

# The Christian Arsenal

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## Accept The Lord's Forgiveness Jeremiah Chapter 29 - 33

- Jeremiah had received God's call to service in 626BC. Chapter 28 tells us that Zedekiah is now the King of Judah, which occurred in 598BC. So for 28 years Jeremiah had preached to the people of Judah that they must change their ways or face destruction. The people however rejected the prophet's warnings.
- Jeremiah was called to deliver a message of judgment; to uproot and tear down, to destroy and demolish (1:10). The prophet had been faithful and preached God's message even though he had been persecuted for it.
- The message of judgment was not the only message the Lord gave Jeremiah. He was also called to "build and plant"(1:10). This was God's promise of restoration and hope for the future. Beyond the destruction, God promised a new covenant and a new relationship with Him. This is what enables people to survive devastating circumstances, hope in the Lord and His promises. Romans 8:18 assures believers that there is more beyond our present circumstances. The present sufferings cannot compare to the glory which shall be revealed in us. Faith and hope in God enables us to live through the worst that life offers.
- The people of Judah were experiencing the worst of life. Many of the citizens had been carried away to Babylon or killed. The temple had been looted and plundered. Their king, Jehoiachin had been taken and replaced with Zedekiah by Nebuchadnezzar. In the midst of all this turmoil, Jeremiah was delivering the other element of God's message. Hope for restoration.
- The Lord promised to restore the people to the Promised Land. God's grace to an undeserving people is well demonstrated here. I am so grateful for this Godly characteristic. This grace is available for all today, as Paul stated in Ephesians 2:8, "by grace you have been saved through faith", "it is the gift of God". God's grace is the source of salvation. God alone saves; salvation never originates in the efforts of people. It arises out of the loving kindness of God. As John 1:9 says, "Salvation is of the Lord".
- God promises a new and righteous leader to sit on the Davidic throne. A new covenant, based on the divine provision of forgiveness, promises fulfilled in Christ Jesus. God did not leave his people without comfort even as He condemned their sins.
- In chapter 29, Jeremiah sends a letter to the exiles in Babylon. Because of false prophets telling the exiles they would soon return, they were making little effort to prepare for a lengthy stay. So Jeremiah sent the letter, encouraging them to settle in, build homes and plant crops. Exile did not mean imprisonment or enslavement, rather displacement and

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- resettlement in unknown lands.
- He warned against listening to these false prophets. Their only hope was in calling out to the Lord and seeking Him wholeheartedly. God says in verse 11 and 12, “My thoughts of you are of peace not evil, to give you a future and a hope.” Yet there were still people like Shemaiah.
- Shemaiah had declared himself a prophet, and sent a letter back to Jerusalem, to the temple priests asking them to imprison Jeremiah. He was upset that Jeremiah was telling them to prepare for 70 years in Babylon. To build and plant. Because of this, God punished him for preaching rebellion against the Lord. Not only would he not see the good the Lord was going to do for His people, Shemaiah would not have any family see it either. Our sin always hurts more than just us.
- God’s message that Jeremiah was bringing to the people was not a hopeless word. In chapter 30 God promises to restore not only Judah but Israel as well. He promises that they shall return, have rest and be quite. God is faithful to His promises.
- Look in chapter 31:27-34. A restored and reunited Israel would enjoy the blessings of a new covenant relationship with the Lord. Keep this in mind when looking at the new covenant. God is speaking specifically to Israel and Judah. The new covenant was to be established with them through the coming Christ.
- This new covenant passage is quoted in the New Testament and applied to the church in 2Corinthians(3:5-18) and Hebrews (8:8-12,10:16-17). However, Israel rejected her Messiah and the new covenant, and according to Romans 11:11, when that happened salvation came to the Gentiles.
- It is important to understand that we didn’t just happen into salvation because of the failure of Israel. God had planned our salvation all along. In Genesis 12:3 God promised Abraham that through him all of the families of the earth would be blessed. Through the line of Abraham came Jesus the Messiah. And God repeats that promise here in 27. The days are coming when He would bless His people wonderfully.
- This new covenant promise was fulfilled in Jesus. Through Him all people of all nations and tongues have become one people of God. Through Jesus walls of division are broken down. Division between Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, young and old, and men and women. Regardless of how we differ from any other people group, in Christ we are simply the “redeemed”.
- Until the time of the fall of Jerusalem, God’s message through Jeremiah had only focused on judgment. The fact that the judgment had occurred as promised now could give hope that the restoration would occur as well.
- Verse 27 God says the days are coming when He promises to bless His people. Now that the judgment was happening, the people should know that God would keep the other part of His promise. God promised to and had made plans for blessing for His people. He was encouraging His

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people that hope lay ahead, hope beyond their present circumstances. Romans 8:18 reiterates this promise to all believers.

- In verse 29, Jeremiah repeats a popular proverb which is also recorded in Ezek. 18:2. This proverb carries the meaning of children bearing the sins of the fathers. 2 Chronicles attributes much of the demise of Jerusalem to the idolatry of Jotham and Ahaz, and it seems the people felt that the nation was being punished for the sins of a previous generation. The Lord rejected that proverb through Jeremiah and Ezekiel by telling us that each will be held accountable for his or her own sin.
- What we need to keep in mind is that none are innocent. Romans 3:23, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”. Although not all suffering is linked directly to an individual’s sin. Some suffering God allows in our lives to test us and grow our faith. Some is due to the presence of sin in the world. Regardless, the Lord made it clear here in Jeremiah that the suffering of the people of Judah was due to their disobedience. In chapter 19 God said they have stiffened their necks.
- Again in 31:31, the Lord says, “the days are coming”. I am promising something new and wonderful for the future. This is a fountain of God’s love for mankind here. This is the promise of the coming redemption through Christ Jesus. The new covenant of Jesus Christ fulfilled the promises of the old covenant of Moses. It is only by His perfect, once-and-for-all sacrifice that sinners can be forgiven.
- There had been covenant renewals before to change people’s wayward hearts, but this was not a renewal, this was new. It would not be like the old covenant. In the old covenant, God used intermediaries to relay His will (Moses, Aaron, Joshua). With the new covenant God Himself became the Mediator through God the Son. In the tabernacle and later the temple, only the High Priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies, and that was only at the designated time once a year.
- Now fast forward to the Cross. Upon the death of Jesus Christ, the veil which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies was torn in half from top to bottom. This signified the restoration of our relationship with God the Father through God the Son. When sin entered the world, it separated us from God. Jesus has bridged the gap between God and man. We no longer have need of the High Priest to go to God on our behalf, Jesus has become the permanent High Priest. He makes intercession to God on our behalf.
- The new covenant is permanent. In verse 32 God says the old covenant was one the Israelites broke. In 32:40 the Lord says this will be an everlasting covenant. The permanence and everlasting nature is based on God’s grace.
- The new covenant also would be internal. Verse 33, He will put His law in their minds and write on their hearts. The old law was written on tablets of stone, but the new covenant promise would give His people a new heart and a new spirit-Ezek. 36:26-27. John said rebirth is the work God’s

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spirit within the human heart.

This new covenant is not a cold business contract. It is relational, it is God's loving provision for our forgiveness. It is the reestablishment of our relationship with the Father through His Son. Just as God desired for the people of Judah then He desires for us now, to repent and seek His face and accept His forgiveness.

"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. (2Chron. 7:14)