

Introduction: In our world, more than ever, news travels fast. The result of this is that our souls are more burdened by darkness and desolation due to oppression, especially in dictatorships. Oppression is both physical and spiritual. Those who know Jesus are aware that both Jews and Christians are among the most hated people in the world. As this Advent season begins, there are ‘hot’ wars in both Ukraine and Gaza. The last straw is that we are powerless to change any of this. *** When I struggled with depression in my junior year at WPI, it got to the point that I had to go home for help at the beginning of the third quarter of the academic year. During those seven weeks I realized that IF I had an event to look forward to in the near future, especially IF it was with long-time friends, my depression would get lighter. This led me to the conclusion that hope is a powerful force for humans. As long as people have hope, they can cope. *** The God of LOVE, who sent His Son to earth two thousand years ago, knows the importance of hope for the people He created. Our passage in Jeremiah gives the Word He spoke as Judah had become desolate and Jerusalem was about to be burned to the ground. In this dark time, Yahweh said He would fulfill His Word concerning The Righteous Branch from David. He is The Eternal King who will bring justice, salvation and security to His people. *** We also heard that six hundred years later, Peter proclaimed Jesus IS Messiah! *** In the time in which we are living, justice has a foothold in the world due to the influence of Jesus’ Church in the world, and in the darkness that still seems to dominate. But, IF we know Christ, and are IN Him through faith, we have hope in His coming Second Advent when justice will finally, fully triumph. *** With this as our background, let us examine more closely our passages.

I. The Covenant God of Israel asks Jeremiah to speak into the desolation of Judah about the return of joy, gladness and thanksgiving, and shepherds tending flocks. (Jeremiah 33:10-13)

A. Yahweh tells Jeremiah to address the desolation of Judah with the hope of gladness and thanksgiving. (Verses 10-11)

1. Thus says Yahweh, ‘Again it will be heard in this place of which you all are saying “desolate from lack of *adam*, and from lack of beast in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem being desolate from lack of *adam*, and from lack of inhabitant, and from lack of beast”’. (Verse 10)

Desolation: This is a poetic description of how it will feel in Judah after Babylon destroys Jerusalem when it lays siege to it for the third time in 586 BC. This is the context for Jeremiah’s Lamentations.

2. ‘The voice of joy and the voice of gladness, voice of bridegroom and voice of bride, voices saying, “Give thanks to Yahweh of hosts / because good Yahweh / because to eternity the steadfast love of Him”, those bringing thank offerings to the house of Yahweh because I will restore the captivity of the land as in the first’, says Yahweh. (Verse 11)

Joy and gladness: When Yahweh restores His people from their captivity in Babylon in seventy years

(Jeremiah 25:8-11; 29:10; 2 Chronicles 36:21-23) they will again experience joy and gladness. As in the days of Joshua.

Thanksgiving: The two words describing Yahweh’s character, good and mercy (steadfast love), occur together in songs of praise and thanksgiving eleven additional times. Look for them as you read the Bible.

B. Yahweh of hosts speaks of shepherds caring for sheep in southern Israel. (Verses 12-13)

1. Thus says Yahweh of hosts again, ‘There will be in this place, desolate from lack of *adam* and also beast of its cities: habitation of shepherds making to lie down flocks’. (Verse 12)

Again, shepherds: The good news here is that a time is coming when Yahweh will raise up shepherds to care for flocks outside the cities that are now desolate of any animals.

2. ‘In the cities of the hill country, in the cities of the Shephelah (lowland foothills), in the cities of the Negev (southland), and in the land of Benjamin, and the places round about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, again will pass flocks under the hands of one counting them’, says Yahweh. (Verse 13)

Southern Israel: This is a contiguous area of some 2,600 square miles. It is twice as large as Rhode Island and twenty-five percent larger than Delaware. But sheep will have a shepherd.

II. Yahweh will fulfill His Word about a Righteous Branch from David who will do justice, save Judah and rule forever; when Jesus asks the twelve about His identity, Peter says ‘Messiah’! (Jeremiah 33:14-18; Mark 8:27-29)

A. Yahweh says His Word will be fulfilled concerning Righteous Branch from David who will do justice, and Judah will be saved to security, and He will always sit on the throne. (Jeremiah 33:14-18)

1. ‘Behold! Days coming’, says Yahweh, ‘And I have fulfilled the good Word which I spoke to the house of Israel and concerning the house of Judah’. (Verse 14)

Coming fulfillment: The days are coming when this good Word being spoken in 720 BC will be fully accomplished, because His origin is from the distant past (Micah 5:2, RSV).

2. ‘In those days and at that time, I will cause to grow to David, Branch of Righteousness; and , He has done justice and righteousness in the land’. (Verse 15)

Righteous Branch: The Righteous Branch to David is the Messiah, Eternal King spoken of through Nathan over two-hundred-fifty years before this (2 Samuel 7:11-17).

Justice: Justice is that which is right before God according to His instruction to His people through Moses and the prophets. The Eternal King will both reconcile people to God and to each other. This is the hope of all God’s people.

HOPE: *The Eternal King from David will do justice*

More prophecies: The Spirit-filled Servant of Yahweh will bring forth the justice to the nations and not falter until He will set justice on the earth (Isaiah 42:1-4). Yahweh says, ‘He will glory, glorying ... to know ... Yahweh is doing lovingkindness, justice and righteousness’ (Jeremiah 9:23-24). Yahweh, The Good Shepherd, will seek perishing (sheep) ... and will pasture them in justice (Ezekiel 34:16).

Application: Let us now take hope because The Covenant God has sent joy and gladness into the world through The Righteous Branch of David, The Eternal King of kings, who is bringing justice to the world.

HOPE: *The Eternal King from David will do justice*

3. 'In those days will be saved Judah, and Jerusalem will dwell in security; and this which will be called her: Yahweh (is) our righteousness'. (*Verse 16*)

Salvation and security: The salvation Yahweh will give Judah is for body, soul and spirit; and, security brings safety so as not to fear anything. Those whom Yahweh has saved and made secure know He is their righteousness.

Application: Let us pray that both us, and the people who are close to us, will be given assurance that Messiah Jesus brings salvation and security to all hearing and believing IN Him (John 5:24-25).

4. For thus says Yahweh, 'Never will be cut off to David man sitting on the throne of the house of Israel'. (*Verse 17*)

Eternal King: Yahweh reaffirms His Word that The Messiah, The Eternal King, will rule forever over Israel and He will do even more justice than did the last righteous human king of Judah, namely Josiah (Jeremiah 22:11-17). Not only is this Israel's hope, it is also our hope today as we wait for the Second Advent of Jesus.

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5. 'And the Levitical priests will never fail man from My presence to offer burnt offerings, and to burn grain offerings, and to do sacrifices all the days'. (*Verse 18*)

Priests: Here Yahweh is telling the descendants of Israel there will always be priests from Levi to offer sacrifices on their behalf. We now know this was only for six-hundred years until ...

Surprise: Jesus, who is The Eternal King from the line of David, is also The Eternal High Priest from Judah, not Levi!!!

Application: Not only for Advent, but for every day of our lives, may we all be glad that Jesus is both The Eternal King and The Eternal High Priest. This hope anchors our souls (Hebrews 6:19-20).

B. While in Syria, Jesus asks the twelve what people are saying about Him; and, they name various prophets; but, when He asks them, Peter says He IS Messiah. (*Mark 8:27-29*)

1. And He went out, Jesus and His disciples into the towns of Caesarea of Philippi. (*Verse 27a*)

Caesarea Philippi: This was a town in the tetrarchy of Philip (Rome divided Palestine into four districts). Tyre on the Mediterranean Sea was thirty miles to the west. Damascus, Syria was thirty miles to the northeast. And, Capernaum at the north of the Sea of Galilee was thirty miles to the south.

2. On the way, He was asking His disciples, saying to them, 'Whom Me, they are saying, the men, to be?' (*Verse 27b*)

Hearing of Him: Jesus is asking what they have been hearing people are saying about His identity.

3. They themselves answered Him, saying, 'John the Baptist, and some Elijah, and some that one of the prophets'. (*Verse 28*)

Three 'camps': The largest group of people say He is John the Baptist resurrected. And some say He is Elijah, the forerunner of the Messiah (Malachi 4:4-6). And a third camp is saying He is one of the prophets, but they can't say which one.

4. And He was saying to them, 'But you all, whom Me you all are saying to be?' (*Verse 29a*)

You: Now Jesus brings it home. They have been with Him, and close to Him, for a long time. What do they say?

5. Having answered Peter, he is saying, 'Thou are being The Messiah!' (*Verse 29b*)

Messiah-King: Peter boldly proclaims Jesus to be The Messiah! He has no doubts about it.

Hope of Israel: The Messiah had been the hope of Israel for a millennium, from the days of David. We now know He is the hope of all the people of the world.

Application: Both this Advent, and going forward, may we join with Peter in acknowledging Jesus IS Messiah, the hope of Israel and all the earth.

Jesus IS The Anointed King (Messiah)

Conclusion: Yahweh asks Jeremiah to speak during the desolation of Judah that joy, gladness and thanksgiving will return and shepherds will tend flocks. Yahweh will fulfill His Word about The Righteous Branch from David who will do justice, save His people in security, and rule forever. In Syria, Jesus asks the twelve what people are saying about Him; they name some prophets. But, when He asks them, Peter says He IS Messiah!

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