

Jeremiah 33:8

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Date: 22 May 2016

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[0 : 0 0] Jeremiah 33, we read at the verse 8, And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me. And I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.

Now at the time when the Lord gives this word through Jeremiah, it's not exactly a propitious kind of time for him. Because as it says, he is himself shut up in the court of the prison.

He is in jail in Jerusalem. It may be because of the prophecies that he is giving and making about how Jerusalem is going to fall, which the Lord has told him to give and to prophesy.

Or it may be because of the occasion when he sought to go out of the city after the Babylonians withdrew for a time. And then he was arrested and thrown into prison, saying, Oh, he's defecting to the Babylonians, which of course he wasn't.

But at any rate, here he is in jail. Right. And in the midst of his prison time, when Jerusalem is compassed about with armies, when it is being besieged, and when it is due ultimately to fall, this word of hope and encouragement comes through.

[1 : 1 2] And I think, well, it's not going to be very convincing, is it? When, you know, he's in prison and Jerusalem is about to be destroyed by the Babylonians. How can all these things be true? How can the Lord say, yes, he's going to cleanse them from their sin, and he's going to make it all right again, when he's just been saying, you know, that he did all these things, he brought all this, yeah, this evil upon them because of the abundance of their sin.

You know, they come to fight with the Chaldeans, verse 5, that he's to fill them with the dead bodies of men, whom I have slain in my anger and my fury, for all whose wickedness I have hid my face from their city.

So, you know, which is it? Is it going to be the blessing and the forgiveness of sin, or is it the destruction? Is it the punishment for wickedness? Well, of course, we think in terms of either or. But with the Lord, whose promises are full and true, it is always both and. This forgiveness, which is prophesied here, and which we know ultimately comes only through God's own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the branch of David, who's referred to there at verse 17, or verse 15, I beg your pardon, and on into 17, the Lord, our righteousness, the one who is king and priest for us, that forgiveness comes through him.

But also, the suffering and the punishment and the agony, he goes through in order to purchase, to maintain, to obtain that forgiveness for us.

[2 : 4 4] It's not an either or. Either everything's going to be all right, we're going to be blessed, we're going to be forgiven, we're going to be free, it's going to be okay, or there's going to be punishment and judgment for our wickedness and so on.

There is both. There is judgment for our wickedness. There is judgment for our sin. There is destruction because of all the evil that we are guilty of. But, in the Lord's ultimate mercy, it falls not upon the guilty, but upon the innocent.

This is how he is able to forgive. Notice, if we can focus on the emphasis here at verse 8. I will cleanse them from all their iniquity.

It's not a case of, well, they'll bring enough offerings, and they'll sacrifice enough goats, and then enough sheep, and so on. And then I'll say, okay, fair enough, I'll turn up all these sacrifices. Yes, okay, there's enough sacrifice, there's enough good works, you've said enough prayers, you've gone on enough pilgrimages, that's it.

Okay, it's paid for. No, it's not paid for. It's never going to be paid for with the blood of bulls and goats. It is, I will cleanse them. Not only from their iniquity, but notice, from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me.

[4 : 02] All sin is ultimately against the Lord. Yes, we may sin against other people too, and we may do them wrong, and we may do them injustice, but ultimately sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of any law of God, giving us a rule to the reasonable creature.

Now, if we have David, for example, in Psalm 51, when he is guilty of plotting murder against Uriah, of adultery with Bansheba, he is ultimately guilty for the death of the child that dies thereafter, you know, and yet he says against thee, thee only of I sinned, and done this evil in my sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

All sin, there are others wounded by it, that is almost, as we might say, collateral damage, and others are genuinely sinned against, and genuinely wounded. They need to forgive us too, but all sin is ultimately against the Lord.

I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me, and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.

All sin is ultimately against the Lord. It is he alone who is able to pronounce forgiveness. And when he does so, he doesn't do just partially.

[5 : 31] He doesn't do it just a little bit, or say, well, that's 50% paid for, you still owe me this much. No, as we read in Hebrews 7, verse 25, Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Who is it being spoken about? Our great high priest, the Lord Jesus. Because what he endures for sinners upon the cross is the punishment that would be due to each and every single one of the saved.

In each and every generation, from Adam all the way down to the last individual who ends up being saved, and elect, and redeemed, and all the sin that they are guilty of, and all that they have ever done, and said, and thought against the Lord.

You know, that's a whole lot of sin. In a whole lot of generations throughout the entire salvation history of the world, it is piled and poured into one individual, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, a couple of years ago, when the hurricane hit the island here in 2015, January there, there was a whole lot of damage throughout parts of the island here in Staphy, I was always surprised that sitting up on the hill where we are, the man didn't get more damage.

[6 : 58] But other places lower down in the village and so on, got more damage than we did. And sometimes, it was because in places where, although buildings or whatever were comparatively sheltered within a rock or a cliff or whatever, the effect of that shelter was that where the wind could get through, it became funneled.

It became focused. And when it was channeled into a much narrower gorge, no doubt the power of it would have been intensifying, the hostages are whirling around all over the place.

It's like if you watch a wide, kind of meandering river, and then maybe it goes through a rocky stage in a narrow gorge, and instead of just sort of easy-ozy meandering, suddenly it's plunging, and it's fast, and it's rapid, because it's narrowed, and it's focused, and the intensity is much greater.

So think then of all the sin of all the Lord's people throughout all the ages, not spread now nearly across all these generations, from Adam to whenever the last generation happens to be, but rather focused, channeled in its intensity, poured down into one individual.

Yes, he is divine, but all this sin is poured into him. He bears all of this upon the cross, and the Father, beholding such sin, cannot behold it.

[8 : 28] He is of pure eyes and to behold iniquity, he turns his face away, and the Son cries out upon the cross, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? He has not forsaken him, but he must forsake the sin.

The sin which is laid upon the cross, the sin which is born by God the Son. There it is taken upon himself, the ultimate sacrifice.

The one upon, as it were, like with a sacrificial beast, the priest lays his hand and pronounces all the sins of all the people of Israel, and then he slays the sacrificial beast, and with its blood, the sin symbolically was meant to drain away.

Now all the sin of all God's people is endured in the suffering, in the agony, in the intensity of the abyss through which our Lord passes and into which he enters.

When he says, I will cleanse them from all their iniquity that have sinned against me, it's not an instead of to the suffering and to the destruction which Jerusalem is going through.

[9 : 38] Yes, but it is a both-and. Jeremiah is not saying to the people around him, it's okay, we're going to get forgiven, it's fine, it's all doing well, the Babylonians will go away and everything will just return to being rosy again.

It will eventually, but first, there has to be the enduring of this suffering, this punishment. And in physical terms, for physical Jerusalem, it was a physical destruction, a physical war, a physical siege.

But in a deeper spiritual reality, of which the physical is merely the illustration, then ultimately it is our Lord who bears and takes all the punishment, all the suffering, all the destruction for our sin, for those who trust and believe in him.

And because their sin is forgiven, because their iniquity is taken away, not just some of them, but all their iniquity, whereby they sin against me.

I'm the one who can decide whether to expunge this debt, says the Lord. And it is not really expunged, it is paid, it is paid in full. I can pronounce that I will issue the receipt.

[10 : 50] I can say when it is paid, when it is fulfilled. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a name of honor before all nations of the earth. What is the name of honor, the name of joy?

Well, remember what we read in Philippians 2. That because our Lord endured the cross and all that he suffered, emptying himself and taking upon himself the form of a servant, the Lord, the Father, gave him a name that is above every name.

That the name of Jesus said we should bow in heaven and in earth and things under the earth.

Now, as I think of mentioning in the past, you just think about that for a second. Think about all the angelic forces in heaven bowing the knee at the sound of the name of Jesus or at the sight of Jesus on his throne.

All the redeemed in glory. Yeah! Think of that. Yeah, brilliant. But also think of all his enemies.

Think of those who have denied him. Think of the militant atheists.

Think of all the militant Muslims and Hindus who have been burning down churches and murdering Christians and so on in India and in Pakistan and other places. Think of the terrorists.

[12 : 02] Think of the atheists. Think of all those who have set themselves against the Lord Jesus Christ and said, no, he's not a true prophet. He's not the ultimate one. He's not God the Son.

Having to bow the knee at the sound of this name, the name that is higher than any other, the Lord says, it shall be to me a name of God, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth.

This is a father delighting the son. Do you think in terms of, let's say, your parents at some school award setting or some university thing or whatever it may be and are calling out the names for the prize and they call out the name of your child and you go, oh my God, when you burst with pride, when they say their name and hopefully go up to get their prize, if that would happen to you then that's nice but I mean, it would be, it's such a sense, such a feeling of delight in the name of your own beloved child being called.

It shall be to me a name of joy and praise and honour before all the nations of the earth which shall hear all the good that I do unto them.

They shall fear and tremble for all the goodness, for all the prosperity that I procure unto it. You might think, well, that's a bit odd, isn't it? Surely, you know, they'd fear and tremble with judgment or with warfare or with darkness or with terror, you know, but they don't fear and tremble with goodness or with kindness or with love.

[13 : 32] Well, maybe it's not a good illustration but I can remember times when, let's say, when I was young and things maybe, people were nasty at school or something went wrong or whatever and you can face it down, you can face down whether the bullies or the pals that have given you a hard time or whatever, you know, put on your hard face and you can, and you can, oh, I'm not bothered and then, then somebody's nice to you and then somebody comforts you and they're okay, they're alongside you and they're trying to be your friend, they understand and they get you to talk about it and they sympathize it and that's when you begin to crumble.

That's when you begin to start weeping or blubbing when people are nice to you. You can face down the hardness, you can deal with the difficulty but kindness, blessing, goodness, when we don't expect that, that can destroy all our defenses because to have kindness, to show blessing, mercy, love, is something you can only do really from a position of strength and when we see how good the Lord is to us, it underlines in a sense, we don't actually deserve this, we've done this against and we've sinned against in this way, that way, we've taken his name in vain, we've

disobeyed his commandments, we deserve on a judgment, he is being kind to us, he is being nice to us, we're afraid in a sense of this kindness, we're afraid of this mercy, we know that we don't deserve it and it shall be a name of joy, yes, and they will fear, all the nations shall hear all the good that I do to them, they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it, they will be afraid when they see how good the Lord is to sinners and especially how good he is to those whom he loves in particular, you see, imagine that, let's say, you were the one giving a hard time to somebody and you, you picked on them and you were bad to them and you did nasty things to them and then suddenly, this person who is so powerful and so completely in control and they are the one who rules everything, they come up, they go up to this person even back to this, oh, it's okay, you're my friend, you're my favorite, you come with me and you're blessed and you're my particular, my particular celebrity person or pupil or whatever, they think, oh, Jesus, that's the one who rules everything and now he is taking charge of this one that I've been bad to, how is he going to feel about me, what's he going to think about me when I've turned on his own precious child in this way, yes, they'll tremble, yes, they'll fear when they see kindness, when they see blessing because the world is not used to this, the world knows about wickedness, it knows about sin, it knows about hardness, it knows about cheating, it knows about lying, but kindness, goodness, honesty, truth, it feels threatened by, think of it today, you know, if somebody makes a public statement and you know that public statement is true and yet there'll be people jumping up and saying, you can't say that, you're not allowed to say that, people will be offended if you say that because you'll upset this group and that group and the next group, now, the fact is, it might actually be true, but you're not allowed to say it, even if it's true, if it's going to upset people, you see, the world's not interested in the truth, it's more interested in lies, more interested in not upsetting itself, more interested in practicing deceit and hardness and wickedness but goodness and kindness and mercy from the Lord it can't deal with, that causes people to be afraid and when people are afraid they become cruel, but the Lord is not cruel, his promise rather is a blessing, again, there shall be heard in this place which he shall say shall be desolate without man, without beast, the cities of Judah,

Jerusalem, they're desolate, you don't have anybody in there, there'll be heard in them the voice of joy, the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, the voice of the bride, now he's prophesying a return from exile in the first instance but always with the Lord there's the surface level of truth which is true and there's the deeper level of truth, you know, it's as though, as though let's say you want a piece of land and this piece of land it's been fruitful, maybe you plant crops in it, maybe you've got fruit trees and you harvest your crops, you sell them, makes a nice, nice tidy little sum for you and you've got good, good fortune for your land and good money for your land and income for your land and then, underneath your land somebody discovers there's oil or perhaps there's diamonds in a mine there and you own this land so you can dig down and you can bring up this rocks and diamonds and you get even more and maybe there's oil you can drill for that too and what was initially just superficial wealth on the surface of the land this now proves to be deeper, richer, vaster wealth and it's all your land you didn't even know it and this is what the Lord's truth is like there is the layer at the top which applies immediately to the historical context and that is true it's perfectly true what the Lord is saying he's going to restore the exile to Jerusalem and there will be weddings and funerals and parties and blessings and marriages and so on there will be all these things again the voice of joy the voice of gladness but ultimately he's pointing to a deeper truth he's pointing to himself as the bridegroom and his people as the bride this is what he prophesies through Isaiah 62 verses 4 and 5 thou shalt no more be termed forsaken neither shalt thy land any more be termed desolate but thou shalt be called

Hepzibah and thy land Beulah and a Hepzibah it's a name that means my delight is in her Beulah means thou art married for the Lord delighteth in thee and thy land shall be married for as a young man marrieth a virgin so shall thy sons marry thee and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride so shall thy God rejoice over thee now of course he's talking spiritual terms here because sons don't marry their mothers it says thy sons shall marry thee you can't physically marry the land it's spiritual terms God is talking here as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride so shall thy God rejoice over thee he intends to make his people his own just like we read Ephesians 5 the love of the Lord for his church and likewise of course at the end of Revelation where the new Jerusalem is coming down out of heaven and he says

I'll show you the lamb's wife the bride coming down out of heaven and we read that in chapter 20 21 I beg your pardon and there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials of

the seven last place and talked to me saying come hither I'll show thee the bride the lamb's wife and he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain and showed me that great city the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God having the glory of God and her light was like unto a stone most precious even like a jasper stone clear as crystal the voice of joy is heard because it is the voice of the Lord united with his people in that intimacy in that love which is unlike any other the nearest parallel in earthly terms is marriage between a man and his wife but the Lord's love for his people is so much deeper than that so much more intense so much more intimate and so we have here the voice of the bride and the voice of the bride we have here also as we read that the multiplication of the Lord's people it's not just about Judah it's not just about Jerusalem verse 22 as the host of heaven cannot be numbered neither the sand and the sea measure so will I multiply the seed of David my son and the Levites that minister unto me again in Isaiah this is this is what was prophesied there again because he says you know single barren that didst not bear

[22 : 27] Isaiah 54 break forth into singing cry aloud thou didst not travail with child more of the children of the desolate than the children of the mine white saith the Lord because he's talking about enlarging the tents spreading the land white for thy maker is thy husband the Lord of hosts is his name this is a spiritual marriage with spiritual descendants it's not just physical children and physical progeny it is a spiritual spreading a spiritual fulfillment and this is why literally the number of believers the number of self-identifying Christians we can see anyway throughout the world is far greater than that of any other religion in the world and even those other religions that are increasing they tend to be increasing by simply birth rate when Christianity is expanding when the gospel is expanding it's doing so by conversions doing so by people coming to know the Lord as their personal saviour as the bridegroom and down as the bride again in this place verse 12 which is desolate without man and without beast in all cities shall be an invitation of shepherds causing their flocks to lie down and here we have again the other spiritual illustration here that he will perform the good that he has promised that the Lord is the shepherd of his people

Psalms 23 of course tells us that but also you know John 10 here we are in verse 2 he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep to him the poor to open it the sheep hear his voice he calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth the mighty knows each individual one by name he putteth forth his own sheep when he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them and the sheep follow him for they know his voice verse 11 I am the good shepherd the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep see we have the fulfillment in Jesus we have the fulfillment the voice of the shepherd of the sheep yes there is a physical fulfillment yes there is a physical return from exile but the deeper truth the oil the diamonds deep down in the truth of God's word is that this is fulfilled in Christ and we see that it is fulfilled in Christ because in verse 15 onwards it talks about the branch of righteousness to grow up unto David now we know that legally

Jesus is descended from David physically of course he is not Joseph is not his physical father so there is not the physical descent from David but there is the legal descent from David he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land in his days Judah shall be saved Jerusalem shall dwell safely and this is the name whereby she shall be called the Lord of righteousness back again to verse 8 I will cleanse them from all their sin we don't have any righteousness in ourselves there is no righteousness of our own it is the Lord who is our righteousness this is what she shall be called the bride the old Jerusalem like the new Jerusalem the bride of Christ the bride of the Lord acknowledges that he is our righteousness David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel well he would struggle to find one now because the genealogy can be traced from David all the way down to Christ it could probably be traced for a couple more generations until the fall of Jerusalem but after that nobody has got any records of who is descended from anybody you can't trace anybody back now to the lineage of David you can't say oh well the Messiah is still going to come because look we can trace him back to David no you can't you can trace Jesus back to David you can say that he is the branch that he is the fulfillment of this prophecy you can say that David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel because Mary is told when she is to expect that our Lord in her womb that of his kingdom there shall be a way when he becomes the king upon the throne of Israel it will never end he will never cease to be king he will never cease to be the Lord's anointed but notice he also it's not just about the kingship it's also about the priesthood verse 18 neither shall the priest the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt offerings and to kindle me to offerings and to do sacrifice continually

now Jesus is not descended from the tribe of Levi technically he's not descended from David but legally he is but Jesus is the ultimate priest the priest as Hebrews tells us after the order of Melchizedek the one without father without mother without end of day so beginning of time he is the one who is always the priest offering up intercessions the one that all sacrifice for us at the throne of grace so there's never a need for more Levites there's never a wanting a desiring of more Levites there'll never be in need of more to kindle meat offerings and to do sacrifice continually because there is already a fulfillment by the time of Christ there is the ultimate fulfillment of kingship and priesthood and not only so but just as it goes on to say in verse verse 21 now I know the Levites the priests now have a son to reign upon his throne and with the priests the Levites my ministers that there will always be a kingship there will always be a priesthood now of course what does Moses the Lord say to Moses at Exodus 19 at verse 6 ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation these are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel and Peter takes up this theme in chapter 2 the first Peter where he says ye are a chosen generation a royal priesthood and a holy nation a peculiar people you should show forth the praises of him who have called you out of darkness into his marvelous life the Lord's people are both kings and priests don't take my word for it the word of God says it Revelation chapter 1 verse 6 he hath made us kings and priests unto God and his father to him be glory and dominion forever and ever amen and again verses 9 and 10 chapter 5 in Revelation they sung a new song saying thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals below for thou hast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation and hast made us unto our God kings and priests and we shall reign on the earth now we're going to get a wee bit bamboozled here one minute he's talking about shepherds the next minute he's talking about kings and priests then he's talking about getting married about the marriage and the deep truth of God's word I mean this is all just getting a wee bit mushed for me it's almost like not a single strand or a thread or a rope running through but then it's crisscrossing and intertwining and the mesh is getting really really quite confusing and quite thick well yes it is not even so much the mesh of an interweaving net but so close and so tight and so intense are the crossings and the stitchings and the united this is a veritable tapestry not a net so much as a tapestry from which the picture emerges how all the strands and threads of God's truth physical Judah physical Israel the kingship the priesthood all of it pointing to Christ bringing in this kingdom of priests bringing in this royal priesthood this shepherding this calling of his own sheep by name marrying the land marrying his people he being the bride she being the bride and the new Jerusalem coming out of God from heaven it's all there all the different strands coming in from different sides it's in Peter it's in Moses it's in Exodus it's in Jeremiah it's in Isaiah it's in the gospel accounts it's in the Hebrews it's coming from all angles it is going in all directions because it is completely interwoven this story it is not one strand going off by itself it is not one line or one road here or there in different shapes like an octopus it is completely intermeshed it is completely bonded together and the picture which this tapestry forms is that [31 : 18] Christ the fulfilment of all the scriptures this is why we have this truth that it is not an either or not a suffering agony destruction judgment or blessing and goodness and kindness and newness of life it is both and for Jeremiah and the Israelites in Jerusalem they had to go through physical destruction physical siege physical defeat physical exile before the time of blessing would come in for us now as we can see the long story with hindsight the long view we can see that Christ has taken the intensity of all the suffering agony judgment for sin upon himself and he in himself has fulfilled this verse here I verse 8 will cleanse them from all their iniquity to whereby they have sinned against me

I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have sinned whereby they have transgressed against me he is the one sinned against he is the one who pays the price he is the one who sets us free all the strands come together all the threads of the tapestry unite to form this one picture of God in the person of his son Jesus Christ and because he has done it the Lord our righteousness and because he has done it all and saves to the uttermost them that come to God by him this is good news because it means none of us can sit and say oh well if only I knew the Lord better then there might be hope for me if only I were a better person then he might want to save me if only this if only that there is no if only God has done it and done it all he has done it all for sinners so that they may simply trust and believe and come that's all trust and believe and come repent of yourselves so that he and his sacrifice takes them away yes then you're going to begin then the life of sanctification of becoming more like

Jesus begins then the journey really starts but none are prohibited none are turned away because he has done it all this is the truth of the gospel it may be in the depths of the old testament it may be here in Jeremiah but ultimately it is Jesus I will cleanse them from all their iniquity whereby they have sinned against me and all the different parts of all scripture have their fulfillment and their consummation in him let's pray bye how is