

Jer. 30:1-11, Introduction to the Book of Consolation
August 3-9, 1990
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Overview

1. Place of this section in the book.

This is the center of the book:

- a) *Oracles*, 2-25. Judgment on Judah.
- b) *Biographical*, 26-29. Jeremiah's relations with the **Priests**
- c) *Oracles*, 30-33. Promise of Restoration; New Covenant.
- d) *Biographical*, 34-45. Jeremiah's relations with the **King**.
- e) *Oracles*, 46-51. Oracles against the Nations.

My earlier handouts show only 30-31 here, since they are poetry and 32-33 are prose, but I've found that the prose section echoes the poetry section very closely, so it is better included with the central oracles.

2. Overall structure of this section (30-33)

- a) 30:1-3 appears to be a heading to the entire section.
- b) 30-31 are poetry; 32-33 are prose. Each has two parts; the vision break at 31:26, and the strong IF at 33:1.
- c) Four strong themes are repeated throughout this section.
 - 1) Reiteration of the land's *sin* and the agony of suffering imposed on the people for it.
 - 2) *Restoration* of the society and its relations.
 - 3) Focus on a new *covenant* between God and Israel.
 - 4) Promises grounded in the order of *creation*.
- d) Here is how these features are distributed in the four sections of the book of consolation.

	30-31a	31b	32	33
1) Sin	X		X	
2) Restoration	X			X
3) Covenant		X	X	
4) Creation		X		X

If we add the poetry-prose distinction as uniting the two halves of each section, we get a complete graph. These patterns of repetition integrate the entire section.

3. 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.

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

4. Theological significance: This is probably the single most important passage in the Bible for determining one's eschatological position. It predicts that God will bring Israel back to her land, to live there forever under a new covenant. Thus it is foundational to the millennial perspective. Recall the three options for the restoration passages:

- a) Reference to Zerubbabel--but this restoration is to be forever, not just until 132 AD.
- b) Spiritual reference to the church--but this completely misses the emphasis on the land, which is central to Jeremiah's whole point.
- c) The final option is that God will one day restore the nation to its land, in belief and obedience. This has always been the Jewish expectation. Furthermore, it was the dominant Christian teaching during the first three centuries. Only after the so-called "conversion" of Constantine, when the church felt that it at last had its temporal power on earth, did amillennialism become dominant, through the influence of Augustine.

A. Introduction to the book, 30:1-3

- 1. The command to write in a book; importance of preserving this. Why is this information singled out?
- 2. v.3 gives the reason: God is going to reverse his former judgments, by bringing them back to the land. Because this will happen a ways down the road, he wants the record preserved so that, when it happens, people will recognize it as the hand of God and not just political happenstance.
 - a) The phrase "bring again [or 'turn'] the captivity" is a common OT phrase, most common (7x) here in Jer. 30-33, referring not just to the end of captivity but to the reversal of any divine judgment.

NOTES:

- 1) Found only in restoration sections, not covenant sections, except for the very end of 32:44.

2) G in 30-31, C in 32-33, with K/Q uncertainty in 33:26.

b) Specifically, he will bring them back to their land and give it back to them. Note the emphasis on the land! It is central; the other blessings are secondary. To apply this to God's blessings on the church, which omit the land entirely, is completely backwards.

c) *Application*: God's Word is sure and certain. He even wants to write it down, so that he can be held to it. "The promises of God are yea and amen."

Now we begin a series of three oracles, each including both Suffering and Restoration, but in a different order: SRRS, then SR, then RSR. Each contrasts the judgment and the restoration with a different metaphor. 30:4 expressly declares them to refer to both houses of Israel, but in these three only the south is mentioned explicitly, and that only obliquely, via the reference to 'Zion' in 30:17.

B. 30:5-11, Childbirth and Resurrection

1. The metaphor here compares the suffering of the exile with the pain of childbirth (v.6), in contrast with the triumph of the resurrection that God will bring in the future (v.9). Two modes of attaining to life, one painful, the other gloriously free of pain.
2. Overview of the structure.
 - a) The oracle is a motivated command: "Do this because of that."
 - b) The command is in 10a.
 - c) The word "therefore" with which it begins shows that what comes before is to be understood as a motive for the command; that section describes suffering followed with deliverance.
 - d) The three repetitions of "for" that follow it (the third rendered "though" in AV v.11) indicate a following motive; the first two speak of God's deliverance, but the last of his measured judgment.
 - e) Overall structure is thus chiastic:
Suffering-Restoration-Command-Restoration-Suffering
3. 5-7. The judgment is announced in answer to a question.
 - a) First, the prophet hears a voice of trembling, a cry of fear.
 - b) Then he sees men holding their bellies in agony, with ashen faces, as though they were in the pangs of childbirth. A great mystery.

c) v.7 offers the explanation. It is a (not "the") time of distress for Jacob. (Note parallel with birth agonies in 4:31 and 49:24.) Furthermore, it is unique in her experience: "none is like it."

d) What historical event is in view?

- 1) Conquest under Babylon? But was that any worse than what the northern kingdom experienced under Assyria?
- 2) Destruction by Rome in A.D. 70 and 132, when the streets were lined with crosses?
- 3) Surely the pogroms and the Holocaust, in our century, dwarf both of these events. 6 million Jews dead--I doubt there WERE six million Jews in all in 600 BC. (Present population of all of Israel is only about 4 million.)
- 4) Further prophetic input helps us see when this will be and what it will be like.

a> Dan. 9:27 foretells a seven-year period ("one week") during the second half of which (3.5 years) Jerusalem will be desolated. This is placed AFTER the coming of Messiah.

b> Matt. 24:14ff gives further temporal precision; it refers to Daniel's period AFTER the evangelization of the entire world, and describes it as an unprecedented "great tribulation."

c> Revelation picks up the 3.5 year figure (11:2, 3; 12:6, 14; 13:5) and describes the coming sufferings in great detail.

- 5) *Application*: Consider how terrible sin is, that it justifies such extraordinary suffering as its consequence--greater even than the holocaust. Should we ever be tempted to take it lightly, let us pray for God to bring vividly before our eyes the sufferings of Israel, and then realize that the worst is yet to come; and then let us worship God for bringing such suffering on his own dear son, that we might be spared it.

4. 8-9. Deliverance will follow.

The deliverance is announced in the form of a contrast. The nation will change rulers.

- a) v.8, they will no longer serve the Gentiles. The imagery is drawn from the symbolic yokes and bonds of ch. 27. Note that this servitude is to be "no more." That is, once it ends, it ends forever. Certainly not something that was attained in the restoration under Zerubbabel.

- b) v.9, they will serve the Lord, whose rule will be mediated through the restored house of David.

Who is the David here? Is the reference here to David the individual? To his house? Or to Messiah? The answer will probably depend on whether you understand these promises to refer to the Jewish restoration, spiritually to the church, or to a future restoration of Israel on earth.

- 1) Note first of all that there are two lines of Davidic promise in the OT:

a> a promised branch or descendant of David:

- 1> 2SA 7:12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.
- 2> ISA 11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:
- 3> JER 23:5 (cf. 33:15) Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.
- 4> cf. also Jer. 33:17, 22, 26 on David's family line in general.

b> David himself: besides here, Hosea (about 130 years before Jer); Ezekiel (contemporary with Jer).

- 1> HOS 3:5 Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.
- 2> EZE 34:23 And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.
- 3> EZE 34:24 And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it.
- 4> EZE 37:24 And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them.
- 5> EZE 37:25 And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.

- 2) If you believe this is fulfilled in the restoration, you argue that "David" refers to the davidic house (as in 1 Kings 12:16). That is, these two lines of promise merge. Then you argue that the focus is on Zerubbabel, governor of

Judah (Hag. 1:1), whose father, Shealtiel, was a son of Jeconiah (1 Chron. 3:17, but there Zech in the MT comes from Shealtiel's brother Pedaiah--levirate? Cf. NBD under "Zerub.") BUT Zerubbabel can't even satisfy the "branch" prophecies:

a> As a descendant of Jeconiah, Zerubbabel is under the curse of Jer. 22:30, so he CANNOT sit on the throne of David. (NB: Though Matthew traces a genealogy through this line, it is of Joseph, NOT of our Lord.)

b> Eze. 37:25 says, "my servant David shall be their prince for ever." Zerubbabel did not reign for ever, nor did the commonwealth over which he ruled persist.

3) If you believe that this promise is to be fulfilled spiritually to the church, you again have to argue that "David" refers here to the house of David, merging the two lines of prophecy, and that the distinguished member of the house of David is the Lord Jesus. Unlike Zerubbabel, there is no question that our Lord does fulfill the branch prophecies. But where is he ever clearly and unambiguously called "David"?

4) If you believe that God will restore the people of Israel in belief to the promised land, there's no need to confuse the two promises or play games with the references to David.

a> The Lord Jesus, the promised branch of David, will be king over all the earth.

b> Rev. 20:4 teaches that those who participate in the first resurrection, at the beginning of the millennium, "lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." This certainly includes David.

c> Then the prophecies of Hosea, Jer, and Ezekiel show that David's responsibility in the resurrection is particularly over the nation Israel.

d> NB: C of *QWM* "raise up" here = "establish," not "raise from the dead"? Same verb used in 2 Sam. 7:12 and Jer. 23:5, of the promised davidic descendant. The point of "resurrection" comes from the promise that a deceased king will rule, not from the verb.

c) *Application:* However we understand "David," in these verses we see the roots of Rom. 6. Freedom is only relative; you always serve someone. Either you are in bondage to sin as Israel was to the Gentiles, or you are a slave of God. Cf. the refrain in Exodus to Pharaoh, "Set my people free, *that they may serve me.*"

Recall that this recounting of judgment and deliverance is intended to motivate the command in 10a.

5. 10a, Command: Do not fear.

The argument is that the nation should not fear the judgment to come, because deliverance lies beyond.

If someone told me, "Don't be afraid; you're going to suffer the most incredible judgment ever, and then I'm going to deliver you." I think I might still fear. Thanks for the coming deliverance, but I'd still be frightened of the judgment! But note that it is the nation, not any individual in it, who is addressed here ("Jacob," "Israel"). The view of any individual is different from the view of the nation as a whole, here personified as its founding father. Unlike the Assyrians or the Hittites, the nation of Israel will not be discarded on the rubbish heap of history, but will endure as God's special people.

6. 10b-11, Second Motive: Three "for" phrases, the first two describing deliverance, the third the discipline.

a) 10b, their future prosperity after God regathers them.

b) 11a, God's presence with them. No one will be able to dislodge them from their new, favored position.

c) 11b, the measured nature of the coming discipline. For AV "though," Hebrew has *K.IY*. The third aspect of this motive for not being afraid (10a) is the knowledge of God's control and purpose even in the discipline.

The verse contrasts Israel's discipline with God's dealings with the other nations. He will exterminate the nations entirely. His dealings with Israel, by contrast, are described in three statements, a positive between two negatives. Each has application to us in God's dealings with us when we sin.

1) He will not make a full end of Israel. The nation will endure before him. Confirmed in spite of amazing trials, through history.

Application: Even so, the believer will never be swept away by God's wrath.

2) He will "guide [them] toward the right" (not "correct in measure," cf. Isa. 28:26). The point is that he has a purpose in their chastisement, something to teach them. This is the difference between chastisement and punishment: chastisement is intended for improvement; punishment, to bring justice and revenge.

Application: This is the point of 1 Cor. 10:13. "A way to escape" is literally, "an outcome," which I take to be the purpose or issue of the chastisement.

- 3) He will not leave them unpunished. Quotation from Exod. 34:6,7, the tension between God's mercy and justice; the enduring effects of sin, even after forgiveness.

Application: Gal. 6:7,8, God's harvest law. God is not mocked.

7. *Application:* As a message to the people of God as a whole and not to any individual, this message has application to the church. We may sometimes fear that the true testimony of our Lord will vanish from the earth, but he has promised that the very gates of hell shall not prevail against it. When his purging fires have done their work, we shall emerge as pure gold.

Hymn:

Analysis

- A. 30:1-3, * quote p: introduction to the book of consolation
 1. quote f:
 - a) 30:1 HA/D.FBFR):AŞER HFYFH)EL-YIR:M:YFHW. M"/)"T Y:HWFH L"/)MOR
 - b) 30:2 K.OH-)FMAR Y:HWFH):ELOH"Y YI&:RF)"L L"/)MOR
 2. quote:
 - a) K.:TFB-L/:KF)"T K.FL-HA/D.:BFRIYM):AŞER-D.IB.AR:T.IY)"LEY/KF)EL-S"PER
 - b) 30:3 K.IY HIN."H YFMIYM B.F)IYM N:)UM-Y:HWFH
 - c) W:/ŞAB:T.IY)ET-Ş:BW.T (AM./IY YI&:RF)"L WI/YHW.DFH)FMAR Y:HWFH
 - d) WA/H:AŞIBOTIY/M)EL-HF/)FREC):AŞER-NFTAT.IY LA/):ABOWT/FM
 - e) WI/YR"ŞW./HF P
- B. 30:4-31:25, * quote p: the promise of restoration after suffering to both houses of Israel
 1. quote f: W:/)"L.EH HA/D.:BFRIYM):AŞER D.IB.ER Y:HWFH)EL-YI&:RF)"L W:/)EL-Y:HW.DFH
 2. 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 forth 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.
 - a) 30:5-31:1, SRRS SR RSR

Three cycles of suffering and restoration for Jacob. No explicit mention of either house of Israel (except for oblique reference to Zion in v.17).

- 1) srrs 30:5-11, quote p: childbirth and resurrection; suffering; restoration; David (cf. 33:14-26)
 - a> quote f: 30:5 K.IY-KOH)FMAR Y:HWFH
 - b> quote: chiasmic motivated command
 - 1> Motive: deliverance follows judgment.
 - a: explanation p: Judgment is coming.
 - 1: text: QOWL X:ARFDFH \$FMF(:NW. P.AXAD W:/)"YN \$FLOWM
 - 2: explanation: contrast p
 - A. thesis: awareness quote p: Is everyone giving birth?
 1. aq f: 30:6 \$A):ALW.-NF) W./R:)W.
 2. aq: evidence p
 - a) conclusion:)IM-YOL"D ZFKFR
 - b) evidence:
 - 1) MAD.W.(A RF)IYTIY KFL-G.EBER YDFDY/W (AL-X:ALFCFY/W K.A/Y.OWL"DFH
 - 2) W:/NEHEP:KW. KFL-P.FNIYM L:/Y"RFQOWN
 - B. antithesis: This is a unique time of judgment.
 1. 30:7 HOWY
 2. K.IY GFDOWL HA/Y.OWM HA/HW.)
 3. M"/)AYIN K.FMO/HW. "Where is any like it?"
 4. W:/("T-CFRFH HIY) L:/YA(:AQOB
 5. W./MI/M./EN.FH YIW.F\$(A ... Holladay construes as question.
 - b: temporal p: Deliverance will follow.
 - 1: time: 30:8 W:/HFYFH BA/Y.OWM HA/HW.) N:)UM Y:HWFH C:BF)OWT
 - 2: text: contrast p
 - A. thesis: interpretation p
 1. figure:
 - a))E\$:B.OR (UL./OW M"/(AL CAW.F)R/EKF
 - b) W./MOWS:ROWTEY/KF):ANAT."Q
 2. interpretation: W:/LO)-YA(AB:DW.-B/OW (OWD ZFRIYM
 - B. antithesis: 30:9 W:/FB:DW.)"T Y:HWFH):ELOH"Y/HEM W:/)"T D.FWID MAL:K./FM):A\$ER)FQIYM L/FHEM S
 - 2> Command: coordinate p
 - a: 30:10 W:/)AT.FH)AL-T.IYRF) (AB:D./IY YA(:AQOB N:)UM-Y:HOWFH
 - b: W:/)AL-T."XAT YI&:RF)"L
 - 3> Motive: deliverance, after discipline
 - a: K.IY Future prosperity
 - 1: HIN/:NIY MOW\$IY(/:AKF M"/RFXOWQ W:/)ET-ZAR:(/:AKF M"/)EREC \$IB:YFM

2: W:/\\$FB YA(:AQOB
3: W:/\\$FQA+
4: W:/\\$A):ANAN
5: W:/)"YN MAX:ARIYD
b: 30:11 K.IY God's presence
-)IT./:KF):ANIY N:)UM-Y:HWFH L:/HOW\$IY(/EKF
c: K.IY : contrast p: measured discipline
1: thesis:)E(:E&EH KFLFH B.:/KFL-HA/G.OWYIM
):A\$ER H:APICOWTIY/KF \$.FM
2: antithesis:
A.)AK:)OT/:KF LO)-)E(:E&EH KFLFH
B. W:/YIS.AR:T.IY/KF LA/M.I\$:P.F+
It is a mistake to compare this clause (as almost all commentators do) with 10:24, YAS.:R/"NIY Y:HWFH)AK:-B.:/MI\$:P.F+. The two use different prepositions, and one is definite while the other is indefinite. A better comparison is Isa. 28:26, W:/YIS.:R/OW LA/M.I\$:P.F+):ELOHfy/W YOWR/EN.W.. The definite article suggests a specific body of right knowledge (as opposed to an abstract standard), and L expresses purpose or objective, while B expresses manner. "I will guide you toward the right."
C. W:/NAQ."H LO)):ANAQ./EK.F P
Citation of Exod. 34:6,7, the tension between God's mercy and justice; the enduring effects of sin, even after forgiveness.

2) sr 30:12-17, quote p: wounds and healing (cf. 33:4-9)
Detail in later study.

3) rsr 30:18-31:1, quote p: judgment and rebuilding (33:10-13)
Detail in later study.

b) 31:2-14, All restoration: the Lord regathers his people. The northern kingdom is expressly included, but the south is not excluded. Cf. Zion again in 31:6,12.
Detail in later study.

c) 31:15-22, coordinate p, SR SR, the Lord comforts two weepers, Rachel and Ephraem (N). Full focus on the northern kingdom.
Detail in later study.

d) 31:23-25, quote p, restoration of Judah (note extended quote formula). Full focus on the south.
Detail in later study.