

Jer. 30:12-31:1, Suffering and Restoration
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Overview

1. Four major sections, interconnected by six features or characteristics:

	30-31a	31b	32	33
a) Sin	X		X	
b) Restoration	X			X
c) Covenant		X	X	
d) Creation		X		X
e) Poetry	X	X		
f) Prose			X	X

2. Now focus in on 30:4-31:25.

The IF's show the basic paragraphs, as at 30:5, 12, 18. "saith the Lord" at the end of a sentence doesn't count.

A series of oracles, in four groups; the first and third include both suffering and restoration; the second and fourth are purely restoration. 30:4 sets the surprising tone for this section, emphasized more and more as the oracles unfold: the northern kingdom is included in this restoration. No one would suspect such a prospect for the rebellious north, but just as they led Judah in sin, so they will share with her in restoration.

Ref.	Suffering?	Restoration?	North?	South?
a) 30:5-31:1	Y	Y	?	Zion
b) 31:2-14	N	Y	Y	Zion
c) 31:15-22	Y	Y	Y	N
d) 31:23-25	N	Y	N	Y

3. The first group (30:5-31:1) has three oracles, each with a combination of S(uffering) and R(estoration): SRRS, SRRS, RSR. We have already discussed one, and now turn our attention to the two remaining.

A. 30:12-17, Wounds and Healing

1. The dominant metaphor in this section is that of wounds that need to be healed, and of the healing that the Lord brings.
2. Overview of structure:
 - a) 12-15, God has brought suffering upon the nation, for her sin.
 - b) 16, God will oppress Israel's oppressors.
 - c) 17a, God will heal Israel.
 - d) 17b, The heathen have reproached Israel.

Note that the first and third of these correspond (because God has brought suffering on Israel, he will restore her), as do the

second and fourth (because the heathen have abused Israel, God will judge them).

Application: The big question thrust before us here is, "Who causes Israel's suffering--God or the heathen?" The answer is, "Yes." God works through the events of our world, not in spite of them. They are under his control, yet those who do them are still responsible. Neb. is God's rod, yet God will judge Neb. for abusing Israel.

3. 12-15, God's role in Israel's suffering

This paragraph depicts the gravity of Israel's suffering with three statements that build upon one another.

a) 12, Jer begins by reporting the fact of Israel's hurt. The nation has a grievous wound. Imagine a gangrenous ulcer in the days before antibiotics. The only prospect is continued suffering.

b) 13-14a, Not only is Israel wounded, but no help is available for her. No remedy, either in friend or substance.

1) "None to plead thy cause, that thou mayest be bound up."

Cf. Paul and Silas in Philippi. The sequence of events there was

a> beating

b> imprisonment

c> salvation of the jailor

d> binding of their wounds!

That is, as prisoners and presumed evildoers, no one was under any obligation to dress the wounds that resulted from their beating! After all, the purpose of the beating was to punish them; why should anyone want to heal them?

So here, Israel's wounds come in punishment for her sin, and no one will take her side in the case and thus minister to her wounds.

2) Even if someone could be found to take her side, no medicine is available.

3) The situation is even graver than it sounds, because Israel used to have lots of "friends," the pagan nations with whom she made alliances, and whose gods she worshipped in preference to the Lord. But now they have forsaken her, and she is left to suffer.

4) *Application:* Beware trusting in the arm of flesh instead of the Lord. Human friends will let you down just when you need them most.

c) 14b-15, Not only is she wounded, and not only is no help available for her wound, but in fact the Lord himself has

brought this wound upon her, because of her sin. The paragraph is chiasmic, ABCBA, and develops two causal links: B causes A, and A causes C.

- 1) In the center, 15a poses a question: "Why do you cry over your wound? Why is your sorrow incurable?" (Hebrew accent leads to this division, not that of the AV.) These questions ask the reason for the grave situation already portrayed in 12-14a.
 - 2) The outermost members give the answer: "I have wounded thee; I have done these things unto thee." If Israel's wound were induced by a man, a man might be able to heal it. But when almighty God lifts his hand against her, she has no recourse.
 - 3) This in turn leads to a further question: why would God thus abuse his chosen people? The answer to this appears in the intermediate members, and is the same both times: "for the multitude of thine iniquity, because thy sins were increased."
4. 16, God oppresses the heathen.
v.16 changes the scene suddenly in two ways. First, we learn that the nation's "illness" is really oppression from foreigners, something that we have not seen previously. Second, God, who in the previous verse is chastising Israel, now is on their side.
- Note the progression in the four lines of this verse. In the first three, we learn of oppressors, and that the tide will be turned on them. Only in the fourth does God step forth as the one who brings judgment on them.
5. 17a, God heals Israel.
Not only will he take vengeance on their enemies, but he will also finally do what no one else is able to do, and heal their wound.
 6. 17b, the heathen's role in Israel's suffering.
Finally, we hear directly for the first time of the opposition of the heathen toward the nation, for which their judgment has already been announced.
 7. Summary:
The structure is rather intricate, but we can sort out the ideas into chronological order like this:
 - a) The nation sins against God (14,15).
 - b) So he brings judgment on them (14,15),
 - c) by the hand of pagan nations (17b).
 - d) Because he is the source of their misfortune, they can find no help (12-14).
 - e) But he eventually restores their fortunes (17a),
 - f) and punishes the heathen who have abused them (16).

8. *Application*: What does this paragraph have to teach us about our suffering?
- a) The solution does not lie in our own efforts or our own strength.
 - b) We cannot complain to God about it; whatever he allows into our lives is far less than our iniquities deserve.
 - c) He can and will bring relief when it is his time.
 - d) Meanwhile, we should not seek vengeance against those who abuse us; he will take care of that in due time.

B. 30:18-31:1, Judgment and Rebuilding

In this oracle, the judgment is mentioned, not at the beginning as in the previous two, but in the middle, between two promises of restoration, one long and one short. If the contrast in the first oracle was between birth pangs and resurrection, and in the second between wounds and healing, the contrast in the third is between judgment and rebuilding.

1. 30:18-22, a detailed look at the coming restoration.

The prophet begins with a general summary of the restoration, the promise to restore the fortunes of the nation (the same summary used already in 30:3). Then he amplifies it by tracing four successive stages in the restoration of the nation.

- a) 18b, the physical damage of war to the real estate will be undone.
 - 1) "Heap" is "tell," the semitic word for the artificial hill formed of the ruins of previous cities. The very word presumes that the buildings have been cast down violently.
 - 2) There is no article with "city" or "palace"; the sense is distributive. This is a promise about every city, every palace.
- b) 19-20, the population will be restored. Otherwise the buildings would be only a museum. Note the different ways in which the restoration of the population is described. We hear their worship and celebration; see their numbers increase; witness the punishment of their oppressors.
- c) 21, from the population at large we zoom in to the nation's ruler. Two of his characteristics are drawn to our attention: his origin, and his ministry.
 - 1) His origin: he is one of the people. Contrasted with Nebuchadnezzar; also with the Herodian family, who were Idumeans (Edomites). In this, he will fulfill the requirement of Deut. 17:15, "one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother," which the Jewish leaders at the time of Christ violated when they cried out, "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15).

2) His ministry: he will approach unto God. The verbs here ("draw near," "approach unto") describe the ministry of the priests in the tabernacle. It was a ministry expressly forbidden to the king, in a basic division of power between civil and religious rulers.

a> Saul lost the kingdom for usurping the levitical office of Samuel (see K&D on 1 Sam. 1:1 for Samuel's levitical pedigree) and offering sacrifice, 1 Sam. 13.

b> King Uzziah was smitten with leprosy for offering incense in the temple, 2 Chr. 26:16-20.

So the king promised here is qualitatively different from the kings of old. He combines the privileges of king and of priest.

3) The first of these descriptions was fulfilled often (though not consistently) during the restoration (Zerubbabel, Nehemiah, but not Herod). The second has never been true of any king except the Lord Jesus Christ, and he has yet to rule over the nation in the state described in vv. 18ff. Another indication that we have here promises yet to be fulfilled concerning the nation Israel.

d) 22, God will establish his covenant with the nation. These twin phrases are the heart of God's promise throughout the OT, ever since Sinai. God chose them to be his peculiar people. They broke the covenant of Sinai, rejecting God for false idols, but he will bring them back to himself and (through the New Covenant, yet to be described) will finally establish the relation that he desires with them.

The phrase occurs seven times in Jer, of which four are in chh. 30-32. The first two occurrences (7:23; 11:4) both look back to the covenant of Sinai; that in 24:7 looks forward to the same time as this promise.

e) Thus he describes the restoration as a crescendo, a growing climax. First the property is restored, then the population, then the human ruler, and finally God attains his rightful place as the nation's god, and they take their place as his people.

NOTE: the inseparability of the physical (v.18) and spiritual (v.22) sides of the promise. The church enjoys the spiritual without the physical (2 Cor. 6:16), but God has promised both to Israel, and as he is true, she will receive both.

2. 30:23-24, review of the judgment.

Suddenly a cloud passes over the face of the sun. For just a moment we are reminded that the promised restoration does not annul the warnings of judgment. Jer is not another false prophet with a groundless message of peace. In fact, these words are repeated from 23:19,20, the midst of his confrontation with the false prophets, where their words are contrasted with the Lord's

true words as a whirlwind. God's judgment must fall on the wicked. Israel's salvation is in no way independent of God's law, or the way of faith established through the Lord Jesus.

3. 31:1, a summary review of the restoration.
The promise of the covenant "God-people" relation was the pinnacle of 30:18-22. Here it recurs alone, to close out the chiasm and remind us of the blessings to come after the nation is purged by judgment.
4. *Application*: Both the order of the climax in the first panel, and the feature of restoration chosen for summary in the last, show us what our values should be. God's blessings are both material and spiritual; it would be a mistake to ignore the material, but it is just as wrong to overemphasize it. God's great purpose is to establish his "people-God" relation with us, and deepen it to a "father-child" relation (2 cor. 6:16-18).

Psalm: 50. "Tempest" recalls 23-24; "my people"; last stanza, calling on God, makes him our God.

Analysis

30:4-31:25, * quote p: the promise of restoration after suffering to both houses of Israel

A. quote f: W:/)"L.EH HA/D.:BFRIYM):A\$ER D.IB.ER Y:HWFH)EL-YI&:RF)"L W:/)EL-Y:HW.DFH

B. quote: let S be suffering, R restoration. A series of oracles, in four groups; the first and third include both suffering and restoration; the second and fourth are purely restoration. He sneaks the northern kingdom in; no mention of either house in the first group, north included in the second, then focus on the north in the third, and on the south in the fourth. No one would suspect such a prospect for the rebellious north, but just as they led Judah in sin, so they will share with her in restoration.

1. 30:5-31:1, SRRS SRS RSR

Three cycles of suffering and restoration for Jacob. No explicit mention of either house of Israel.

a) srrs 30:5-11, quote p: childbirth and resurrection; suffering; restoration; David (cf. 33:14-26)
See previous study.

b) srs 30:12-17, quote p: wounds and healing (cf. 33:4-9)

1) quote f: 30:12 K.IY KOH)FMAR Y:HWFH

2) quote: chiastic reason p

a> reason-1: reason p

1> text: amplification p: Israel's severe suffering

a: text: The problem

1:)FNW.\$ L:/\$IB:R/"K:

2: NAX:LFH MAK.FT/"K:

b: ampl: No remedy, either in friend or substance
 1: 30:13)"YN-D.FN D.IYN/"K: L:/MFZOWR
 2: R:PU)OWT T.:(FLFH)"YN L/FK:
 3: 30:14 K.FL-M:)AH:ABAY/IK: \$:K"XW./K:
 4:)OWT/FK: LO) YID:RO\$W.

2> reason: K.IY: God has caused it, for their sin.
 Chiastic nested reason p: they suffer because God has
 smitten them, because of their sin. Add in 17a: God
 restores them because they suffer because ...

a: reason-1: reason p
 1: text: MAK.AT)OWY"B HIK.IYTIY/K: MW.SAR
)AK:ZFRIY
 2: reason: (AL
 A. ROB (:AWON/"K:
 B. (FC:MW. XA+.O)TFY/IK:

b: text:
 1: 30:15 MAH-T.IZ:(AQ (AL-\$IB:R/"K:
 2:)FNW.\$ MAK:)OB/"K:

c: reason-2: reason p
 1: reason: (AL
 A. ROB (:AWON/"K:
 B. (FC:MW. XA+.O)TAY/IK:
 2: text: (F&IYTIY)"L.EH L/FK:

b> text-2: thesis: 30:16 LF/K"N God oppresses Israel's
 oppressors
 1> K.FL-)OK:LAY/IK: Y")FK"LW.
 2> W:/KFL-CFRAY/IK: K.UL./FM B.A/\$.:BIY Y"L"KW.
 3> W:/HFYW. \$O)SAY/IK: LI/M:\$IS.FH
 4> W:/KFL-B.OZ:ZAY/IK:)ET."N LF/BAZ

c> text-1: antithesis: God heals Israel
 1> 30:17 K.IY)A(:ALEH):ARUKFH L/FK:
 2> W./MI/M.AK.OWTAY/IK:)ER:P.F)/"K: N:)UM-Y:HWFH

d> reason-2: K.IY the reproach of the heathen
 1> NID.FXFH QFR:)W. L/FK:
 2> CIY.OWN HIY)
 3> D.OR"\$)"YN L/FH. S

c) rsr 30:18-31:1, quote p: judgment and rebuilding (33:10-13)
 1) quote f: 30:18 K.OH)FMAR Y:HWFH
 2) quote: chiastic contrast p

a> thesis: amplification p: restoration
 1> text: coordinate p
 a: HIN/:NIY-\$FB \$:BW.T)FH:FL"Y YA(:AQOWB
 b: W./MI\$:K.:NOTFY/W):ARAX"M
 2> amplification--builds to a climax.
 a: the buildings
 1: W:/NIB:N:TFH (IYR (AL-T.IL./FH.
 2: W:/)AR:MOWN (AL-MI\$:P.F+/OW Y"\$"B
 b: population
 1: 30:19 W:/YFCF) M"/HEM T.OWDFH W:/QOWL

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M:&AX:AQIYM
2: nap: W:/HIR:B.ITIY/M W:/LO) YIM:(F+W.
3: nap: W:/HIK:B.AD:T.IY/M W:/LO) YIC:(FRW.
4: 30:20 W:/HFYW. BFNFY/W K.:/QEDEM
5: WA/(:ADFT/OW L:/PFNAY T.IK.OWN
6: W./PFQAD:T.IY (AL K.FL-LOX:ACFY/W
c: ruler
1: coordinate p: his origin--from the people.
  A. 30:21 W:/HFYFH )AD.IYR/OW MI/M./EN.W.
  B. W./MO$:L/OW MI/Q.IR:B./OW Y"C")
2: contrast p: his destiny--with God.
  A. thesis: result p
    1. text: W:/HIQ:RAB:T.IY/W
    2. result: W:/NIG.A$ )"L/FY
  B. antithesis: K.IY MIY HW.)-ZEH (FRAB
    )ET-LIB./OW LF/GE$ET )"L/AY N:)UM-Y:HWFH
d: establishment of the covenant
Occurrences of this phrase in Jer: 7:23 (Gp); 11:4
(pG); 24:7 (pG); 30:22 (pG); 31:1 (Gp); 31:33
(Gp); 32:38 (pG)
1: 30:22 WI/H:YIYTEM L/IY L:/(FM
2: W:/)FNOKIY )EH:YEH L/FKEM L"/)LOHIYM S

b> antithesis: coming judgment on the wicked
1> 30:23 HIN."H SA(:ARAT Y:HWFH X"MFH YFC:)FH SA(AR
MIT:G.OWR"R
2> (AL RO)$ R:$F(IYM YFXW.L
3> 30:24 LO) YF$W.B X:AROWN )AP-Y:HWFH (AD-( :A&OT/OW
W:/(AD-H:AQIYM/OW M:ZIM.OWT LIB./OW
4> B.:/)AX:ARIYT HA/Y.FMIYM T.IT:B.OWN:NW. B/FH.

c> thesis: covenant blessing for Israel (recap of the
crowning detail of vv.18-22)
1> 31:1 B.F/("T HA/HIY) N:)UM-Y:HWFH )EH:YEH L"/)LOHIYM
L:/KOL MI$:P.:XOWT YI&:RF)"L
2> W:/H"M.FH YIH:YW.-L/IY L:/(FM S

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2. 31:2-14, All restoration: the Lord regathers his people. The northern kingdom is expressly included, but the south is not excluded. Detail in next message.
3. 31:15-22, coordinate p, SR SR, the Lord comforts two weepers, Rachel and Ephraem (N). Full focus on the northern kingdom. Next message.
4. 31:23-25, quote p, restoration of Judah (note extended quote formula). Full focus on the south. Next message.