORD. For **I will restore the fortunes of the land as they were at first,**' says the LORD. 12 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'There will again be in this place which is waste, without man or beast, and in all its **cities**, a habitation of shepherds who rest their **flocks**. 13 'In the **cities** of the hill country, in the cities of the lowland, in the cities of the Negev, in the land of Benjamin, in the environs of Jerusalem and in the **cities** of Judah, the **flocks** will again pass under the hands of the one who numbers them,' says the LORD.

This is the picture of God's good hand of blessing on His **remnant** of repentant, returned people!

**Jeremiah 31:25 "For I satisfy the weary ones and refresh everyone who languishes."**

## **JEHOVAH - SOURCE OF SATISFACTION AND REFRESHMENT**

LXE For I have saturated every thirsting soul, and filled every hungry soul.

KJV For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul.

NET I will fully satisfy the needs of those who are weary and fully refresh the souls of those who are faint.

ESV For I will satisfy the weary soul, and every languishing soul I will replenish."

NIV I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint."

NLT For I have given rest to the weary and joy to the sorrowing."

ASV For I have satiated the weary soul, and every sorrowful soul have I replenished.

**NET Note on I satisfy...and refresh** - The verbs here again emphasize that the actions are as good as done (i.e., they are prophetic perfects) (**Ed**: The prophetic perfect tense is a literary technique used in the Bible that describes future events that are so certain to happen that they are referred to in the past tense as if they already happened.) ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

Earlier Jeremiah used the same Hebrew word for **satisfy** (**ravah**) recording Jehovah's promise "I will fill the soul of the priests with abundance, And My people will be satisfied with My goodness," declares the LORD." (Jer 31:14) The English translation of the Septuagint has "filled every hungry soul."

In a very real sense this passage is a fulfillment of the words of Jesus Who declared "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for **they shall be satisfied.**" (Matthew 5:6-note) The nation of Israel having come to repentance and renewal will be blessed in the **Millennial Kingdom** and **shall be satisfied.**

**Languish** (used in Jer 31:12) ([01669](#))(**daeb**) means to become faint. The **Lxx** translates **daeb** with the verb **peinao** which means to hunger. While this description may be literally true (that they will never again be physically hungry), it is more true spiritually, for as

Jesus declared (using the verb peinao) "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not **hunger**, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst." (John 6:35)

**NET Note** - For the concept here compare Jer 31:12 where the promise was applied to northern Israel. This represents the reversal of the conditions that would characterize the exiles according to the covenant curse of Dt 28:65–67. ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

**Guzik** - God promised abundance and satisfaction to the empty, tired soul. The soul filled with sorrow would be filled with hope and peace.

**Jeremiah 31:26 At this I awoke and looked, and my sleep was pleasant to me.**

## **JEREMIAH'S SWEET DREAM**

**At this I awoke** - One cannot be certain as to when Jeremiah's dream state began, though several commentators feel his dream goes all the way back to Jeremiah 30:1. It is best to not be dogmatic.

**My sleep was pleasant to me** - Now he had a pleasant message to deliver. As **MacArthur** says "The hope of Israel's restoration brought a moment of peace in Jeremiah's otherwise tumultuous ministry."

**Feinberg** notes that "Jeremiah goes on to give his own response to the bright promises of the millennial time under Messiah....Jeremiah's sleep was sweet because the truths he received in them were comforting Previews of future glory for God's people (contrast the disappointing dreams in Isa 29:8; cf. Pr 3:24)."

**Michael Brown** - What a relief it must have been for the beleaguered and battered prophet to receive a revelatory dream that was not a nightmare! Jeremiah wakes up and takes stock of his surroundings; in other words, he realizes he has been dreaming and has received a word from the Lord, and he describes his quiescent experience as pleasant ('ārbâ). One can readily picture a smile forming on his lips as he basks in the reality of the blessed days to come for his people.

**Kroll** - Although Jeremiah repudiated dreams (Jer 23:25–28), here he was like a man asleep while God gave him this vision. He awakens with a sweet confidence in God's purpose for His people.

**Jeremiah 31:27 "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.**

## **MEN AND BEASTS MULTIPLIED WHEN MESSIAH REIGNS**

**Dyer** introduces the last portion of chapter 31 - The establishment of a new relationship with Israel and Judah (Jeremiah 31:27–40). The rest of the chapter focuses on the new relationship God will establish with His people.

**Behold** ([02009](#)) (**hinneh**) is an interjection meaning behold, look, now; if. "It is used often and expresses strong feelings, surprise, hope, expectation, certainty, thus giving vividness depending on its surrounding context." (Baker) **Hinneh** generally directs our mind to the text, imploring the reader to give it special attention. In short, the Spirit is trying to arrest our attention! And so hinneh is used as an exclamation of vivid immediacy (e.g., read Ge 6:13)! **Hinneh** is a marker used to enliven a narrative, to express a change a scene, to emphasize an idea, to call attention to a detail or an important fact or action that follows (Isa 65:17, Ge 17:20, 41:17). The first use of hinneh in Ge 1:29 and second in Ge 1:31 - "And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day."

**W E Vine** observes it is notable that when **behold** (hinneh) is used in **Isaiah**, it always introduces something relating to future circumstances and that is exactly the sense of **hinneh** in this passage in Jeremiah.

**Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, behold is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

## DAYS ARE COMING

**Days are coming** - This phrase is found 21 times in the OT (NAS) and most (15x) are in the book of Jeremiah - 1Sa 2:31; 2Ki 20:17; Isa 39:6; Jer 7:32; 9:25; 16:14; 19:6; 23:5, 7; 30:3; 31:27, 31, 38; 33:14; 48:12; 49:2; 51:47, 52; Amos 4:2; 8:11; 9:13. This phrase always has eschatological overtones, in some cases giving a prophecy of the coming Babylonian destruction (near future) (Jer 7:32, 19:6), but most often giving a prophecy to be fulfilled in the end times (Jer 16:14; 23:5, 7; 30:3; 31:27, 31, 38; 33:14)

**NET Note on days are coming** - This same expression is found in the introduction to the Book of Consolation (Jer 30:1–3) and in the introduction to the promise of a new covenant (or covenant; Jer 31:31). In all three passages it is emphasized that the conditions apply to both Israel and Judah. The LORD will reverse their fortunes and restore them to their lands (Jer 30:3), increase their numbers and build them up (Jer 31:27–28), and make a new covenant with them involving forgiveness of sins (Jer 31:31–34). ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

**House of Israel and the house of Judah** - This foreshadows that future day when Jehovah will reunite the 12 tribes into one nation. The last time the two houses were mentioned in the same verse was Jer 30:3.

**I will sow...with the seed of man and with the seed of beast** - Clearly this speaks to divinely orchestrated growth of the population of the nation of Israel as well as growth in prosperity. This prophetic promise of multiplication is quite a contrast with Jer 4:27; 6:12, which had both foretold of depopulation.

**NET Note on sow...seed** - The metaphor used here presupposes that drawn in Hos 2:23 which is in turn based on the wordplay with [Jezreel](#) (meaning "God sows") in Hos 2:22. The figure is that of plant seed in the ground which produces a crop; here what are sown are the "seeds of people and animals." For a similar picture of the repopulating of Israel and Judah see Ezek 36:10–11. The promise here reverses the scene of devastation that Jeremiah had depicted apocalyptically and hyperbolically in Jer 4:23–29 as judgment for Judah's sins. ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

Compare Ezekiel's similar prophecy of this increase of men and beast...

'But you, O mountains of Israel, you will put forth your branches and bear your fruit for My people Israel; for they will soon come. 9 'For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be cultivated and sown. 10 'And **I will multiply men on you**, all the house of Israel, all of it; and the cities will be inhabited, and the waste places will be rebuilt. 11'And **I will multiply on you man and beast; and they will increase and be fruitful**; and I will cause you to be inhabited as you were formerly and will treat you better than at the first. Thus you will know that I am the LORD. (Ezekiel 36:8-11-note)

**Jeremiah 31:28 "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.**

**As I have watched over them** - Notice that it was the sovereign God Who watched over their destruction and will watch over their restoration. Just as Jehovah fulfilled His promise to pluck up (Babylonian exile), He would fulfill the prophecy to build them up. We see the opposite promise in Deut 28:63.

Jeremiah was God's messenger of Israel's judgment in Jeremiah 1:10 = "See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, To pluck up and to break down, To destroy and to overthrow, To build and to plant." Now Jeremiah's message is one of redemption and restoration.

**Jeremiah 31:29 "In those days they will not say again, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.'**

## MISINTERPRETATION OF A POPULAR PROVERB

**In those days** - In the last days, the day in which Messiah returns to deliver the believing remnant of Israel (Ro 11:26-note). In context this phrase goes back to Jer 31:27 which had foretold that **days are coming** and which will continue through the end of this chapter.

**The father's have eaten...** - This was a popular proverb of Jeremiah's day but in those days would no longer be repeated.

**Guzik on fathers...children** -- Jeremiah quoted what apparently was a common proverb in his day that promoted the idea that God was punishing Judah for the sins of their forefathers, and they themselves were relatively innocent. God clearly denied this, showing that He will judge individuals for their own sins (Ezekiel 18:1-3).

**Ryrie** - The people excused themselves by saying they were being punished for the sins of their fathers; in reality each person is punished for his own sins (cf. Deut. 24:16; Ezek. 18:2-4).

**Criswell** - The Hebrews had accused God of injustice and cruelty in the punishment of children for the sins of their fathers. Actually, the children had surpassed their fathers in their wickedness. Under the New Covenant, there would be no misunderstanding because every individual must bear the responsibility for his own sins (cf. Jer 17:10; Deut. 24:16; Ezek. 18:2, 20).

**Constable** comments on this popular "proverb that said that the children were bearing the consequences of their fathers' sins. This proverb expressed a popular misconception (cf. Deut. 24:16; Ezek. 18:25). It blamed present trouble on past ancestors inordinately. In that day everyone would bear the consequences of his own actions. Justice would be obvious then whereas at present it did not seem to be operating. Whereas people do suffer for the sins of their ancestors to a limited extent (corporate responsibility), they much more consistently suffer for their own sins (individual responsibility)."

**Thompson** - The proverb quoted here occurs also in Ezekiel 18:2. It seems that the feeling was widespread that the nation was being punished for the sins of past generations and that Yahweh was unjust.

**Jeremiah 31:30 "But everyone will die for his own iniquity; each man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth will be set on edge.**

**Reformation Study Bible** - The principle that each person is judged individually is elaborated at length in Ezek. 18:4–32.

Ezek 18:20 "The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself.

**Morris** comments - No matter how much influence the father may have on his son, or vice versa, each one is responsible for himself before God (Romans 14:12).

Deut. 24:16 "Fathers shall not be put to death for their sons, nor shall sons be put to death for their fathers; everyone shall be put to death for his own sin.

**Criswell** comments on Dt 24:16 - Every person was accountable for his own wrongdoing, but one's children were inevitably affected by the consequences of his sin (cf. Dt 5:8-10). Though God in His righteous and just sovereignty might extend the penalty of sin to include the greater family (Josh. 7:24-26), earthly judges had no jurisdiction beyond the individual criminal (2Ki 14:6; 2Chr. 25:4)

**Adam Clarke** - No child shall suffer Divine punishment for the sin of his father; only so far as he acts in the same way can he be said to bear the sins of his parents.

**Jeremiah 31:31 "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,**

## **A NEW COVENANT WITH ISRAEL AND JUDAH**

**LXE** Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

**KJV** Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

**NET** "Indeed, a time is coming," says the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah.

**ESV** "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah,

**NIV** "The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.

**NLT** "The day is coming," says the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah.

**ASV** Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

**Behold** ([02009](#)) (**hinneh**) is an interjection that generally directs our mind to the text, imploring the reader to give it special attention. In short, the Spirit is trying to arrest our attention! It is notable that God uses **hinneh** when He establishes covenants (Ge 9:9,15:12, 17 [when Jehovah cut the Abrahamic covenant], Ge 17:4, cp Ge 28:13, 15), when He provided a sacrificial substitute for Isaac (foreshadowing His giving us His only Son!) (Ge 22:13).

**Days are coming** - [see preceding comment](#). In context, this is an eschatological phrase.

**Related Resources** - The Jewish Problem-David Baron

**When I will make a new covenant** - Jehovah initiates the covenant, not man. While this passage is the only OT use of the term "new covenant," it is clear that many other OT passages convey the message of a new covenant with other words and phrase - see **New Covenant in the Old Testament**. **Walter Kaiser** agrees writing "Based on similar content and contexts, the following expressions can be equated with the new covenant: the "everlasting covenant" in seven passages ( Jer. 32:40; 50:5; Ezek. 16:60; 37:26; Isa. 24:5; 55:3; 61:8), a "new heart" or a "new spirit" in three or four passages (Ezek. 11:19; 18:31; 36:26; Jer. 32:39 LXX), the "covenant of peace" in three passages (Isa. 54:10; Ezek. 34:25; 37:26), and "a covenant" or "my covenant" which is placed "in that day" in three passages ( Isa. 42:6; 49:8; Hos. 2:18–20; Isa. 59:21) —making a grand total of sixteen or seventeen major passages on the new covenant."

**Make** (cut) ([03772](#))(**karath**) literally means to cut, to cut off or to sever an object from its source or cut into parts and implies a violent action. For example, Zipporah "cut off her son's foreskin." (Ex 4:25) **Karath** is used with **beriyth** meaning to "cut a covenant" or establish a covenant between two parties, either between God and men (Abrahamic Covenant = Ge 15:18, Mosaic Covenant = Ex 24:8, Dt 5:2-3, 9:9; see Abrahamic versus Mosaic and Abrahamic vs Old vs New) or between men (Ge 21:27, 32, 26:28, 31:44, 2Sa 3:12-13, 21, 5:3; 1Sa 18:3, 20:15-16, 22:8, 23:18 between Jonathan and David [See discussion of their Covenant - Exchanging of Robes]; cutting covenant was prohibited = Ex 23:32, Dt 7:2, Jdg 2:2, a dictum which Joshua disobeyed - Josh 9:6-7,11).

In the context of cutting covenant in Jer 31:31 **karath** is translated in the Lxx with the verb **diatithemi** which is used in the sense of making "a last will or testament" (Heb 9:16-note).

**Horner** comments on the Hebrew verb making or cutting a **new covenant** - With regard to its addressees, the new covenant is plainly established with the nation of Israel through its Messiah who was, in covenantal terms, "**cut**," that is, "pierced because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities" (Isa 53:5) (**Ed**: compare use of **karath** in Da 9:26-note "the Messiah will be cut off [**karath**]"). But through this new covenant "all the peoples [families] of the earth will be blessed" (Ge 12:3) as "wild olive branch[es]" that become engrafted into "the rich root of the cultivated olive tree" (Ro 11:17-note). ([Future Israel - Why Christian Anti-Judaism Must Be Challenged](#) - if you are wrestling with whether God is finished with Israel I would recommend this book by Horner).

**New** ([02319](#))(**chadash** from the verb **chadash** meaning to renew or repair) means new. The first use in Ex 1:8 describes "new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph." **Chadash** describes a "new grain offering." (Lev 23:16, Nu 28:26).

**Chadash** describes a new house (Dt 20:5, 22:8), a new wife (Dt 24:5) and "new" gods (Dt 32:17, Jdg 5:8), new wineskins (Josh 9:13 - the were not truly new - this was a lie calculated to fool Joshua; Job 32:19), new ropes (Jdg 15:13, 16:11), new cart (1Sa 6:7, 2Sa 6:3, 1Chr 13:7), new sword (2Sa 21:16), new cloak (1Ki 11:29-30), new jar (2Ki 2:20), new court (2Chr 20:5), new songs in Psalms (Ps 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1), New Gate (Jer 26:10; 36:10:). Solomon write "there is nothing **new** under the sun." (Eccl 1:9)

Jeremiah speaking of Jehovah's compassions wrote that they "are **new** every morning; Great is Thy faithfulness." (Lam 3:23).

Many of the uses of **chadash** in Isaiah have eschatological (prophetic) significance...

Isaiah 42:9 "Behold, the former things have come to pass, Now I declare **new** things; Before they spring forth I proclaim them to you." 10Sing to the LORD a new song, Sing His praise from the end of the earth! You who go down to the sea, and all that is in it. You islands and those who dwell on them.

**MacArthur** - The "former things" are already fulfilled or about to be fulfilled prophecies of Isaiah (cf. Isa 41:22). The "new things" pertain to the future accomplishments of the Lord through His Messiah-Servant when He comes.

Isaiah 43:19 "Behold, I will do something **new**, Now it will spring forth; Will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, Rivers in the desert.

**MacArthur** - In the Messiah's future kingdom, the barren places of Israel will be well-watered (41:18) and will supply refreshment for God's chosen people (43:1).

Isaiah 48:6 "You have heard; look at all this. And you, will you not declare it? I proclaim to you **new** things from this time, Even hidden things which you have not known.

**MacArthur** - From this point onward, the prophecies of Messiah's first and second coming and the restoration of Israel have a new distinctiveness. Babylon becomes the Babylon of Revelation (Isa 48:20), and God uses Isaiah to communicate truths about the messianic kingdom on earth and the new heavens and new earth that follow it (e.g., Isa 11:1-5; 65:17). Isa 48:7 indicates that God had never before revealed these features about the future.

Isaiah 62:2 And the nations will see your righteousness, And all kings your glory; And you will be called by a **new** name, Which the mouth of the LORD will designate.

**MacArthur** - Jerusalem's new name will reflect Israel's new favored status (Isa 62:4, 12; 65:15).

Isaiah 65:17 "For behold, I create **new** heavens and a **new** earth; And the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind.

**MacArthur** - Israel's future kingdom will include a temporal kingdom of a thousand years (see notes on Rev 20:1-10) and an eternal kingdom in God's new creation (Isa 51:6, 16; 54:10; 66:22; cf. Rev 21:1-8). The prophet uses the eternal kingdom here as a reference point for both. Isaiah's prophecy does not make clear the relationship between the kingdom's two aspects as does later prophecy (Rev 20:1-21:8). This is similar to the compression of Christ's first and second advents, so that in places they are indistinguishable (cf. Isa 61:1, 2).

Isaiah 66:22 "For just as the **new** heavens and the **new** earth Which I make will endure before Me," declares the LORD, "So your offspring and your name will endure.

**MacArthur** - National Israel will have a never-ending existence through the Millennium, and on into the new heavens and the new earth throughout eternity.

Similarly all of the uses of **chadash** in Ezekiel have an eschatological significance, all referring to the New Covenant...

Ezek 11:19-note "And I shall give them one heart, and shall put a **new** spirit within them. And I shall take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,

Ezek 18:31 "Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed, and make yourselves a **new** heart and a **new** spirit! For why will you die, O house of Israel?"

**Comment:** The only way Israel could "make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit" would be by entering into the New Covenant by grace through faith. **MacArthur** adds that "The key to life eternal and triumph over death is conversion. This involves repentance from sin (Ezek 11:30, 31a) and receiving the new heart which God gives with a new spirit, wrought by the Holy Spirit (Ezek 36:24-27; Jer 31:34; Jn 3:5-8)."

Ezek 36:26-note "Moreover, I will give you a **new** heart and put a **new** spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

**Chadash** = 48v translated (NAS) as new(47), New(2), new thing(1), new things(2), something new(1). -

Ex 1:8; Lev 23:16; 26:10; Num 28:26; Deut 20:5; 22:8; 24:5; 32:17; Josh 9:13; Jdg 5:8; 15:13; 16:11-12; 1Sa 6:7; 2Sa 6:3; 21:16; 1Ki 11:29-30; 2Ki 2:20; 1Chr 13:7; 2Chr 20:5; Job 29:20; 32:19; Ps 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1; Eccl 1:9-10; Song 7:13; Isa 41:15; 42:9-10; 43:19; 48:6; 62:2; 65:17; 66:22; Jer 26:10; 31:22, 31;

The **Lxx** translates **chadash** with the adjective **kainos** which refers to that which is new kind (unprecedented, novel, uncommon, unheard of). It has not been previously present. In short, this covenant is **BRAND NEW**.

The **Reformation Study Bible** note on **house of Israel** and **house of Judah** says that *"Using both names stresses the unity of God's covenant people."*

**Comment:** Yes, that is true, but specifically in this **context** these words are addressed to the divided nation of Israel, so that this is clearly a prophetic promise that the 12 tribes would again be united in **days** that are **coming**, **days** that have not yet been fulfilled but will be at Messiah's Second Coming. It is sad that the **Reformation Study Bible (RSB)** notes for the most part tend to ignore the clear literal teaching in Jeremiah's prophecy. For example in the **RSB** comment on the phrase **"after those days"** in Jer 31:33 we read *"The prophet speaks of a time after exile, without being specific. The New Testament shows that the time arrived with Christ, the Messiah."* That is simply not correct, for even if one interprets the reborn nation of Israel (May, 1948) as the fulfillment of the reunited nation, the Jews in Israel today are for the most part not believers and thus have not had their iniquity forgiven (Jer 31:34). The only way to justify such a comment is to assume that either all in Israel are believers or the church in the NT is the final recipient of Jeremiah's promise and/or that the promise is not to be interpreted literally and contextually! In the discussion on **Keeping Context King** we have emphasized that if one interprets a passage out of context, it will potentially yield an erroneous interpretation. And as we frequently teach, if the plain sense of a specific Biblical text makes good sense in context, then seek to make no other sense lest it be nonsense! Beloved better **days are coming** for the literal, reunited nation of Israel! The upshot is that the student (all of us) who seeks to rightly divide the Word of Truth must continually employ a Berean mindset (Acts 17:11-note) and not be "held captive" by one's particular systematic theology! As an aside I am **NOT** a dispensationalist, but a *"literalist!"*

The **ESV Study Bible** comments on Jeremiah 31:31 that *"The new covenant is fulfilled in the covenant that Christ makes at the Last Supper (Mt. 26:28; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:8–13; 10:15–25) and includes Gentiles as well as Jews through union with Christ (Gal. 3:9, 14, 27–29)."*

**Comment:** I would not argue that it was **inaugurated** (initiated, commenced, set in motion) at the Last Supper, but it was **NOT FULFILLED** at the Last Supper! What the **ESV Study Bible** note fails to take into account is that the New Covenant was specifically (literally) addressed to **the house of Israel and the house of Judah** which together in no way constitute the Church! And so tragically this comment ignores the fact that the New Covenant is given to the nation of Israel in a clearly eschatological context, one which has not yet been consummated, but awaits the return of the Messiah. Paul was clear when he declared that "all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB." 27"AND THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH **THEM**, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS." (Ro 11:26-27). Who is **THEM**? If context is king in interpretation (and it is!), in the context of Romans 11 Paul is addressing his people, ethnic Jews, so clearly **THEM** is addressed to the Jews and not to the Church as erroneously interpreted by the ESV Study Bible. Furthermore, it is not at the Last Supper but at the time of Ro 11:26-27 that the New Covenant will be finally and fully fulfilled!

**Charles Dyer** also refutes the ESV note asking **'How is the church related to the New Covenant? Is the New Covenant being fulfilled in the church today?'** Ultimately the New Covenant will find its complete fulfillment during the Millennium when Israel is restored to her God. The New Covenant was made with Israel (Jer. 31:31, 33) just as the Mosaic Covenant had been (v. 32). One key element of the New Covenant is the preservation of Israel as a nation (vv. 35–37). However, though the ultimate fulfillment of this covenant awaits the millennial reign of Christ, the church today is participating in some of the benefits of that covenant. The covenant was inaugurated at Christ's death (Matt. 26:27–28; Luke 22:20), and the church, by her union with Christ, is sharing in many of the spiritual blessings promised to Israel (cf. Ro. 11:11–27; Eph. 2:11–22) including the New Covenant (2Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:6–13; 9:15; 12:22–24). But though the church's participation in the New Covenant is real, it is not the ultimate fulfillment of God's promise. The fact that believers today enjoy the spiritual blessings of the New Covenant (forgiveness of sins and the indwelling Holy Spirit) does not mean that spiritual and physical blessings will not be realized by Israel. That still awaits the day when Israel will acknowledge her sin and turn to the Messiah for forgiveness (Zech. 12:10–13:1). Some Bible scholars, however, take a slightly different view. They see one covenant (a covenant of grace), which God will apply to Israel in the Millennium and is now applying to the church in this present age. In both views the New Covenant is made possible by the blood of Christ. (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

**Covenant (01285)**(berit/berith/beriyth) was the most solemn, binding agreement that could be made between two parties in the OT and often referred to a compact made by passing between pieces of flesh.

**With the house of Israel and with the house of Judah** - As alluded to in comments above, Jehovah specifically addresses both divisions of the nation of Israel, which implies their reunification when He cuts this covenant with them. These words do not need to be spiritualized to mean the "church." The church is never referred to in any context as the house of Israel and the house of Judah. If one is intellectually honest and allows the text to say literally what Jehovah is declaring, it is clear that this New Covenant is addressed to the Jewish nation. To replace the literal nation of Israel with the church is in essence to be arrogant toward the branches, something that Paul sternly warned against in Romans 11 writing "if some of the branches (God has always preserved a believing **remnant** of Jews) were broken off (speaking figuratively of the nation of Israel), and you, being a wild olive (Gentiles), were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches (There is no place in the church for spiritual pride, much less for anti-Semitism as at least implied in the errant doctrine of **replacement theology**); but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; **for if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will He spare you.**" (Ro 11:17-21-note)

**MacArthur** has an interesting note on **Jer 31:31-34** - In contrast to the Mosaic Covenant under which Israel failed, God promised a New Covenant with a spiritual, divine dynamic by which those who know Him would participate in the blessings of salvation. The fulfillment was to individuals, yet also to Israel as a nation (Jer 31:36; Ro 11:16-27). It is set 1) in the framework of a reestablishment in their land (e.g., Jer 30-33 and in Jer 31:38-40) and 2) in the time after the ultimate difficulty (Jer 30:7). In principle, this covenant, also announced by Jesus Christ (Lk 22:20), begins to be exercised with spiritual aspects realized for Jewish and Gentile believers in the church era (1Co 11:25; Heb 8:7-13; 9:15; 10:14-17; 12:24; 13:20). It has already begun to take effect with "a remnant according to God's gracious choice" (Ro 11:5). It will be also realized by the people of Israel in the last days, including the regathering to their ancient land, Palestine (Jer 30-33). The streams of the Abrahamic, Davidic, and New Covenants find their confluence in the millennial kingdom ruled over by the Messiah.

**Barry Horner** ([read his personal pilgrimage from](#) ) has this comment on Jeremiah 31:31-40 - A common interpretation of Heb 8:7-13 has concluded that Jer 31:31-40 finds its fulfillment in the Christian church as the new Israel. For example, W. J. Grier wrote, "*In the Epistle to the Hebrews (chapters 8 and 10), we have the sacred writer claiming that the new covenant (of New Testament times) is the fulfillment of these words of Jeremiah: 'Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.' Israel and Judah are evidently the Israel of God, the New Testament Church.*" Certainly this perspective has predominated through the centuries of the Christian church, which is very much in parallel with **replacement theology** and its derogation of national Judaism. On the other hand, anyone who reads Jer 31:31-40, especially in its immediate context without any recollection of Hebrews 8 and 10, is unlikely to conclude that we are solely considering the NT church. According to **Henry Alford** (Ed: Lived 1810-1871 - He was NOT a dispensationalist) (quoting F. Bleek), "It belongs throughout to the cycle of Messianic prophecies, and is one of the most beautiful and sublime of them; and its true fulfillment can only be sought in the covenant brought in by the Savior, and in the salvation through Him imparted to mankind, and ever more and more unfolded and completed. This is the case, however this salvation, in the perception and declaration of the prophet, is bound up with the restoration of the ancient covenant people and their reunion in the land of their home." ([Future Israel - Why Christian Anti-Judaism Must Be Challenged](#) - if you are wrestling with whether God is finished with Israel I would recommend this book by Horner).

**Lawrence Richards** on the **New Covenant** - Jeremiah's announcement did not in fact make a New Covenant with Israel. It simply promised that, in time, a New Covenant would be made. Until that time, the old, Mosaic Covenant remained in force. It is much like engagement and marriage: engagement is a promise that a couple will marry, but it is not a marriage itself. Until the marriage has taken place, each of the two remains single. For hundreds of years the Jewish people looked forward to the time when the New Covenant would be made. When finally it was made, Israel tragically failed to recognize it, for the nation refused to acknowledge Jesus as the long-promised Messiah. The night before Jesus' death, He explained its meaning to His closest followers. At the Last Supper Christ said, "This is My blood of the New Covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Mt. 26:28). There were several types of beriths in Old Testament times. The most binding was a "covenant of blood": one confirmed by the death of a sacrifice, and by those making the commitment passing between the severed halves of the sacrificed animals (cf. Ge 15:6-21). The blood of Jesus not only won our salvation. That blood confirmed in an unmistakable way God's oath, promising forgiveness to all who would believe in Jesus. But it is important to realize that Jesus' death made ("cut") the New Covenant. That is, the death of Jesus was the confirming oath, the promise of what God will do in the future. **The death of Jesus did not fulfill the promise, for the New Covenant with the house of Israel promises a national renewal and conversion. Like the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants, the total fulfillment of the New Covenant awaits history's end!** (Teacher's Commentary)

**Jeremiah 31:32 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.**

## **NOT THE CONDITIONAL MOSAIC COVENANT**

**LXE** not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day when I took hold of their hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; for they abode not in my covenant, and I disregarded them, saith the Lord.

**KJV** Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:

**NET** It will not be like the old covenant that I made with their ancestors when I delivered them from Egypt. For they violated that covenant, even though I was like a faithful husband to them," says the LORD.

**ESV** not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD.

**NIV** It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD.

**NLT** 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.

**ASV** not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith Jehovah.

**Related Resource:** [Jeremiah- The New Covenant - Bible.org](https://www.bible.org/jeremiah-the-new-covenant)

**Not like the old covenant** - He is referring the Mosaic Covenant, the Covenant of the Law ("the Ten Commandments"), made with the nation of Israel at Mt Sinai, the blessings of which were conditioned on obedience.

**Warren Wiersbe** - The Old Covenant tried to **control conduct**, but the New Covenant **changes character** so that people can love the Lord and one another and want to obey God's will. "By the Law is the knowledge of sin" (Ro 3:20), but under the New Covenant God promised "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer 31:34). It is this covenant that the Jews will experience in the last days when they see their Messiah and repent (Zech 12:10–13:1). The basis for the New Covenant is the work of Jesus Christ on the cross (Mt 26:27–28; Mk 14:22–24; Lk 22:19–20). Because the church today partakes in Israel's spiritual riches (Ro 11:12–32; Eph 3:1–6), anyone who puts faith in Jesus Christ shares in this New Covenant (Heb. 8:6–13; 10:14–18). It's an experience of regeneration, being "born again" into the family of God (Jn 3:1–21). (Be Decisive) (Bolding added)

**I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt** - Metaphorically speaking God **took them by the hand** when He redeemed them from bondage (Ex 6:6, 15:13) and brought **them out of the land of Egypt** (Ex 3:17, 7:4 Dt 26:8).

**My covenant which they broke** (See Ex 24:6-8 for the cutting of this covenant inaugurated with blood as would be the New Covenant - Lk 22:20, 1Cor 11:25) - They could not keep the law because they had no inner power to keep the law. The New Covenant provided the energizing presence of the Spirit to enable them (and you and me) to obey the law (see Ezek 36:27-note, cp Phil 2:12-note and Phil 2:13-note).

Remember that the Law was not given to save us but to show us that we are all great sinners in need of a greater (the greatest) Savior (Gal 3:21-23, 24, Ro 3:20-note).

**Delitzsch** writes that "there is no period of the history of Israel before the captivity, in which more or less idolatry was not united with the worship of Jehovah, except the time of David and the first years of Solomon, during which the influence of Samuel still continued to be felt."

**NET Note on not like the covenant** - This refers to the Mosaic covenant which the nation entered into with God at Sinai and renewed on the plains of Moab. The primary biblical passages explicating this covenant are Ex 19–24 and the book of Deuteronomy; see as well the study note on Jer 11:2 for the form this covenant took and its relation to the warnings of the prophets. The renewed document of Deuteronomy was written down and provisions made for periodic public reading and renewal of commitment to it (Dt 31:9–13). Josiah had done this after the discovery of the book of the law (which was either Deuteronomy or a synopsis of it) early in

the ministry of Jeremiah (2Ki 23:1–4; the date would be near 622 B.C. shortly after Jeremiah began prophesying in 627 [see the [note](#) on Jer 1:2]). But it is apparent from Jeremiah's confrontation with Judah after that time that the commitment of the people was only superficial (cf. Jer 3:10). The prior history of the nations of Israel and Judah and Judah's current practice had been one of persistent violation of this covenant despite repeated warnings of the prophets that God would punish them for that (see especially Jer 7, 11). Because of that, Israel had been exiled (cf., e.g., Jer 3:8), and now Judah was threatened with the same (cf., e.g., Jer 7:15). Jer 30–31 look forward to a time when both Israel and Judah will be regathered, reunited, and under a new covenant which includes the same stipulations but with a different relationship (Jer 31:32). ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

**Although I was a husband to them** - The point is that Jehovah was as near and dear to Israel as a husband is to his wife, but they still sought other "lovers," other gods or as the KJV says they went "whoring after their gods" (Ex 34:15KJV, Lev 17:7KJV, Dt 31:16KJV)

**NET Note on husband** - The metaphor of Yahweh as husband and Israel as wife has been used already in Jer 3 and is implicit in the repeated allusions to idolatry as spiritual adultery or prostitution. The best commentary on the faithfulness of God to his "husband-like" relation is seen in the book of Hosea, especially in Hos 1–3.

Several verses allude to **Israel's** relationship to **Jehovah** as her **husband**...

Hosea 2:16 "And it will come about **in that day** (When Messiah returns and delivers Israel from ungodliness)," declares the LORD, "That you will call Me **Ishi** ([0376](#)) And will no longer call Me **Baali** ([01180](#) derived from [01167](#) - see also Jer 3:14 below for related words) . 17 "For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, So that they will be mentioned by their names no more. For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, So that they will be **mentioned** (Hebrew = zakar = remembered) by their names no more. (See another example of God's gift of "spiritual amnesia" in Zech 13:2 which is in the context of the Messiah's return to set up His kingdom on earth).

**NET Note** - There are wordplays on the terms שִׁי (‘**ish**) and בַּעַל (ba'al) here. The term יִשִּׁי ('ishi, "my man, husband") is a title of affection (Ge 2:23; 3:6, 16) as the counterpart to אִשָּׁה ('ishah, "woman, wife"). The term בַּעַל (baali, "my lord") emphasizes the husband's legal position (Ex 21:3; Deut 22:22; 24:4). The relationship will no longer be conditioned on the outward legal commitment but on a new inward bond of mutual affection and love....There is a wordplay on the terms בַּעַל (baali, "my master") and הַבְּעָלִים (habbē'alim, "the Baals") which are derived from the root בַּעַל (ba'al, "master; lord"). This wordplay is especially effective because the term בַּעַל can refer to one's **husband** and is also the name of the Canaanite storm god **Baal**. Referring to a spouse the term normally means "husband; master." It was a common, ordinary, nonpejorative term that was frequently used in an interchangeable manner with שִׁי ('ish, "husband; man"). Due to its similarity in sound to the abhorrent Canaanite fertility god Baal, the repentant Israelites would be so spiritually sensitive that they would refrain from even uttering this neutral term for fear of recalling their former idolatry. The purpose of the exile is to end Israel's worship of Baal and to remove **Syncretism**. ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

Hosea 2:19 "And I will betroth you to Me forever (NRSV = "I will take you for my wife forever."); Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, In lovingkindness and in compassion,

**NET Note** - The text contains an allusion to the payment of bridal gifts. The LORD will impute the moral character to Israel that will be necessary for a successful covenant relationship.

Isaiah 54:5 "For your husband is your Maker, Whose name is the LORD of hosts; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, Who is called the God of all the earth.

Jeremiah 2:2 "Go and proclaim in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the LORD, "I remember concerning you **the devotion of your youth**, The love of your betrothals (**hesed/chesed/heced**), Your following after Me in the wilderness, Through a land not sown.

**NET Note** - The Hebrew word translated "how devoted you were" (The love of your betrothals) (חֶסֶד, **hesed**) refers metaphorically to the devotion of a new bride to her husband. In typical Hebraic fashion, contemporary Israel is identified with early Israel after she first entered into covenant with (= married) the LORD. The reference to her earlier devotion is not absolute but relative. Compared to her unfaithfulness in worshipping other gods after she got into the land, the murmuring and complaining in the wilderness are ignored.

Jeremiah 3:14KJV 'Turn, O **backsliding** (refers to a people who are always turning away from the Lord, leaving their God, acting unfaithfully towards Him and His laws) children, saith the LORD; for **I am married unto you** (or "I am your Husband", "I am a master to you" = verb means to marry as in Dt 24:2, Pr 30:23): and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:

**NET Note** - There is a wordplay between the term "true master" (**ba'al** - [01166](#)) and the name of the pagan god Baal ([01168](#)). The pronoun "I" is emphatic, creating a contrast between the LORD as Israel's true master/husband versus Baal as Israel's illegitimate lover/master. See 2:23–25.

**See related resource - Backsliding or Drifting**

**Jeremiah 31:33 "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.**

## THE LAW INTERNALIZED WRITTEN ON OUR HEART

**LXE** For this is my covenant which I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will surely put my laws into their mind, and write them on their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.

**KJV** But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

**NET** "But I will make a new covenant with the whole nation of Israel after I plant them back in the land," says the LORD. "I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts **and minds**. I will be their God and they will be my people.

**NET Note** - The words "**and minds**" is not in the text but is supplied in the translation to bring the English psychology more into line with the Hebrew where the "heart" is the center both of knowing/thinking/reflecting and deciding/willing.

**ESV** But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

**NIV** "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

**NLT** "But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day," 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.

**Covenant** ([01285](#))(**berit/berith/beriyth**) was the most solemn, binding agreement that could be made between two parties in the OT and often referred to a compact made by passing between pieces of flesh. The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates berit with the noun **diatheke** which literally conveys the idea of a testament, as in one's last will and testament. A covenant is an agreement between two parties that binds them together and conveys the associated ideas of very close fellowship (even oneness and identity as for example in the marriage covenant where two mystically become one flesh).

**Make** (cut) ([03772](#))(**karath**) literally means to cut, which alludes to the idea of passing between pieces of an animal cut in half (see Jer 34:15-17, 18).

**The house of Israel** - Referring to all 12 tribes. **NET Note** adds that "All commentators agree that the term here refers to both the whole nation which was divided into the house of Israel and the house of Judah in Jer 31:30."

**Barry Horner** adds that "Both the nations of Israel and Judah, their unification also being implicit (see Ezek 37:15-23), are here the primary objects of the Lord's saving design, not the Gentile Christian church." ([Future Israel - Why Christian Anti-Judaism Must Be Challenged](#))

**After those days** - What days? He began speaking of a "new" day for the house of Israel and the house of Judah in Jeremiah 31:27-28 and mentioned days again in Jer 31:29 and Jer 31:31. The clearest direct referent of "those days" is the reference to the New Covenant in Jer 31:31.

**NET Note on after those days** - Commentators are generally agreed that this refers to the return from exile and the repopulation of the land referred to in Jer 31:27–28 and not to something subsequent to the time mentioned in Jer 31:30. This is the sequencing that is also presupposed in other new covenant passages such as Deut 30:1–6; Ezek 11:17–20; 36:24–28. ([Jeremiah 31 NET](#))

[Notes](#))

**Fruchtenbaum** on **I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it** - That conditional covenant (Mosaic Covenant) showed the standard of righteousness demanded by the law, but could never impart to the Jew the power to keep it. However, the New Covenant will rectify that problem (Jer 31:33) through regeneration, giving the internal power necessary to meet and to keep God's righteous standards.

**NET Note** says **within them** means to "in their inward parts." The Hebrew word here refers to the seat of the thoughts, emotions, and decisions (Jer 9:8 [9:7 HT]). It is essentially synonymous with "heart" in Hebrew psychological terms. ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

**Heart** ([03820](#))(**leb**) most often is used figurative to refer to what I term the "control center" of our being. Think of an Air Traffic Controller and how dysfunctional, even destructive it is when the controllers fail to function as they should. **NET Note** adds that "the **heart** is the center both of knowing/thinking/reflecting and deciding/willing."

**NET Note** on the phrase **within them and on their hearts** - Two contexts are relevant for understanding this statement. **First** is the context of the first or old covenant which was characterized by a law written on stone tablets (e.g., Ex 32:15–16; 34:1, 28; Dt 4:13; 5:22; 9:10) or in a "book" or "scroll" (Dt 31:9–13) which could be lost (cf. 2Ki 22:8), forgotten (Hos 4:6), ignored (Jer 6:19; Amos 4:2), or altered (Jer 8:8). **Second** is the context of the repeated fault that Jeremiah has found with their stubborn (Jer 3:17; 7:24; 9:14; 11:8; 13:10; 16:12; 18:12; 23:17), uncircumcised (Jer 4:4; 9:26), and desperately wicked hearts (Jer 4:4; 17:9). Radical changes were necessary to get the people to obey the law from the heart and not just pay superficial or lip service to it (Jer 3:10; 12:2). Dt 30:1-6; Ezek 11:17-20; 36:24-28 speak of these radical changes (**Ed**: These passages all are based on and represent effects of the New Covenant). The LORD will remove the "foreskin" of their heart and give them a circumcised heart, or take away their "stony" heart and give them a new heart. (**Ed**: **See Excursus on Circumcision Of the Heart**) With this heart they will be able to obey his laws, statutes, ordinances, and commands (Dt 30:8; Ezek 11:20; 36:27). The new covenant does not entail a new law; it is the same law that Jeremiah has repeatedly accused them of rejecting or ignoring (Jer 6:19; 9:13; 16:11; 26:4; 44:10). What does change is their inner commitment to keep it. Jeremiah has already referred to this in Jer 24:7 and will refer to it again in Jer 32:39. ([Jeremiah 31 NET Notes](#))

**The IVP Bible Background Commentary** has an interesting note regarding on their heart I will write it - **Extispicy** is the practice whereby diviners pose a question to deity and seek the answer by examining the entrails of sacrificed animals. When extispicy was being performed, the incantation priests asked the deity to write his revelation on the **exta** (entrails) of the sacrificed animal so that his will or instruction could be understood. Another frequent diviner's prayer was to place the truth in the exta. Both the verbs of this verse (**put, write**) and the nouns ("mind" = entrails, specifically intestines; heart) are the same words as are used in extispicy omens in Akkadian literature. But if Jeremiah is using the language and concepts of omens, it is only as a convenient bridge to his message. God's decrees and will are going to be made known through the careful examination of the heart of his people. Akkadian also uses the nouns (heart and mind) parallel to one another in reference to the center of reason and emotion.

**Criswell** - There are some marked differences between the old and new covenants (Jer 31:32; cf. Ge 9:13). (1) The Sinai covenant demanded obedience, while the new covenant offers forgiveness of sin. (2) The old covenant was written on stone tablets, while the new covenant is carved on the hearts of God's people (cf. Ezek. 36:26, 27). (3) The old covenant was between God and the nation Israel, whereas the new covenant is between God and all believers. At the foundation of the new covenant is the fact that God is everything; He will make His people what they ought to be. This new covenant clearly is applicable to two distinct groups. The author of Hebrews recognizes certain fulfillment in those who are saved in the present dispensation (Heb. 8:7-13). However, the covenant as prophesied by Jeremiah must also see a fulfillment in national Israel during the millennial age. The connection between these double fulfillments is actually that of an extension. The new covenant came into force with the atoning death of Christ. All believers in the present church age are the recipients of its benefits. Eventually those benefits will also be extended to include a repentant and regenerate Israel (Rom. 11:25-29).

## **A PRECIOUS PROMISE REPEATEDLY REPEATED!**

**I will be their God, and they shall be My people** - This is clearly the language of covenant and was a promise first given in the Abrahamic Covenant in Ge 17:8 = "And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and **I will be their God.**" This promise is repeated several times in Jeremiah...

Jeremiah 24:7 = "I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the LORD; and **they will be My people, and I will be their God**, for they will return to Me with their whole heart."

Jeremiah 30:22 **'You shall be My people, And I will be your God.'**

Jeremiah 32:38 = "And **they shall be My people, and I will be their God'**

This promise is also recorded by other prophets...

Ezekiel 37:23, 27-note = "And **they will be My people, and I will be their God....**"My dwelling place also will be with them; and **I will be their God, and they will be My people**"

Zechariah 8:8 = "And I will bring them back, and they will live in the midst of Jerusalem, and **they will be My people and I will be their God** in truth and righteousness."

**Paul** repeats this promise to the believers in the NT...

Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I **WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.** (2Cor 6:16)

The **writer of Hebrews** quotes Jeremiah...

"FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS, AND I WILL WRITE THEM UPON THEIR HEARTS. AND **I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE**" (Hebrews 8:10-note)

**Jeremiah 31:34** "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."

### **EACH WILL POSSESS PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD**

**LXE** And they shall not at all teach every one his fellow citizen, and every one his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them: for I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins I will remember no more.

**KJV** And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

**NET** "People will **no longer** need to teach their neighbors and relatives to know me. For all of them, from the least important to the most important, will know me," says the LORD. "For I will forgive their sin and will no longer call to mind the wrong they have done."

**Comment - No longer** - This phrase is used several times in the book of Jeremiah with an eschatological meaning, specifically signifying the time of the end, when Messiah returns and supernaturally reverses Israel's fortunes - Jer 3:16, 16:14, (Jer 23:4NET), Jer 23:7, 30:8 (Jer 31:19NET, Jer 31:29NET, Jer 31:34NET - twice). See ESV and NIV below.

**ESV** And **no longer** shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

**NIV** **No longer** will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

**NLT** And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their relatives, saying, 'You should know the LORD.' For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will know me already," says the LORD. "And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins."

**They will not teach again....know the LORD** - Why will they not have to teach this again? They will all know Jehovah. In short, all Israel (that believes) will be saved for Jehovah declares "**I will forgive their iniquity.**"

**They will all know Me** - This is a wonderful promise. Not only will they know **Hebrew** - yada; **Lxx** = **eido** = know beyond a shadow of a doubt!) Jehovah, but He will know them! What a contrast to the tragic scene Jesus describes in Mt 7:21-23-note where many claim to know Him but He says to them "I **never** (absolutely not at any time) **knew** you; **DEPART** (aorist imperative = command to

do this immediately!) FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE (present tense = as the habit of one's life, not occasionally - every true saint sadly still sins occasionally) LAWLESSNESS.' (Mt 7:23-note)

**Walter Kaiser** comments that by using the description **they will all know Me** "Jeremiah does not mean possessing intellectual data only (**Ed**: "Head knowledge without heart change"), but in accordance with his usage in Jeremiah 22:15, 16 it is a knowledge which results in appropriate action and living. No doubt this is the explanation of the apparent contradiction of not needing teachers in Jeremiah 31:34 and the need for the Lord to teach in that day in Isaiah 2:3. No one will need to say "Get with it, don't you know Yahweh is King." All will know that and act accordingly!"

**Fruchtenbaum** on **they will all know Me** - The New Covenant will provide for Israel's total national regeneration (Jer 31:34). Every Jew will know the Lord, from the least to the greatest. God will forgive and forget Israel's sins. The New Covenant is the basis for the first facet of Israel's restoration, Israel's regeneration.

## DIVINE FORGIVENESS AND FORGETFULNESS

**Forgive** (05545)(**salach**) (See another study) means to free from or release from something and so to pardon, to forgive, to spare. God's offer of pardon and forgiveness to sinners. **Salach** is never used of people forgiving each other but used of God forgiving. Jehovah Himself announces, in response to Moses' prayers for Israel, that He has forgiven Israel at two of their darkest moments, the golden calf incident and the murmuring at Kadesh Barnea (Ex 34:9; Nu 14:19-20).

The **Lxx** translates **salach** in Jer 31:34 with the adjective **hileos** which BDAG says "pertains to being favorably disposed, with implication of overcoming obstacles that are unfavorable to a relationship, = gracious, merciful, in the wider lit. mostly—in our lit. and in **Lxx** always—of God."

**And their sin I will remember no more** (contrast Jer 14:10) - This is wonderful news for Israel and for us beloved. We have a God Who forgives and does not hold a grudge! He gives a similar promise in Isaiah 43:25 declaring "I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, And I will not remember your sins." (**Read these other passages on great is His forgiveness of our sins against Him** - Micah 7:18-19, Ps 103:12, Isaiah 38:17, Isaiah 44:22) I love Micah 7:19 for He says He will "Tread them under foot, cast them into the depths of the sea!" He in essence is telling us to put up a "No Fishing" sign as Corrie Ten Boom once paraphrased it!

**Remember** (02142)(**zakar**) means to recall, call to mind or to be brought to remembrance.

The first use of **zakar** is wonderful for it says "God **remembered** Noah" remembering His covenant (Ge 6:18), declaring later "I will **remember** My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16 "When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to **remember** the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." (Ge 9:15-16) Similarly we see "that God remembered Abraham" and for that reason (based on covenant), He spared Lot from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Ge 19:29). When Israel was in bondage in Egypt "God heard their groaning; and God **remembered** His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." (Ex 2:24, 6:5, cp Lev 26:42, 45, Ps 98:3 [lovingkindness = covenant term] Ps 105:5, 106:45, 109:16, Ezek 16:60) Moses interceded for Israel asking God to "remember" the Abrahamic covenant and pass over their stubbornness, wickedness and sin (Dt 9:27) Thus we see these many of the early uses of **zakar** speak of God's good memory (so to speak - for His memory is perfect) is based on the fact that He is in covenant with those He recalls to mind. If you are like me and from time to time think God has forgotten you, recall to mind that you are in covenant with Him (New Covenant) and on that basis He will (forever) remember you! I love Hezekiah's prayer "**Remember** now, O LORD, I beseech You, how I have walked before You in truth and with a whole heart and have done what is good in Your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly." (2Ki 20:3) King David called on the people - "**Remember** His wonderful deeds which He has done, His marvels and the judgments from His mouth...**Remember** His covenant forever, The word which He commanded to a thousand generations." (1Chr 16:12, 15) Nehemiah repeatedly called on God to **remember** in his prayers (Neh 1:8, 4:14, 5:19, 6:14, 13:14, 13:22, 29, 31). I think Nehemiah gives us a good "template" to imitate when we make petition to the Most High God! I love David's prayer to God not to remember and then to remember (Ps 25:6-7). Korah gives us a great pattern to imitate when we are downcast in Ps 42:4, 6. Many of the psalms (see 49 uses below) speak of either men remembering God (often in form of a prayer) or of God remembering men (e.g., Ps 78:35, 39) Ps 78:42 is a warning to all believers = "They did not **remember** His power, The day when He redeemed them from the adversary." Have you been saved? Then you have experienced His power! And doubtless there are countless other instances we could all remember (if we chose to!) in which His great power has been palpably present to enable or deliver us! **Lord, give us ready recall of Your past power in our life that we might apply it to our present circumstances.** Amen

Moses reminded Israel that it was important to '**Remember** (they were [as we too often are] a forgetful people) this day in which you went out from Egypt, from the house of slavery (cp call to **remember** in Dt 5:15, Dt 16:12, 24:18, 22); for by a powerful hand the

LORD brought you out from this place (cp Dt 7:18, 8:2). And nothing leavened shall be eaten." (Ex 13:3) Instead too often what did Israel remember? Nu 11:5 says "We **remember** the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic!" In Exodus 20:8 they were told to "**Remember** the sabbath day, to keep it holy." Why? So they would not profane it. They were even to make blue tassels so that when they looked at them they would "**remember** all the commandments of the LORD, so as to do them and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot." (Nu 15:39, 40) Israel was even called to **remember** their sin of the golden calf (Dt 9:7, cp Lord's punishment of Miriam - Dt 24:9) Sadly in the almost 300 years of the times of the Judges "the sons of Israel did not **remember** the LORD their God, who had delivered them from the hands of all their enemies on every side." (Jdg 8:34, cp Isa 17:10, Ps 106:7) Are we not just like Israel? We sin. God delivers us from evil. We forget His mercy, grace, deliverance and forgiveness and when we do we run back to the sin that so easily entangles us. The watchword for God's people should be REMEMBER! Remember Jehovah! Jehovah "**remembered**" Rachel and Hannah, which means that He opened their wombs and gave them children (Ge 30:22, 1Sa 1:19). In 2Sa 20:24 zakar describes a man who was the **recorder** (cp 1Ki 4:3, 2Ki 18:18, 37, 1Chr 18:15).

**Habakkuk** makes one the great Biblical petitions - "LORD, I have heard the report about You and I fear. O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years, In the midst of the years make it known In wrath **remember** mercy." (Hab 3:2-note)

**Zakar** translated in NAS as been mindful(1), boast(1), bring my to remembrance(1), bringing to mind(1), brings to remembrance(1), burns(1), call to mind(1), celebrate(1), certainly still remember(1), come to remembrance(1), confess(1), consider(2), extol(1), invoke(1), invoked(1), keep(1), make mention(2), mention(4), mentioned(5), mentioning(1), mindful(1), named\*(1), preserve(1), put me in remembrance(1), recorder (9), remember (132), remembered (42), remembering(1), remembers(4), remind(1), reminder(1), report(1), surely my remembers(1), take thought(1), well remember(1).

**Zakar** - 221v -

Gen 8:1; Ge 9:15-16; Ge 19:29; 30:22; 40:14, 23; 41:9; 42:9; Ex 2:24; 6:5; 13:3; 20:8, 24; 23:13; 32:13; Lev 26:42, 45; Num 5:15; 10:9; 11:5; 15:39f; Deut 5:15; 7:18; 8:2, 18; 9:7, 27; 15:15; 16:3, 12; 24:9, 18, 22; 25:17; 32:7; Josh 1:13; 23:7; Jdg 8:34; 9:2; 16:28; 1 Sam 1:11, 19; 4:18; 25:31; 2 Sam 8:16; 14:11; 18:18; 19:19; 20:24; 1 Kgs 4:3; 17:18; 2 Kgs 9:25; 18:18, 37; 20:3; 1 Chr 16:4, 12, 15; 18:15; 2 Chr 6:42; 24:22; 34:8; Neh 1:8; 4:14; 5:19; 6:14; 9:17; 13:14, 22, 29, 31; Esth 2:1; 9:28; Job 4:7; 7:7; 10:9; 11:16; 14:13; 21:6; 24:20; 28:18; 36:24; 41:8; Ps 8:4; 9:12; 20:3, 7; 22:27; 25:6f; 42:4, 6; 45:17; 63:6; 71:16; 74:2, 18, 22; 77:3, 6, 11; 78:35, 39, 42; 79:8; 83:4; 87:4; 88:5; 89:47, 50; 98:3; 103:14, 18; 105:5, 8, 42; 106:4, 7, 45; 109:14, 16; 111:5; 115:12; 119:49, 52, 55; 132:1; 136:23; 137:1, 6f; 143:5; Prov 31:7; Eccl 5:20; 9:15; 11:8; 12:1; Song 1:4; Isa 12:4; 17:10; 19:17; 23:16; 26:13; 36:3, 22; 38:3; 43:18, 25f; 44:21; 46:8f; 47:7; 48:1; 49:1; 54:4; 57:11; 62:6; 63:7, 11; 64:5, 9; 65:17; 66:3; Jer 2:2; 3:16; 4:16; 11:19; 14:10, 21; 15:15; 17:2; 18:20; 20:9; 23:36; 31:20, 34; 44:21, 26; 51:50; Lam 1:7, 9; 2:1; 3:19f; 5:1; Ezek 3:20; 6:9; 16:22, 43, 60f, 63; 18:22, 24; 20:43; 21:23f, 32; 23:19, 27; 25:10; 29:16; 33:13, 16; 36:31; Hos 2:17; 7:2; 8:13; 9:9; Amos 1:9; 6:10; Jonah 2:7; Mic 6:5; Nah 2:5; Hab 3:2; Zech 10:9; 13:2; Mal 4:4

**Jeremiah 31:35 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:**

## **THE CERTAINTY OF FULFILLING THE COVENANT PROMISES TO ISRAEL**

LXE Thus saith the Lord, who gives the sun for a light by day, the moon and the stars for a light by night, and makes a roaring in the sea, so that the waves thereof roar; the Lord Almighty is his name:

KJV Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name:

NET The LORD has made a promise to Israel. He promises it as the one who fixed the sun to give light by day and the moon and stars to give light by night. He promises it as the one who stirs up the sea so that its waves roll. He promises it as the one who is known as the LORD who rules over all.

ESV 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:

NIV This is what the LORD says, he who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar-- the LORD Almighty is his name:

NLT It is the LORD who provides the sun to light the day and the moon and stars to light the night, and who stirs the sea into roaring waves. His name is the LORD of Heaven's Armies, and this is what he says:

This description emphasizes God's sovereignty over the universe as well as His wisdom and omnipotence. While even the sea may at times seem "out of control" the truth is that God is in control of every wave!

As **Christopher Wright** puts Jer 31:35-37 in perspective observing that "The double metaphors in Jer 31:35–37 encompass the whole creation from top to bottom, as it were. Jer 31:35 points to the sky and the sea; Jer 31:37 points to the sky and the earth and beneath the earth. They affirm the sovereign governance of God not only over the orderly regularity of the heavenly bodies (sun ... moon and stars), but also over the apparent chaos of the rowdy sea. The silence of the skies and the noise of the oceans—all obey the Lord of the universe. The metaphors also affirm that all that happens in creation and all that happens in human history both take place in the presence of God. The phrases, **from My sight** (creation) and **before me** (Israel), are identical—'before my face'. All natural processes and all human actions are observed by God (cf. Ps. 33:1-22). As Isaiah and Jesus further affirm, we can read something of the character of God, and especially his dependability, from observing the works of His hands. **So did Israel lack confidence in their future? Let them look above, around and beneath them. God their redeemer would prove as dependable as God the Creator.** ([The Message of Jeremiah - Bible Speaks Today - Christopher J. H. Wright](#)) (Bolding added)

**Charles Dyer** - To underscore Israel's permanence because of this New Covenant, God compared her existence to that of the heavens and the earth. As God had appointed the sun to shine by day and the moon and stars to shine by night (cf. Gen. 1:14–19), so He had appointed Israel as His chosen nation. It would take a feat as fabulous as making these natural decrees vanish from nature to make Israel ... cease to be a nation. The power God displayed in creating the universe was the power that He exercises in preserving Israel as a nation. Throughout history people have tried in vain to destroy Israel, but none have succeeded—and none ever will. (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

**Hindson and Kroll** speak to the fact that the power and sovereignty of the God Who controls creation is able to preserve, sustain and restore the Jewish nation - The preservation of the Hebrew people over the centuries can only be attributed to the miraculous fulfillment of this divine promise to them. Over the centuries dictators, religious leaders, and entire nations have tried to eliminate the Jew; but God's promise still remains. In **A. D 70 Titus** killed 1,300,000 Jews when he captured Jerusalem. In eighth-century France and Spain, Jews were persecuted and burned at the stake. With the establishment of Islam in 622, most Arabian Jews were killed. England banished all Jews in 1020 (**Ed comment:** Probably not correct date - see [Edict of Expulsion in 1290](#)) ([History of the Jews in England 1066–1290](#)) ([See Map of Expulsion of Jews 1100-1600](#)). The eleventh-century Crusaders were as cruel to the Jews as they were to the Muslims ([For example - First Crusade - Attacks on Jews in Rhineland](#)). Blamed for the European Black Plague (1350), over one-half of the Jews in Europe were murdered ([Black Death](#)). Thousands of Jews died in the [Roman Catholic Inquisition](#) (1411). Under the Russian czars, thousands of Jews were murdered ([Anti-Jewish pogroms in the Russian Empire](#) or [Here](#)). During World War I many European towns instituted local massacres of Jews. In the Ukraine alone over twelve hundred such pogroms took place. With Hitler's slaughter of six million Jews, the most devastating genocide in world history occurred. **The Jew today is one of the greatest proofs of the promises of God.** (KJV Bible Commentary)

#### Related Resources -

- [Timeline of anti-Semitism](#)
- [Anti-Semitism](#)
- [Judensau \(Jews' sow\)](#) - this is unspeakably sad!

**Michael Brown** - From the vantage point of church history, however, the juxtaposition of vv. 35–37 with vv. 31–34 is significant, as though there is a divine anticipation that the days will come when another part of God's family—meaning the primarily Gentile church—will say, "If there is a new covenant, then there must be a new people—us! And if the old covenant is no longer relevant, then the old people are no longer relevant." This is supersessionism in its most basic, unrefined form.

#### Related Resources -

- [Supersessionism - Replacement Theology](#)
- [What is replacement theology - supersessionism?](#)
- [12 Reasons Why Supersessionism - Replacement Theology Is Not a Biblical Doctrine](#)
- [Replacement Theology: Has the Church Superseded Israel as the People of God? - Michael Vlach - Excellent overview article](#)

As **John Butler** remarks this last section (Jer 31:35-40) "reassures the Israelites of two important things—their continuance and their city. Both are issues today but God's Word will stand and the continuance of the Jews and the city of the Jews will thrive in spite of the attitudes and actions of their enemies."

**Lord of Hosts** (title of God used 229x in the OT and 71x in Jeremiah = Jer 6:6, 9; 7:3, 21; 8:3; 9:7, 15, 17; 10:16; 11:17, 20, 22; 16:9; 19:3, 11, 15; 20:12; 23:15f, 36; 25:8, 27, 28, 29, 32; 26:18; 27:4, 18f, 21; 28:2, 14; 29:4, 8, 17, 21, 25; 30:8; 31:23, 35; 32:14, 15, 18; 33:11, 12; 35:13, 18, 19; 39:16; 42:15, 18; 43:10; 44:2, 11, 25; 46:18, 25; 48:1, 15; 49:7, 26, 35; 50:18, 33, 34, 51:5, 14, 19, 33, 57, 58) - Jehovah Sabaoth = LORD of the Armies (Hosts).

#### Related Resources -

- Jehovah Sabaoth - LORD of hosts (of armies) Pt 1
- Jehovah Sabaoth - LORD of hosts (of armies) Pt 2

**NET Note on LORD of Hosts** - Heb "the Lord Yahweh, [the God of] hosts." For the title Lord GOD see the study note on 1:6. For the title "who rules over all" see the following study note. The title "**the LORD who rules over all**" is a way of rendering the title "**Yahweh of armies**." It is an abbreviation of a longer title "Yahweh the God of armies" which occurs five times in Jeremiah (see, e.g., 44:7). The abbreviated title occurs seventy-seven times in the book of Jeremiah. On thirty-two occasions it is further qualified by the title "the God of Israel," showing his special relation to Israel. On six occasions it is preceded by the title "Lord" (see, e.g., 46:10) and twice it is preceded by the title "the King" (see, e.g., 51:17). Both titles emphasize his sovereignty. Twice it is said that he is the maker of all things (10:16; 51:19), and once it is said that he made the earth and the people and animals on it and gives them into the control of whomever he wishes (27:4-5). On two occasions it is emphasized that he also made the heavenly elements and controls the natural elements of wind, rain, thunder, and hail (31:35; 51:14-16). All this is consistent with usage elsewhere where the "armies" over which he has charge are identified as (1) the angels which surround his throne (Isa 6:3, 5; 1 Kgs 22:19) and which he sends to protect his servants (2 Kgs 6:17), (2) the natural forces of thunder, rain, and hail (Isa 29:6; Josh 10:11; Judg 5:4, 5) through which he sends the enemy into panic and "gums" up their chariot wheels, (3) the armies of Israel (1 Sam 17:45) which he leads into battle (Num 10:34-35; Josh 5:14, 15) and for whom he fights as a mighty warrior (Exod 15:3; Isa 42:13; Ps 24:8), and even (4) the armies of the nations which he musters against his disobedient people (Isa 13:14). This title is most commonly found in the messenger formula "Thus says..." introducing both oracles of judgment (on Israel [e.g., 9:7, 15] and on the nations [e.g. 46:19; 50:18]; and see in general 25:29-32). It emphasizes his sovereignty as the king and creator, the lord of creation and of history, and the just judge who sees and knows all (11:20; 20:12) and judges each person and nation according to their actions (Jer 32:18-19). In the first instance (in the most dominant usage) this will involve the punishment of his own people through the agency of the Babylonians (cf., e.g., 25:8-9). But it will also include the punishment of all nations, including Babylon itself (cf. Jer 25:17-26, 32-38), and will ultimately result in the restoration of his people and a new relation with them (30:8; 31:35-37). ([Jeremiah NET Notes](#))

**Jeremiah 31:36 "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."**

### **THE MAINTENANCE OF CREATION ASSURES CONTINUANCE OF THE NATION OF ISRAEL**

LXE if these ordinances cease from before me, saith the Lord, then shall the family of Israel cease to be a nation before me forever.

KJV If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.

NET The LORD affirms, "The descendants of Israel will not cease forever to be a nation in my sight. That could only happen if the fixed ordering of the heavenly lights were to cease to operate before me."

ESV "If this fixed order departs from before me, declares the LORD, then shall the offspring of Israel cease from being a nation before me forever."

NIV "Only if these decrees vanish from my sight," declares the LORD, "will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me."

NLT "I am as likely to reject my people Israel as I am to abolish the laws of nature!"

**How certain is the rising of the sun tomorrow morning? And can we be sure that the stars and moon will shine tonight?** I ask these questions rhetorically of course, because we can be absolutely sure of both day and night "working" as it has since the beginning of creation! **Creation stands as a steadfast, inviolable witness to the truth that God is NOT finished with the nation of Israel!** Could Jehovah have stated the case any clearer? I think not. Therefore it behooves us to rightly divide the Word of Truth

and let it say what it clearly and literally says! We need to do so lest we **be ashamed** in that day, for Paul wrote that we each must "**Be diligent** (command) to present yourself approved to God as a workman **who does not need to be ashamed**, handling accurately the word of truth." (2Ti 2:15-note)

**Before Me** - Literally before My face, which speaks of God's omnipresence.

**If this fixed order departs from before Me** - It will not depart, so therefore Israel will never cease to be a nation. So much for [replacement theology](#) which makes the sad statement that the Church, the body of Christ, has replaced the literal nation of Israel in God's heart! To try and justify such an absurd belief one has to disregard and/or spiritualize so many passages that it is shocking that one would still hold such an untenable belief. And by the way, as of May, 1948, there is a literal nation of Israel, reborn after almost 2000 years of non-existence, a true modern miracle in our time! And believe it or not the replacement theologians even try to explain that away! It is amazing what one will do when they have been taught a certain system of theological belief, placing more faith in a system concocted by men than they place in the literal inerrant, inspired Word of God.

**Charles Dyer** - The power God displayed in creating the universe was the power that He exercises in preserving Israel as a nation. Throughout history people have tried in vain to destroy Israel, but none have succeeded—and none ever will. Those who claim that the Church replaces Israel in God's program, or who claim that the NT teaches this, fail to come to grips with promises such as these. (Moody Bible Commentary)

**J A Thompson** comments - But it all operates according to Yahweh's fixed order or "decrees" (huqqîm). If these should ever cease, which they will not, then the descendants (zera) of Israel will cease (šābat) to exist. It is an argumentum ad absurdum, and the saying would have given strong confidence to a people so beset by troubles as Israel. ([A Book of Jeremiah The New International Commentary on the Old Testament](#))

**Wycliffe Bible Commentary** - The survival of the Hebrew people, long after their neighbors have perished, is hardly explainable on any but Supernaturalistic grounds.

**F B Huey** - Israel's existence as a **nation**, the Lord says, is as permanent as creation itself, and his promise is as sure as the greatness of his power and the faithfulness of his character (cf. Jer 32:17–20; 33:2). The preservation of the Jewish people today is inexplicable apart from acknowledging that divine will has preserved them. (New American Commentary)

Other passages also speak of the certainty with which Israel can expect Jehovah to fulfill His promises in this section. These promises are rock solid, because they are founded on the Rock (Ps 19:14), Christ Jesus, the One Who is called **Faithful and True** (Rev 19:11). Read similar assurances are given in Jer 33:17–22, 25, 26.

**Then** - Here then is not so much a time word (marking sequence of what is next) but functions as more of term of conclusion. I would paraphrase it "If the universe explodes or implodes, then so too will the nation of Israel!"

**Nation (goy)** is translated **nation** or **nations** 545x and only 4x as **people** in the **NAS**. It is notable also that Jeremiah uses the Hebrew word **goy** 77x (out of a total of 508x in OT) and they are all translated nation or nations. Notice also that in Jer 2:11, 6:22, 27:13, 28:11, 31:7 we see **nation** (goy) and **people** (am) used in the same verse. The point is that when Jeremiah uses goy he means **nation** not people. **He is speaking of the literal nation of Israel!** See Jeremiah's uses of goy -

Jer 1:5, 10; 2:11; 3:17, 19; 4:2, 7, 16; 5:9, 15, 29; 6:18, 22; 7:28; 9:9, 16, 26; 10:2, 7, 10, 25; 12:17; 14:22; 16:19; 18:7-9, 13; 22:8; 25:9, 11-13, 17, 31-32; 26:6; 27:7-8, 11, 13; 28:11, 14; 29:14, 18; 30:11; 31:7, 10, 36; 33:9, 24; 36:2; 43:5; 44:8; 46:1, 12, 28; 48:2; 49:14-15, 31, 36; 50:2-3, 9, 12, 23, 41, 46; 51:7, 20, 27-28, 41, 44.

**Forever** - Literally "all the days"

**Charles Feinberg** - The survival of Israel through the centuries can be explained only on supernatural grounds (Jer 31:36; cf. Jer 33:20, 25). Scripture knows no greater guarantee for the validity and permanence of the covenant than that stated here. As unchangeable as the laws of nature is God's covenant with the deathless nation. The concept of nation carries with it geographical location, government, and other ethnic features to be fully realized in the end time. In short, it is utterly impossible that Israel should cease to be a nation before God (Jer 31:37). National existence is assured, regardless of how God may have to deal with individuals in the nation. God regards his promises rather than their demerits. (Expositor's Bible Commentary - 1984 edition)

**Temper Longman** - In verse 36 God assures the future remnant that the descendants of Israel will be a nation before him for as long as the sun, moon, and stars shine and the seas pound the shores with their waves. Thus God expresses his continual commitment to future restored Israel by likening it to his continual commitment to keep his creation working according to its normal rhythms (Gen. 8:22; 9:8–17). ([Jeremiah, Lamentations- Tremper III Longman](#))

**Albert Barnes** (1798-1870) makes what I regard as an erroneous comment on "a nation" in Jer 31:36 which is representative of what many of the older commentaries say (few of which frankly are of much value on clearly prophetic passages). **Barnes** writes "Israel has long ceased to be a **nation** (**Ed**: Note that Barnes died before May, 1948 - one wonders if he would retract his statement?), but it still exists as a numerous, influential, and distinct people. In Matthew 28:19-20 Jeremiah's prophecy receives its Christian application, and **Israel becomes the Church**, with the promise of perpetual existence. **It has no national existence** (**Ed**: Again we refer the reader to May, 1948 when the nation was reborn but even more to a **Literal Interpretation** of Jer 31:36!), but its members ought to be a strongly marked people, refusing to be merged in the world, while everywhere they pervade and influence it."

Another older commentator **Keil** writes "'From being a nation before me" declares not merely the **continuance of Israel as a nation**, so that they shall not disappear from the earth, just as so many others perish in the course of ages, but also their continuance before Jahveh, i.e., as His chosen people; cf. Jer 30:20.—**This positive promise regarding the continuance of Israel is confirmed by a second simile**, in Jer 31:37, **which declares the impossibility of rejection.**" (Bolding added)

On the other hand a modern commentator Andrew Dearman in the NIV Application Commentary writes "the church has inherited the promises made to Israel" so be aware of this author's beliefs if you choose to read this commentary. He does not believe Israel will be a nation again. One wonders how he explains the supernatural emergence of the nation of Israel in May, 1948!

**Pamela Scalise** writes "This same God, the LORD of Hosts, will preserve Israel's continuing existence as an **anation**....They will have not only a spiritual identity as the LORD's people (אֱמֻנָה, Jer 31:33) but a **national** existence also (אֱמֻנָה, Jer 31:36). ([Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 27, Jeremiah 26-52- Gerald L. Keown, Pamela J. Scalise, Thomas G. Smothers - note Scalise prepared the material for Jer 26-34](#)) (Bolding added)

Notice how **MacKay** refuses to take the nation of Israel literally in his comments on this passage - "Wherever those who are of the faith of Abraham are now found living in the covenant community which is Christ's church upon earth, there the nation of the faithful is to be found, for they truly are those who are 'before me'." (Jeremiah an Introduction and Commentary).

**Comment** - It is interesting that MacKay does "stumble" a bit on Jeremiah's use of the term "nation" writing "The use of the political term '**nation**' (gôy) and not the kinship term am, 'people', **raises the question as to the extent to which this statement relates to the perpetuity of a Jewish state.**" Yes, indeed, it does raise the question of the perpetuity of a Jewish state. In fact, it substantiates this as a literal Biblical truth. If one replaces Israel with the Church, they are forced to ignore a literal reading of the Biblical text as we see with MacKay. Personally, I think this is akin to intellectual dishonesty (just my opinion).

**Jeremiah 31:37 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.**

## **MEASURING OF CREATION ASSURES ISRAEL'S CONTINUANCE**

**LXE** Though the sky should be raised to a greater height, saith the Lord, and though the ground of the earth should be sunk lower beneath, yet I will not cast off the family of Israel, saith the Lord, for all that they have done.

**KJV** Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.

**NET** The LORD says, "I will not reject all the descendants of Israel because of all that they have done. That could only happen if the heavens above could be measured or the foundations of the earth below could all be explored," says the LORD.

**ESV** Thus says the LORD: "If the heavens above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth below can be explored, then I will cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done, declares the LORD."

**NIV** This is what the LORD says: "Only if the heavens above can be measured and the foundations of the earth below be searched out will I reject all the descendants of Israel because of all they have done," declares the LORD.

**NLT** This is what the LORD says: "Just as the heavens cannot be measured and the foundations of the earth cannot be explored, so I will not consider casting them away for the evil they have done. I, the LORD, have

spoken!

**If the heavens above can be measured** - Only the omniscient God knows the extent of the heavens. This knowledge is simply beyond the reach of any human endeavor however ingenious, even beyond [space probes](#).

As **Christopher Wright** asks "What is more unimaginable than measuring the height of the sky or the depth of the earth? That's how unthinkable it is that God could reject 'the seed of Israel' (Jer 31:37). If the exiles had fears that they would die out in Babylon, God here refutes such fear in the strongest possible terms. The people of Israel would survive. Generations of Israelites had indeed rejected God, to the point where he had declared the present generation 'rejected': 'for the LORD has rejected and abandoned this generation that is under his wrath' (Jer 7:29). But this did not constitute a rejection of all their posterity....**Israel's future is as guaranteed as the future of earth itself.**" And so, God decisively answers the plaintive anxiety of the question posed in Jer 14:19, 'Have you rejected Judah completely?' Answer: In this generation? Yes. Forever? No." ([The Message of Jeremiah - Bible Speaks Today - Christopher J. H. Wright](#)) (Bolding added)

**Scalise** adds here we see "A second impossible condition indicates **the permanence of the LORD's choice of Israel's offspring** Only God can measure the heavens (Isa 40:12), and humans cannot explore the foundations of the earth (Job 38:4-7)." ([Ibid](#)) (Bolding added)

**Temper Longman** - A similar oracle follows which also connects creation to God's commitment to Israel. God will not reject Israel as long as the heavens remain unmeasured and the foundations of the earth be searched out. The point is that that moment will never come. God makes such a statement in spite of the fact that he is aware of their rebellion. All that they have done is surely a reference to their sin. Even so, **God will remain committed to Israel.** ([Jeremiah, Lamentations- Tremper III Longman](#)) (Bolding added)

**Cast off (reject, despise)** ([03988](#))(**ma'as**) means to reject, to despise, to abhor, to refuse. The primary idea is to treat as loathsome (that which is repulsive, detestable, causing disgust).

The first use in Lev 26:15 (Lev 26:43 - **Lxx** = *prosochthizo* = to be offended, very upset over something someone has done) is of Israel who is warned not to "**reject** My statutes." And yet later God says "when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not **reject** them, nor will I so abhor them as to destroy them, breaking My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God." (Lev 26:44)

**Ma'as** is used of men rejecting God's law, ordinances or statutes (2Ki 17:15, Lev 26:15, 43, Isa 5:24, Ezek 5:6, 20:13, 16, 24, Amos 2:4. Saul **rejected** God's word - 1Sa 15:26. Isa 30:12, cp Hos 4:6), of rejecting Him (Nu 11:20 = **Lxx** = *apeitheo* - disobeyed, 1Sa 10:19), the promised land by the first generation (Nu 14:31, cp Ps 106:23). God told Samuel "they have not **rejected** you, but they have **rejected** Me from being king over them." (1Sa 8:7) 2Ki 17:20 says Jehovah "**rejected** all the descendants of Israel." (cp Hos 9:17) Used of Jehovah saying He would "cast off Jerusalem." (2Ki 23:27 contrast Jer 31:38-40) We are not to "**despise** the discipline of the Almighty." (Job 5:17, Pr 3:11, 15:32) After Job sees God, he says "therefore I **retract** and I repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:6) Used of a reprobate (Ps 15:4). In a clear Messianic prophecy Psalms 118:22 = "The stone which the builders **rejected** (*apodokimazo* - regard as unworthy after testing) Has become the chief corner stone." Evil should be refused or rejected (Isa 7:15, 16).

Used 10/67 times in Jeremiah - Jer 2:37; 4:30; 6:19, 30; 7:29; 8:9; Jer 14:19; 31:37; Jer 33:24, 26 There is considerable irony in the use of this Hebrew word **ma'as** in Jeremiah. It is used to describe the people who had "cast off" (rejected) God's law (Jer 6:19) and the "word of the LORD" (Jer 8:9). It is used 3 times of Jehovah rejecting the people (Jer 6:30; 7:29; 33:24). Here in Jer 31:37 and in Jer 33:26 Jehovah uses the same word (*ma'as*) declaring He will never reject (cast off) them! How great and everlasting are His lovingkindnesses! **And just as Israel "deserved" to be cast off, all of us deserved to be cast into the Lake of Fire, were not it for His divine intervention in our life to bring us into the everlasting new covenant of grace! Glory to God in the highest!**

**Ma'as** translated in **NAS** as - abhorred(1), cast them away(1), cast away(1), cast off(2), completely rejected(1), despise(6), despised(4), despises(2), despising(1), disdained(1), refuse(2), reject(8), rejected(37), rejects(1), reprobate(1), retract(1), utterly rejected(1), waste away(1).

**Ma'as** - 67v -

Lev 26:15, 43-44; Num 11:20; 14:31; Jdg 9:38; 1 Sam 8:7; 10:19; 15:23, 26; 16:1, 7; 2Kgs 17:15, 20; 23:27; Job 5:17; 7:16; 8:20; 9:21; 10:3; 19:18; 30:1; 31:13; 34:33; 36:5; 42:6; Ps 15:4; 36:4; 53:5; 78:59, 67; 89:38; 106:24; 118:22; Prov 3:11; 15:32; Isa 5:24; 7:15f; 8:6; 30:12; 31:7; 33:8, 15; 41:9; 54:6; Jer 2:37; 4:30; 6:19, 30; 7:29; 8:9; 14:19; 31:37; 33:24, 26; Lam 5:22; Ezek 5:6; 20:13, 16, 24; 21:10, 13; Hos 4:6; 9:17; Amos 2:4; 5:21

In Jer 31:37 **ma'as** is translated in the **Lxx** by the verb **apodokimazo** meaning to throw out as the result of testing (it does not pass

the test).

**I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel** ("I will not reject all the descendants of Israel") - Of course the reasoning is that in view of the fact that the heavens cannot be measured, etc, it follows that God will not cast off **the offspring of Israel**. and in the preceding verse (Jer 31:36) **offspring of Israel** is clearly coupled with **being a nation**. In essence, God is saying the Nation of Israel will exist forever!

**J A Thompson** comments that this "saying is based on a different figure (**Ed**: different then Jer 31:36) but amounts to the same thing. No one (in those days) could measure the heaven above or explore earth's foundations. No more could Yahweh **cast off** ("refuse, spurn," mā'as) **the whole people of Israel**. He had done too much in past days for His people for all His work to be wasted. **There is no compelling reason to deny these verses to Jeremiah (**Ed**: Amen to that last statement!)**" ([A Book of Jeremiah The New International Commentary on the Old Testament](#)) (Bolding added)

**R K Harrison** is a bit less definitive in his comment on the continuance of the nationhood of Israel writing that "God's immutability is reflected by the fixed order of the heavenly bodies. Only the Creator of the cosmos could give such a firm undertaking as that which follows. Divine love for wayward **Israel** is a striking and consistent theme in the prophecy." ([Jeremiah & Lamentations Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries](#)) (Bolding added).

The **ESV Study Bible** note is interesting and somewhat subtle - "The full extent of creation is unfathomable, and it is equally unfathomable that God would **cast off** the **Israel** of this new covenant." Is that really what the text says literally? It is not **"the Israel"** but it is **the offspring of Israel** and in the preceding verse the clear conclusion of the argument is that **"the offspring of Israel also will (not) cease from being a nation before Me forever."** So the ESV note assiduously avoids acknowledging Jehovah's personal affirmation and assurance that Israel will be a nation forever! If one is honest to the text and context, it impossible to avoid this conclusion (unless it disturbs one's systematic theological persuasion), so it is best to pass over it and not comment!

**Jeremiah 31:38 "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.**

## **REBUILT CITY OF JERUSALEM**

LXE Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when the city shall be built to the Lord from the tower of Anameel to the gate of the corner.

KJV Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the city shall be built to the LORD from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner.

NET "Indeed a time is coming," says the LORD, "when the city of Jerusalem will be rebuilt as my special city. It will be built from the Tower of Hananel westward to the Corner Gate.

ESV "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when the city shall be rebuilt for the LORD from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate.

NIV "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when this city will be rebuilt for me from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate.

NLT "The day is coming," says the LORD, "when all Jerusalem will be rebuilt for me, from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate.

**As you study this last section Jer 31:38-40, keep in mind that it delineates three major prophetic aspects concerning the city (Jerusalem) - One thing is clear from the text (if one lets the text say what it says) is that God guarantees Israel's indestructibility.**

**(1) The city will be rebuilt and enlarged** (careful analysis of the boundary markers indicate a city considerably larger than any in past Biblical history).

[Dennis Swanson](#) points out - After Jeremiah's time the city was rebuilt, under Nehemiah and then later enlarged (especially the temple area) under the auspices of Herod the Great. However, it was never enlarged to the extent that Jeremiah's prophecy expects, and has not been enlarged to that extent up to the present time.

(2) **The city will be sanctified** ("holy to the LORD")

This has not been fulfilled to date.

(3) **The city will be immune from destruction forever.**

The historical fact is that Jerusalem has been destroyed several times, even after the rebuilding of Nehemiah.

**John Butler** alliterates Jer 31:38-40 - The Sureness of the City, the Size of the City and the Sanctification of the City.

## WHY THE REBUILT JERUSALEM IS NOT THE HEAVENLY NEW JERUSALEM

At the outset of this controversial section (controversial if not read literally) I would posit that one of the strongest arguments for taking Jeremiah's description of the rebuilt Jerusalem (Jer 31:38-40) literally is by comparing it with Zechariah's prophecy of the city of Jerusalem in Zech 14:8-21. Zechariah describes a secure Jerusalem which other nations are to go up to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths. This section is very difficult to spiritualize or allegorize into a description of the heavenly New Jerusalem. Pray and read the description in Zech 14:8-21 asking God to show you the truth revealed in these passages!

In comparing the descriptions of Jeremiah and Zechariah (see table below) notice that some of the same **"boundary marks"** of the city are mentioned in both descriptions which has to be more than coincidence (**tower of Hananel** - Jer 31:38 and Zech 14:10 [only 2 other times in OT - Neh 3:1, 12:39], **Corner Gate** = Jer 31:38, Zech 14:10) as well as the specific description **"holy to the LORD"** (Jer 31:40, Zech 14:20-21). Notice that the uses of **Corner Gate** (only 3 other times - 2Ki 14:13, 2Chr 25:23, 26:9) and **Tower of Hananel** (only 2 other times - Neh 3:1, 12:39) are very literal places in the few other OT passages in which they are found! There is simply no justification for now choosing to interpret them as figurative in Jeremiah and Zechariah! And if these descriptions are not interpreted literally, they must be spiritualized and most commentators who take this latter approach say this is a description of the **New Jerusalem**.

**First**, I would argue that this Jerusalem is to be rebuilt, whereas the New Jerusalem is created. While you might say this is semantics, there is a subtle difference. **Second**, if God meant Jeremiah's description of the New Jerusalem, then why would He give such very specific boundary markers for the rebuilt Jerusalem. That would seem to be superfluous if this was meant to be a description of the heavenly New Jerusalem! **Third**, the description of the **New Jerusalem** does not even remotely fit with Jeremiah's detailed description of the rebuilt Jerusalem. In fact Jeremiah **names** 2 of the **gates** (Jer 31:38 = Corner Gate, Jer 31:40 = Horse Gate [3x - 2Chr 23:15, Neh 3:28, Jer 31:40]) whereas John says there are 12 **gates** "and **names** were written on them, which are those of the 12 tribes of the sons of Israel." (Rev 21:12-13). If one surveys the OT, at no time is Jerusalem described to have **12 gates**. In fact a careful examination will glean at least **20 or more named gates** (see addendum at bottom of this page)! I would therefore submit that based on the evidence of Scripture, the rebuilt Jerusalem is not synonymous with the New Jerusalem.

<b>DESCRIPTION OF JERUSALEM IN THE FUTURE</b>	
<b>Jeremiah 31:38-40</b>	<b>Zechariah 14:8-21</b>
<b>Tower of Hananel - Jer 31:38</b>	<b>Tower of Hananel - Zech 14:10</b>
<b>Corner Gate - Jer 31:38</b>	<b>Corner Gate - Zech 14:10</b>
<b>Holy to the LORD - Jer 31:40</b>	<b>Holy to the LORD - Zech 14:20-21</b>

**Behold** (02009)(hinneh) directs the reader's mind to the text, imploring him to pay special attention. In short, the Spirit is trying to arrest our attention! **Spurgeon** adds that **"Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah! In context, what is so important? The city of God, Jerusalem, will be built.

**Resource on this section** -

- Read Scripture Literally if Possible
- [Rise of Allegorical Interpretation](#)

**Ray Stedman** - The chapter closes with a very specific promise concerning the city of Jerusalem, Jer 31:38-40: That encompasses

practically the whole city of Jerusalem at the present time. **It is obvious that this too is yet to be fulfilled.** But what a scene of beauty and glory, what a promise of joy and of gladness, after years and centuries of wandering and sorrow! And will you notice when this promise is given? Remember, this is given at a time when these people were at the lowest stage of their national life. They were a wanton, wicked, and wayward people, stubborn and rebellious. (See full sermon [Jeremiah 30-31 The Secret Of Strength](#))

**Days are coming** - In context this refers to the future age of Messiah, when He returns to rule and reign from His throne in Jerusalem. This phrase occurs 3 times (Jer 31:27, 31, 38) and serves to introduce respectively a restored nation, a new covenant and a rebuilt city.

**Michael Brown** comments that "As in Jer 31:27 and Jer 31:31, Jer 31:38 begins with "the days are coming" (see also Jer 30:3; 33:14 for this opening formula in Jeremiah 30–33), joining these prophesied periods together.

**The city will be rebuilt** - This appears to refer to the rebuilding of an earthly Jerusalem and does not fit as well with the New Jerusalem (Rev 3:12-[note](#), Rev 21:2-[note](#)). Some interpreters (see [Philip Ryken's comments; John Gill](#)) think that this prophecy was fulfilled when the Jews returned from exile in Babylon, but as discussed below ([see note](#)) that could hardly be the case as the city was not **holy to the LORD** (Jer 31:40) and secondly Jerusalem was overthrown (contrast "it shall not be plucked up, or overthrown anymore forever" - Jer 31:40) by the Roman general [Titus](#) in 70 AD ([See Siege of Jerusalem](#)).

**For the LORD** (cp "Holy to the LORD" IN Jer 31:40) - Conveys the idea already of the idea that it will be a holy place as described in Jer 31:40. One is reminded of Ex 20:10 where a day was to be set aside for the LORD. The idea is that the rebuilt city just as the Sabbath day was to be devoted to Jehovah.

**Warren Wiersbe** - Just as Jerusalem was rebuilt after the Babylonian Captivity, so it will be restored after the "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer 30:7) and be holy to the Lord.....Jerusalem is called "the holy city," but it will not truly be holy until the Lord restores it and reigns in glory at the end of the age. (Be Decisive)

An older commentator **Adam Clarke** (1760-1832) reads the text literally (he does not always do so but this time he does) and comments "**This cannot mean the city built after the return from Babylon, for two reasons** 1. This is to be much greater in extent; 2. It is to be permanent, never to be thrown down, Jer 31:40. It must therefore mean, if taken **literally** at all, the city that is to be built by them **when they are brought in with the fulness of the Gentiles**" ([Jeremiah 31 Commentary](#)) (Bolding added)

**Recommended Resource related to Jeremiah 31:38-40** - [Expansion of Jerusalem in Jer 31:38-40: Never, Already, or Not Yet - Dennis Swanson](#)

**The Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate** - The Tower of Hananel was in probably in the northeast corner of Jerusalem (Hananel - 4x in OT - Neh 3:1, 12:39, Jer 31:38, Zech 14:10). It is notable that both the **Tower of Hananel** and **Corner Gate** are mentioned in Zech 14:10 which is clearly a description of Jerusalem in the Messianic Age.

Jeremiah had earlier prophesied of rebuilding of the city (and introduced it with "Behold" - pay attention) - "Thus says the LORD, '**Behold**, I will restore the fortunes of the tents of Jacob And have compassion on his dwelling places; And**the city shall be rebuilt on its ruin**, And the palace shall stand on its rightful place." (Jer 30:18)

**For all that they have done** - This refers to the sins the nation of Israel had committed against Jehovah. This is **mercy** - not giving them what they deserve. This is **grace** - giving them what they do not deserve, a future and a hope in the promises of the New Covenant, reconciliation, restoration and rebuilding of the city. Why did Jehovah do it? Because He had loved them with an **everlasting love** (Jer 31:3). His love would never fail them, no matter how often they failed Him! And the same is true in principle for each child of God who is safe in Christ by grace through faith.

**Jeremiah 31:39 "The measuring line will go out farther straight ahead to the hill Gareb; then it will turn to Goath**

## **SIZE OF REBUILT JERUSALEM**

LXE And the measurement of it shall proceed in front of them as far as the hills of Gareb, and it shall be compassed with a circular wall of choice stones.

KJV And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath.

NET The boundary line will extend beyond that, straight west from there to the Hill of Gareb and then turn southward to Goah.

ESV And the measuring line shall go out farther, straight to the hill Gareb, and shall then turn to Goah.

NIV The measuring line will stretch from there straight to the hill of Gareb and then turn to Goah.

NLT A measuring line will be stretched out over the hill of Gareb and across to Goah.

**For a very detailed description of the boundaries read Dennis Swanson's article on the [Expansion of Jerusalem in Jer 31:38-40: Never, Already, or Not Yet](#).**

**Hill Gareb...Goah** - Both locations are uncertain. The point is not in knowing where they are today. God knows where they are! The fact that God would include specific geographic markers which are unknown to men makes it very clear that Jeremiah is describing a literal city with these unknown (now) borders. The New Jerusalem description does not remotely fit with the details Jeremiah gives! Unless you interpret them all allegorically, figuratively or spiritually (spiritualize)! "The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this!" (Isaiah 9:7)

**Measuring Line** - One writer notes that Jeremiah's image of measuring serves to emphasize the reality and certainty of fulfillment! This phrase is found 7x in the OT (Isa 28:17; 44:13; Jer 31:39; Amos 7:17; Mic 2:5; Zech 1:16; 2:1) and its use in Zechariah 1:16 also refers to **rebuilt Jerusalem** (which is more fully described in Zech 14:8-21)-

'Therefore, thus says the LORD, "I will return to Jerusalem with compassion (**Second Coming**); My house will be built in it (cp Zech 2:10-11)," declares the LORD of hosts, "and a **measuring line** will be stretched over Jerusalem."

**Jeremiah 31:40 "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."**

## **SANCTIFICATION AND SECURITY OF REBUILT JERUSALEM**

**LXE** And all the Asaremoth even to Nachal Kedron, as far as the corner of the horse-gate eastward, shall be holiness to the Lord; and it shall not fail any more, and shall not be destroyed for ever.

**KJV** And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the LORD; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever.

**NET** The whole valley where dead bodies and sacrificial ashes are thrown and all the terraced fields out to the Kidron Valley on the east as far north as the Horse Gate will be included within this city that is sacred to the LORD. The city will never again be torn down or destroyed."

**ESV** The whole valley of the dead bodies and the ashes, and all the fields as far as the brook Kidron, to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east, shall be sacred to the LORD. It shall not be uprooted or overthrown anymore forever."

**NIV** The whole valley where dead bodies and ashes are thrown, and all the terraces out to the Kidron Valley on the east as far as the corner of the Horse Gate, will be holy to the LORD. The city will never again be uprooted or demolished."

**NLT** And the entire area-- including the graveyard and ash dump in the valley, and all the fields out to the Kidron Valley on the east as far as the Horse Gate-- will be holy to the LORD. The city will never again be captured or destroyed."

**Valley of the dead bodies** - This presumably refers to the Valley of Hinnom. So even where dead bodies had been thrown will be sanctified (made holy) by Jehovah in the Messianic Kingdom. The mention of **ashes** would support this premise for the [Valley of Hinnom](#) was where bodies of children were burned which would result in residual ashes (2Chr 28:3, Jer 7:31, 19:1-6).

**Note** - For much more discussion on the boundary markers see Swanson's article [Expansion of Jerusalem in Jer 31:38-40](#) in which he describes every one of the seven markers in great detail. In addition **Swanson** then assesses the three schools of interpretation of Jeremiah 31:38-40 - (1) **Never** (John Calvin's view which has considerable fallacious reasoning), (2) **Already**

(Anthony Hoekema), and (3) **Not Yet**. (future)

**NET Note on valley of dead bodies** - It is generally agreed that this refers to the Hinnom Valley which was on the southwestern and southern side of the city. It was here where the people of Jerusalem had burned their children as sacrifices and where the LORD had said that there would be so many dead bodies when he punished them that they would be unable to bury all of them (cf. Jer 7:31–32). Reference here may be to those dead bodies and to the ashes of the cremated victims. This defiled place would be included within the holy city.

**The brook Kidron** - This was east of Jerusalem.

**The Horse Gate** - This was at the southeast corner of Jerusalem's city wall and opened to the Kidron Valley. **NET Note** adds "The Horse Gate is mentioned in Neh 3:28 and is generally considered to have been located midway along the eastern wall just south of the temple area."

**NET Note** commenting on the boundaries of the rebuilt city - "The area that is here delimited is larger than any of the known boundaries of Jerusalem during the OT period. Again, this refers to the increase in population of the restored community (cf. Jer 31:27)."

**Recommended resource related to Jeremiah 31:38-40 (this is a very well documented and very detailed article) - [Expansion of Jerusalem in Jer 31:38-40: Never, Already, or Not Yet - Dennis Swanson](#)**

**Swanson** rightly observes that the "prophecy in Jer 31:38–40 which deals with the **expansion of Jerusalem**, has often been handled superficially (E.g., in Randall Price's otherwise fine book, Jerusalem in Prophecy....Jer 31:38–40 is only quoted in part once and mentioned only once in passing) or simply overlooked in millennial discussions. This article seeks to enlarge the discussion by dealing with the prophecy of Jer 31:38–40 about the expansion of Jerusalem and examining details of the prophecy and three interpretative theories about its fulfillment." ([Read entire article](#))

What is so amazing about this aspect of Jeremiah's prophecy is that even the **valley of dead bodies and ashes** would one day be made **holy to the LORD**, because this valley was the site of unspeakable evil (2Ki 23:10, Jer 7:31) not to mention that in the OT dead things were associated with uncleanness and could not even be touched (e.g., Lev 11:8, 31, 32). The unclean would be made clean. The unholy would be made holy. This is clearly the doing of the LORD, who alone can accomplish such a miracle.

**Holy to the LORD** (cp Jer 31:38 city "**for the LORD**") - Certainly (and sadly) this is not true of Jerusalem in the past nor in the 21st century, so neither the post-exilic rebuilt city or the modern city could hardly be the fulfillment of this prophecy! This holy quality of Jerusalem awaits a future fulfillment. It also awaits a **holy people** for in Jer 4:4 the people were commanded to circumcise themselves "to the LORD" which happens every time a Jewish person receives Messiah and will happen fully when Messiah returns (Zech 12:10, Ro 11:26). Just as the people would experience purification (Jer 31:18-22) so too would Jerusalem.

This phrase **holy to the LORD** occurs 21 times in the Old Testament and once in the New Testament. The idea is that it is devoted to Jehovah. Notice what was to be holy to the LORD - priests, atoning sacrifices, days (Sabbath), Israel, etc. Today believers are "holy to the LORD" because we are saints or holy ones. **Do my thoughts, words and deeds authenticate my eternal identity as "Holy to the LORD?"**

Exodus 28:36 "You shall also make a plate of pure gold and shall engrave on it, like the engravings of a seal, **'Holy to the LORD.'**

Exodus 30:10 "Aaron shall make atonement on its horns once a year; he shall make atonement on it with the blood of the sin offering of atonement once a year throughout your generations. It is most **holy to the LORD.**"

Exodus 31:15 "For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, **holy to the LORD**; whoever does any work on the sabbath day shall surely be put to death.

Exodus 39:30 They made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and inscribed it like the engravings of a signet, **"Holy to the LORD."**

Leviticus 23:20 "The priest shall then wave them with the bread of the first fruits for a wave offering with two lambs before the LORD; they are to be **holy to the LORD** for the priest.

Leviticus 27:14 "Now if a man consecrates his house as **holy to the LORD**, then the priest shall value it as either good or bad; as the priest values it, so it shall stand.

21 and when it reverts in the jubilee, the field shall be **holy to the LORD**, like a field set apart; it shall be for the priest as his property.

23 then the priest shall calculate for him the amount of your valuation up to the year of jubilee; and he shall on that day give your valuation as **holy to the LORD**

28 'Nevertheless, anything which a man sets apart to the LORD out of all that he has, of man or animal or of the fields of his own property, shall not be sold or redeemed. Anything devoted to destruction is most **holy to the LORD**.

30 'Thus all the tithe of the land, of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S; it is **holy to the LORD**.

32 'For every tenth part of herd or flock, whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be **holy to the LORD**.

Numbers 6:8 'All the days of his separation he is **holy to the LORD**.

Joshua 6:19 "But all the silver and gold and articles of bronze and iron are **holy to the LORD**; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD."

2 Chronicles 35:3 He also said to the Levites who taught all Israel and who were **holy to the LORD**, "Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel built; it will be a burden on your shoulders no longer. Now serve the LORD your God and His people Israel.

Ezra 8:28 Then I said to them, "You are **holy to the LORD**, and the utensils are holy; and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering to the LORD God of your fathers.

Nehemiah 8:9 Then Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is **holy to the LORD** your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people were weeping when they heard the words of the law.

Jeremiah 2:3 "Israel was **holy to the LORD**, The first of His harvest. All who ate of it became guilty; Evil came upon them," declares the LORD."

Jeremiah 31:40 "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."

Ezekiel 48:14 "Moreover, they shall not sell or exchange any of it, or alienate this choice portion of land; for it is **holy to the LORD**.

Zechariah 14:20 In that day there will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, '**HOLY TO THE LORD**.' And the cooking pots in the LORD'S house will be like the bowls before the altar.

21 Every cooking pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be **holy to the LORD** of hosts; and all who sacrifice will come and take of them and boil in them. And there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts in that day.

Luke 2:23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "EVERY firstborn MALE THAT OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED **HOLY TO THE LORD** "),

**The city will be rebuilt** - If we read this literally (and there is no reason not to), Jerusalem will be rebuilt. The question then arises as to **when** will this prophecy be fulfilled? Below are three of the more commonly noted interpretations. I have excluded interpretations such as those of **John Calvin** which totally jettisons any semblance of literal interpretation writing that "this passage teaches us that the Church will be perpetual." This is a sad approach to the text because it suggests that the literal words had no real meaning.

**(1) REBUILT JERUSALEM IN MESSIANIC KINGDOM** - Literal Jerusalem rebuilt on earth when Messiah returns to reign and set up His Messianic Kingdom. This is the interpretation which I favor.

**(a) Thomas Constable** interprets this city as a literal city of Jerusalem - The description of rebuilt Jerusalem in Nehemiah's day does not coincide with this picture. Furthermore the temple that the restoration community rebuilt did not continue to exist (cf. Jer 31:40); the Romans destroyed it in A.D. 70. That this is a description of a **heavenly city** is unlikely in view of the large amount of literal detail. Contextual considerations also demand an eschatological rebuilding of the city on the ancient site. Ezekiel 40-48 and Zechariah 2:1-13 and Zechariah 14:1-21 also describe this future city. ([Jeremiah 31 Commentary](#))

**(b) MacKane** quotes Jewish writers - "Kimchi assumes that the rebuilding programme would include the provision of a third temple which, unlike the first and second, would never suffer destruction and it is on this

third temple that he focuses the final promise of the verse. The prediction (so Rashi) looks to a far future and a final redemption and it was not fulfilled in the times of the first and second temple." (As Swanson says this explanation fits well with what what Jer 31:38-40 states!)

**(c) Dennis Swanson** - Jeremiah, facing the destruction of Jerusalem—either an accomplished fact or an imminent threat as he received this prophecy—predicts a future time when the city will be rebuilt. The city will be changed in almost every way....As the future capital of the Messiah's earthly kingdom, it will be rebuilt and enlarged, a necessity from the severe damage which will occur during the tribulation (e.g., Rev 11:13-note). The city's topography will be altered so that the city is elevated (Zech 14:10)(**See Diagram of Rebuilt Jerusalem in the Millennium**). This enlarged and elevated city will be sanctified and become **'holy to the Lord.'** The city will be inviolable, never again falling victim to the destruction of war or natural disaster. Even when Satan, during his short release from the bottomless pit (Rev 20:7-note), rallies the nations to march against the city, the city itself will suffer no harm. Before the rebels can launch their attack, God will intervene and "fire [will come] down from heaven and devour them" (Rev 20:9-note). J. Barton Payne, late professor of Old Testament at Covenant Theological Seminary, was correct in assigning the fulfillment of Jer 31:38–40 to the period of the future **"millennial kingdom."**

**(d) Charles Feinberg** (Jewish believer) - A permanent nation calls for a permanent capital. The rebuilding of the city envisioned here cannot be that effected in Nehemiah's day because (1) the contextual considerations demand the end time for Israel (cf. "days are coming" [Jer 31:27, 31]) and (2) the temple rebuilt by Zerubbabel was thrown down thereafter and again destroyed (cf. Mt 24:1–2; Lk 21:20–24). Finally, in the broader context of prophecy, this passage will not permit an interpretation that applies it to a spiritual, heavenly, or symbolic Jerusalem. **If that were possible, why is it so full of literal detail?**

**(e) Holman OT Commentary** - The fulfillment...rests in the future...in an earthly reign of Christ for one thousand years with His throne at Jerusalem. In support of this position is the contention that God made a promise to Israel that has never been fulfilled (Ed: He is speaking of the land promised to Abraham and never fully occupied by Israel in her history). A further contention of this school is that the promise God made to Abraham was unconditional and has never been canceled. Therefore, a period exists in the future when Israel will once more occupy her land exclusively. This will be accompanied by unprecedented material prosperity and unparalleled fertility. (cp Jer 31:27-28, Amos 9:13-15, Hos 2:21-23, Joel 3:18)

**(f)** One of the strongest arguments for taking Jer 31:38-40 literally is comparison with Zechariah's prophecy of the city of Jerusalem in Zech 14:8-21. Zechariah describes a secure Jerusalem which other nations are to go up to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths. This section is very difficult to spiritualize or allegorize into a description of the heavenly New Jerusalem. Pray and read the description in Zech 14:8-21 asking God to show you the truth revealed in these passages!

**(g) Michael Brown** (Jewish believer) - While the geographical details of the city's physical restoration may appear unnecessary and even mundane to the modern reader, they point to the importance of the literal fulfillment of the words and rule out the possibility of a spiritualizing interpretation that robs this prophecy from the city itself (and its people!), seeking instead to apply it to the church (as has been done with similar verses such as Isa 62:7).

**(h) John MacArthur** - When New Covenant promises are ultimately fulfilled to Israel in its regathering to its land, rebuilt Jerusalem will meet certain specifications.

**(i) Holman Study Bible** - Once again in days connected to the consummation of history, Jerusalem will be rebuilt from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate.

**(j) Moody Bible Commentary** (Charles Dyer) - War has ravaged Jerusalem from ancient times up until the present political turmoil. Therefore the city awaits the coming of her King Messiah to bring the peace that the prophets predicted. These promises await their future fulfillment during the millennium (Jer 31:31-40) when Israel will know, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness" (Jer 31:3-4; Is 11:9).

**(k) David Baron** who believes in a literal, rebuilt future Jerusalem reasons "In what particular locality in heaven are the tower of Hananel and the corner gate? And what will our allegorical Interpretations make of the hill Gareb, and Goah, and the brook Kidron? All these are known to me (**Ed:** I am not sure he really knows where Gareb and Goah are located) in the environs of the literal Jerusalem in Canaan; but I confess some difficulty in locating them in heavenly places. If Israel does not mean Israel, and "the land God gave to the fathers" does not mean Palestine, then I do not know what is meant. (**The Jewish Problem-David Baron**)

**(2) HEAVENLY NEW JERUSALEM** - Some think this refers to the New Jerusalem (Rev 3:12-note, Rev 21:2-note).

(a) **Swanson** discusses the **Heavenly Jerusalem** interpretation of Lutheran commentator, Theodore Laetsch - "In his commentary, he tries hard to give precise information as to the geographic markers of the passage, details their location and explains the options, but then concludes "the underlying idea of this passage (Jer 31:38–40) is not the enlargement of Jerusalem, but its complete sanctification. Even the areas formerly unclean 'shall be holy unto the Lord,'" and equates the fulfillment with the "**heavenly Jerusalem.**" Though the sanctification or consecration of the land that would be within proper boundaries of Jerusalem is an important aspect of the prophecy, the fact remains that the geographical expansion of the city is central to its entire fulfillment. **If the prophecy speaks of the "heavenly Jerusalem," what need is present to speak of its "complete sanctification"? Is there a part of heaven that is in need of sanctification or some part of it that was "formerly unclean"? Feinberg** correctly identifies the problem of this approach as he states, "[I]n the broader context of prophecy, this passage will not permit an interpretation that applies it to a spiritual, heavenly, or symbolic Jerusalem. If that were possible, why is it so full of literal detail?" ([Expansion of Jerusalem in Jer 31:38-40: Never, Already, or Not Yet](#))

(b) **John Trapp** (1601-1669) is another example of an older commentary on **plucked up...overthrown...forever** - This cannot be applied to the earthly Jerusalem, which was plucked up and thrown down by the Romans once and again; but especially by Aelius Hadrian the emperor, who laid the whole country waste almost, drove the Jews utterly out of it, set a sow of white marble over the chief gate of Jerusalem in reproach of their religion, and called the city by his own name, Aelia, commanding the Jews not once to look towards it from any tower or hill. It must be therefore meant to be the Church, which cannot be ruined." ([Jeremiah 31:40 Comment](#))

(c) **Matthew Poole** (1624–1679) is similar to **John Trapp** on **plucked up...overthrown...forever** - of a perpetuity, the church of God must here be understood, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail, as Christ hath promised. ([Jeremiah 31:40 Comment](#)) (Poole replaces Israel with the Church which he calls "the true Israel of God.")

(d) **Matthew Henry** (1662-1714) allegorizes this section (**Ed: See [Allegorical Interpretation](#)**) on the rebuilt city (but see note below) - The rebuilding of Jerusalem which was now in ruins, and the enlargement and establishment of that, shall be an earnest of these great things that God will do for the gospel church, the heavenly Jerusalem...this promise was to have its full accomplishment in the gospel church, which, as it is the spiritual Israel (**Ed: See [replacement theology](#)**), and therefore God will not cast it off, so it is the holy city, and therefore all the powers of men shall not pluck it up, nor throw it down. It may lie waste for a time, as Jerusalem did, but shall recover itself, shall weather the storm and gain its point, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (**In fairness** it should be noted that in Matthew Henry's concise commentary he clearly believed in a literal Israel writing "As surely as the heavenly bodies will continue their settled course, according to the will of their Creator, to the end of time, and as the raging sea obeys him, so surely will **the Jews be continued a separate people. Words can scarcely set forth more strongly the restoration of Israel.**")

(e) **Philip Graham Ryken** in the well respected series [Preaching the Word](#) in his discussion of Jer 31:38-40 combines interpretations (2) and (3).

**Ryken** interprets Nehemiah's rebuilding of the walls of the city of Jerusalem as the initial fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy even going so far as to describe the rebuilt city after Babylonian exile as "**holy to the LORD.**" To quote **Ryken**...

As Jeremiah went on a grand tour of the city, he noted its landmarks and described its boundaries. God was making real promises for a real city. There would be life after death for Jerusalem. The parts of the city that lay in ruins would be rebuilt. What had been cursed would be blessed. The profane would be made sacred. Even the Valley of Ben Hinnom—the Auschwitz of ancient Palestine, where children were cremated on pagan altars (Jer 7:30–32)—would become "**holy to the LORD**" (Jer 31:40). The graveyard and the garbage dump would become holy ground. **All these promises came true.** When Nehemiah rebuilt Jerusalem after the Exile, his engineers started at "the Tower of Hananel" (Nehemiah 3:1) and worked their way around Jeremiah's map to make repairs "above the Horse Gate" (Jer 31:28). **That was the earthly, physical fulfillment of Jeremiah's promise.** ([Ibid](#)) (Bolding added)

**Ryken's interpretation is not tenable when compared with other Scripture and with history...**

**First**, post-exilic Jerusalem could hardly be described as "**holy to the LORD**". Consider **Malachi's prophecy** which was written about 100 years after the return of the Jews from exile, at a time when both the Temple and the city had been rebuilt. Malachi describes the rebuilt city (and inhabitants) as follows -

Judah has dealt **treacherously** (bagad), and an **abomination** (toebah = the antithesis of "holy to the LORD") has been committed in Israel and in **Jerusalem**; for (now he explains the reason for his charges of treachery and abomination) Judah has **profaned** (chahal = to defile, pollute, desecrate) **the sanctuary** (qodesh = that which is set apart, consecrated for sacred use = **HOLY** - Judah's defilement of the that which was to be holy constitutes a direct antithesis of Jer 31:40!) of the LORD which He loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god. (**Malachi 2:11**-note)

So the Scriptural evidence is clear that post-exilic Jerusalem was not "**holy to the LORD**."

**Second**, the city of Jerusalem was overthrown in 70AD, something the prophecy stated would not happen forever! (Jer 38:40).

**Ryken** then goes on to add that...

There is also a **heavenly, spiritual fulfillment** of the urban promise of the New Covenant. God is building his people an eternal city. In the words of Oxford theologian Oliver O'Donovan, "No destiny can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, other than that of a city." When Christ returns, his people will see "the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God" (Revelation 21:2). ([Ibid](#))

**Ryken** gives no consideration to a rebuilt city in the Millennium, and in fact does not have a single mention of that time period (positive or negative) in his 800+ page tome! Acts 17:11!

**(f) NIV Study Bible note** - "For the ultimate fulfillment compare Gal 4:26 and Rev 21:1-5." So clearly the NIV notes spiritualize Jeremiah's very specific and detailed boundary marks!

**(g) The NLT Study Bible** notes say this rebuilt city will be "present in the heavenly realm and on the new earth (Rev 21-22).

**(h) The Geneva Study Bible** says the rebuilt city "alludeth to the spiritual Jerusalem."

**(3) ALREADY FULFILLED = REBUILT JERUSALEM AFTER EXILES RETURNED FROM BABYLON** - Some (see [Philip Ryken](#); [John Gill](#)) interpret this prophecy as fulfilled when the Jews returned from exile in Babylon, but as discussed below ([see note](#)) that could hardly be the case as the city was not **holy to the LORD** (Jer 31:40) and secondly Jerusalem was overthrown (contrast "it shall not be plucked up, or overthrown anymore forever" - Jer 31:40) by the Roman general in 70 AD.

**(a) Swanson** discusses Anthony Hoekema's "already fulfilled" interpretation - "Hoekema who, though not commenting directly on the text of Jer 31:38–40, nevertheless states,

"Old Testament prophecies about the restoration of Israel may also have multiple fulfillments. In fact, they may be fulfilled in a threefold way: literally, figuratively, or antitypically.. .. As we have just seen, all the prophecies quoted about the restoration of Israel to its land have been literally fulfilled, either in the return from Babylonian captivity under Zerubbabel and Joshua (in 536 B.C.), or in a later return under Ezra (in 458 B.C.).

Problems for Hoekema's position here are several. **First**, as already detailed, the boundaries of the city predicted by Jeremiah were not set by post-exilic returns. In fact, as pointed out in discussion of the **Corner Gate** ([see discussion](#)), Jerusalem as fortified by Nehemiah was significantly smaller than it had been prior to the exile. Michael Avi-Yonah states, "*In the days of Nehemiah, the city seems to have shrunk again, being limited to the eastern hill.*" Avigad adds to this conclusion, stating, "*from all the above we can conclude that the minimalist view of the settlement in Jerusalem in the period of the Return to Zion is correct—that is, that it was limited to the narrow confines of the City of David, and that the Mishneh on the Western Hill remained desolate and uninhabited.*" Additionally, **Kaiser** brings a formidable challenge:

While the sheer multiplicity of texts from almost every one of the prophets is staggering, a few evangelicals insist that this pledge to restore Israel to her land was fulfilled when Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah led their respective returns from the Babylonian Exile. But if the postexilic returns to the land fulfilled this promised restoration predicted by the prophets, why then did Zechariah continue to announce a still future return (Zech 10:8–12) in words that were peppered with the phrases and formulas of such prophecies as Isaiah 11:11 and

Jeremiah 50:19?

To conclude that the prophecy has already been fulfilled in the manner Hoekema suggests is untenable; historical and archaeological data and the remainder of the OT will not allow for it....Perhaps the decisive factor in rejecting this view is the fact that the last part of the prophecy asserts that Jerusalem "shall not be plucked up, or overthrown anymore forever" (Jer 31:40b). The simple fact is that since the rebuilding of Jerusalem under Nehemiah, the city has been destroyed on several occasions, the most significant being that of the Roman destruction of A.D. 70. Henderson's attempted explanation where he postulates that "forever, is here to be taken with the same limitation as it is frequently when applied to matters connected with the old dispensation," is most unsatisfactory. ([Expansion of Jerusalem in Jer 31:38-40: Never, Already, or Not Yet](#))

(b) **Swanson** gives "Another example of the "already" position comes from those, even among premillennialists, who take the 1948 reconstitution of Israel as a nation as a fulfillment of OT prophecy. In an article on his website, Hugh Ross offers this passage as "proof" of the Bible's accuracy:

The exact location and construction sequence of Jerusalem's nine suburbs was predicted by Jeremiah about 2600 years ago. He referred to the time of this building project as "the last days," that is, the time period of Israel's second rebirth as a nation in the land of Palestine (Jeremiah 31:38-40). This rebirth became history in 1948, and the construction of the nine suburbs has gone forward precisely in the locations and in the sequence predicted. ([See Reason #7](#))

That the rebirth of Israel as a nation in 1948 is a fulfillment of any OT prophecy is dubious; beyond this, however, Ross forgets that from 1948 to 1967 Jerusalem remained under Jordanian control and that whatever building has gone on around the city since then, nothing has been done on the scale that Jeremiah's prophecy demands, either geographically (in terms of size) or spiritually (in terms of holiness). ([Swanson](#))

(c) **John Gill** (1697-1771) on **plucked up...overthrown...forever** - which, **if understood literally** of the city of Jerusalem, can only signify, that it should not be destroyed soon, but should continue a long time (**Ed: While I respect John Gill, notice that he says if long reads forever literally, it just means a long time - up to the time of the Roman destruction of Jerusalem! Can you see how inconsistent is such a line of reasoning?**); for certain it is, that after it was rebuilt by Zerubbabel, it was plucked up, and thrown down by the Romans, and particularly by Hadrian, who ploughed it up, and built another city, and called it by his own name; but this figuratively rather intends the church of Christ, which is built on him the Rock, and so is immovable; and, like Mount Zion, shall abide **forever** (**Ed: Notice that what Gill says about the church is true, but he has completely "spiritualized" the passage and removed it far from it's original literal intent. As we have said pre-1900 commentaries are very questionable when it comes to interpretation of prophetic passages!**). ([Jeremiah 31:40 Comment](#))

**It will not be plucked up or overthrown anymore forever** - This description clearly excludes the rebuilding of Jerusalem after the Jews returned from exile. Why? Because Jerusalem was **overthrown** in 70 AD by the Roman general **Titus**. ([See Siege of Jerusalem](#)) This prophecy therefore awaits a future fulfillment. There are really only two possibilities - (1) One interpretation is an earthly rebuilt Jerusalem in the Millennium, and the specific detail is that it will not be plucked up or overthrown forever. And that will be true in the Millennium even though Satan surrounds "the camp of the saints and the beloved city" in a futile attempt to **overthrow** or pluck it up. (Rev 20:7-10-[note](#)). The other possibility is the New Jerusalem which is discussed elsewhere.

Jeremiah used the verb **haras** 7 times in both negative and positive contexts (regarding Israel and once Babylon) -

Jeremiah 1:10 "See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, To pluck up and to break down, To destroy and to **overthrow** (**Lxx** = apollumi), To build and to plant."

Jeremiah 24:6 "For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them again to this land; and I will build them up and not **overthrow** (**Lxx** = kathaireo = bring down, destroy), and I will plant them and not pluck them up.

Jeremiah 31:28 "And it will come about that 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.

Jeremiah 31:40 "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 shall not be plucked up, or **overthrown** (**Lxx** = kathaireo = bring down, destroy) anymore forever."

Jeremiah 42:10 "If you will indeed stay in this land, then I will build you up and not **tear** you **down**, and I will plant you and not uproot you; for I shall relent concerning the calamity that I have inflicted on you.

Jeremiah 45:4 "Thus you are to say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Behold, what I have built I am about to **tear down**, and what I have planted I am about to uproot, that is, the whole land."

Jeremiah 50:15 (Concerning Babylon) "Raise your battle cry against her on every side! She has given herself up, her pillars have fallen, Her walls have been  **torn down**. For this is the vengeance of the LORD: Take vengeance on her; As she has done to others, so do to her.

In **Ezekiel haras** is used in a prophecy that promises the land of Israel will be rebuilt in the Messianic Age - "They will say, 'This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden (); and the waste, desolate and **ruined (haras)** cities are fortified and inhabited. Then the nations that are left round about you will know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the **ruined (haras)** places and planted that which was desolate; I, the LORD, have spoken and will do it." (Ezekiel 36:35-36)

**Overthrown (02040)(haras)** basically means to destroy by tearing down (e.g., cities = 2Sa 11:25, 2Ki 3:25, 1Chr 20:1, Isa 14:17; Lam 2:2, altars - Jdg 6:25, etc). **Haras** means break down, break through, broken down, destroyed. In Ex 19:21, 24 the haras is used by God to warn the people not to **break though** into the area surrounding Mt Sinai and as a result perish.

The first use of **haras** is in Ex 15:7, referring to the destruction of the Egyptian armies in the Red Sea. Israel was to destroy the Canaanites (Ex 23:24 = "utterly overthrow"; Lxx = **suntribo** = strictly rub hard together, hence smash or crush) and break up their idols. As Gideon was to begin his work as a deliverer of Israel, he was first to **pull down** his father's altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah beside it (Jdg 6:25). In Elijah's day it was the Jewish people who had "forsaken" Jehovah's covenant and  **torn down** His altars (1Ki 19:10, 14). Other objects of destruction included walls (Ezek 13:14), foundations (Ezek 30:4), barns (Joel 1:17), cities (2Ki 3:25; 1Chr 20:1) either by God (Lam 2:2; Ex 15:7) or by men (1Chr 20:1). The foolish woman pulled down her house by her sins (Pr 14:1). In ancient warfare cities which did not surrender were to be destroyed when their walls had been breached (1Chr 20:1; cf. Dt 20:10-14). The wicked ideas sinners advance in the cities bring about their destruction (Pr 11:11) by sapping morality and the will to resist the intruder. The slothful person's neglect can bring about the deterioration of the garden walls which mark off property (Pr 24:31). David lamented in Ps 11:3 "If the foundations are **destroyed**, What can the righteous do?"

**NAS** translates **haras** - break down(2), break through(2), broken down(1), destroyed(2), destroyers(1), overthrew(2), overthrow(5), overthrown(1), overthrows(1), pull you down(1), pull down(1), ruined(2), shatter(1), tear them down(1), tear you down(1), tear down(5), tears it down(1), tears down(1), thrown down(3), torn down(7), utterly overthrow(1).

**Haras** - 42v in the NAS - Ex 15:7; 19:21, 24; 23:24 (Lxx = suntribo); Jdg 6:25; 2Sa 11:25; 1Ki 18:30; 19:10, 14; 2 Kgs 3:25; 1 Chr 20:1; Job 12:14; Ps 11:3; 28:5; 58:6; Prov 11:11; 14:1; 24:31; 29:4; Isa 14:17; 22:19; 49:17; Jer 1:10; 24:6; 31:28, 40; 42:10; 45:4; 50:15; Lam 2:2, 17; Ezek 13:14; 16:39; 26:4, 12; 30:4; 36:35f; 38:20; Joel 1:17; Mic 5:11; Mal 1:4

## NAMED GATES OF JERUSALEM

The following is a complete list of the gates named in the Bible and by Josephus, with the reference to their occurrence:

1. Gate of Ephraim. 2 Chr 25:23; Neh 8:16; 12:39 This is probably the same as the--
2. Gate of Benjamin. Jer 20:2; 37:13; Zech 14:10ff so, it was 400 cubits distant from the--
3. Corner gate. 2 Chr 25:23; 26:9; Jer 31:38; Zech 14:10
4. Gate of Joshua, governor of the city. 2 Kin 23:8
5. Gate between the two walls. 2 Kin 25:4; Jer 39:4
6. Horse gate. Neh 3:28; 2 Chr 23:15; Jer 31:40
7. Ravine gate (i.e. opening on ravine of Hinnom). 2 Chr 26:9; Neh 2:13,15; 3:13
8. Fish gate. 2 Chr 33:14; Neh 3:13; Zeph 1:10
9. Dung gate. Neh 2:13; 3:13
10. Sheep gate. Neh 3:1,32; 12:39
11. East gate. Neh 3:29
12. Miphkad (Inspection) Gate. Neh 3:31
13. Fountain gate (Siloam?). Neh 12:37
14. Water gate. Neh 12:37
15. Old Gate. Neh 12:39

16. Prison gate. Neh 12:39

17. Potsherd Gate - Gate Harsith (perhaps the Sun; Authorized Version = East gate). Jer 19:2

18. First gate. Zech 14:10

19. Gate Gennath (gardens). Josephus B.J. v. 4, - 4.

20. Essenes' gate. Josephus B.J. 4, - 2.

**To these should be added the following gates to the temple:**

Gate Sur, 2 Kin 11:6 called also gate of foundation. 2 Chr 23:5

Gate of the guard, or behind the guard,

2 Kin 11:6,19; called the high gate.

2 Kin 15:35; 2 Chr 23:20; 27:3

Gate Shallecheth. 1 Chr 26:16

**At present the chief gates are --**

1. The Zion's gate and the dung gate, in the south wall;
2. St. Stephen's gate and the golden gate (now walled up), in the east wall;
3. The Damascus gate and
4. Herod's gate, in the north wall; and
5. The Jaffa gate, in the west wall.