

"Upon this rock I will build my church"

Matthew 16:18

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JEREMIAH AND THE LAND

INTRODUCTION

A. One of the areas of contention we have with premillennialism is the land promise given to Abraham and his descendants.

1. A misunderstanding of the land promise has caused those who believe this doctrine to contend that Palestine must be restored to the people of Israel and that this will take place in connection with a millennial reign of Jesus.

2. "Premillennialism, and its theological sister—dispensationalism, argue that in connection with the second coming of Christ, God intends to re-establish a Jewish kingdom in Palestine...Dispensationalists allege that in the 'seven-year tribulation period,' just prior to Christ's 'millennial reign,' God will restore the Jews to Palestine, and a national conversion of the Hebrew people will occur."

3. When the land promise is properly understood, the doctrine of premillennialism will lose its appeal.

B. Jeremiah deals with the land of Palestine according to Jehovah's purpose when He promised the land to Abraham's descendants.

C. Let us study Jeremiah's teaching concerning the land.

DISCUSSION

I. JEREMIAH AND THE LAND.

A. Jeremiah recognized that Jehovah had fulfilled His promise to give the land to the seed of Abraham.

1. Genesis 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:18-21.

2. Deuteronomy 1:8.

3. Numbers 32:1-32; Joshua 22:1-9.

4. Joshua 21:43-45.

5. Jeremiah referred to the nation as being in the land (1:14,18; 2:7,15; 3:1,2).

B. Jeremiah knew that Jehovah's land promise was conditional.

1. Leviticus 26.

2. Deuteronomy 11:8-25; 28.

C. Jeremiah realized that the emphasis of Israel's dwelling in Canaan was her fellowship with Jehovah.

1. "The land of Canaan was separated from other lands because it was to be the place of God's dwelling and fellowship with Israel. This is what gave it its distinctiveness, and the fact that Abraham's descendants were tenants of the land was incidental and secondary."

2. The land was to be a dwelling place for Jehovah among His people.

- a. Exodus 15:13,17.

- b. Psalms 78:54; 132:12-14.

3. In order for Jehovah to be able to dwell among Israel, Israel would have to be a holy nation.

- a. Leviticus 26:11,12.

- b. Deuteronomy 14:1,2; 28:1-14.

- c. As long as Jehovah's presence was among them, Israel could remain in the land (2 Kings 13:23).

4. Sin would sever the fellowship between Jehovah and Israel, and Israel would be removed from the land.

- a. Leviticus 26:14-39.

- b. Deuteronomy 28:15-68.

- c. Jehovah removed His presence from Judah, and Judah was removed from the land (2 Kings 24,25).

- d. Ezekiel depicted Jehovah's Glory leaving Jerusalem as a sign that Judah would be removed from the land (Ezekiel 8:3,4,6; 9:3; 10:4,18,19; 11:23).

D. Jeremiah also realized that Jehovah used the land and the nation as a sign to the Gentiles.

1. Jehovah showed that this was His purpose as He dealt with Egypt through His relationship with Israel (Exodus 9:13-16).

2. Rahab testified to the effectiveness of Jehovah's method of working on the Gentiles through Israel (Joshua 2:8-14).
3. The Philistines bore testimony to Jehovah's working on the Gentiles through Israel (1 Samuel 6:1-9).
4. God's defeat of Goliath was a sign to "all the earth" (1 Samuel 17:1-54).

II. JEREMIAH 27 ILLUSTRATES JEREMIAH'S TEACHING CONCERNING JEHOVAH'S USE OF THE NATION AND THE LAND.

A. The Object Lesson from Jehovah (Jeremiah 27:1-11).

1. "Jehoiakim" in verse 1 should read "Zedekiah." "Evidence for this is found in three Hebrew manuscripts, two ancient versions (Syriac, Arabic), and from contextual considerations (see vv. 3,12,20; 28:1)."
2. The time of the instruction (27:1). The beginning of Zedekiah's reign (597 B.C.).
3. The object lesson (27:2). Jeremiah was to make bonds and bars and put them on his neck.
4. The people to whom the lesson was to be given (27:3).
 - a. The kings of surrounding nations: Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, Sidon.
 - b. The bonds and bars were to be sent to these kings by the messengers who had come to meet with Zedekiah in Jerusalem. These may have come as ambassadors of these countries to form an alliance with Judah against Babylon.
5. The lesson (27:4-11).
 - a. The authority behind the lesson (27:4,5).
 - 1) Jehovah of hosts (27:4).
 - 2) The God of Israel (27:4).
 - 3) The Creator (27:5).
 - 4) The Controller (27:5).
 - b. The lesson (27:6-11).

1) Jehovah had given these people to Nebuchadnezzar for punishment (27:6; 25:9).

2) A set time had been given for the punishment, and then Babylon would fall (27:7; 25:12).

a) These nations would be in Babylon during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar.

b) These nations would be in Babylon during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar's son (Evil-Merodach).

c) These nations would be in Babylon during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar's grandson (Belshazzar).

d) The above boundaries would also include the reigns of Neriglissar and Laborsarchad, as well as that of Nabonidus who associated Belshazzar with him on the throne. This would take the time period down to 538-536 B.C.

3) The nation that refused to submit to this punishment would be punished more severely (27:8). God's instruments of punishment are listed.

a) The sword (24:10; 29:17,18; Ezekiel 14:21).

b) The famine.

c) The pestilence.

4) The false prophets are to be abandoned (27:9,10).

a) They had consulted everyone about their problem with Babylon except Jehovah (27:9). Prophets, Diviners (these would use the means of divination to supposedly find out the will of the gods). Dreamers (these would be those who claimed to have revelations from the gods by means of dreams). Soothsayers (the Hebrew is "anan" and it means "cloud observers, or cloud watchers". They would read the formations of the clouds as the diviners would read the formations in the diviners cup). Sorcerers (these were wizards or magicians).

b) The false prophets told them they would not go to Babylon (27:9).

c) The false prophets prophesy lies (27:10; 23:25).

d) The false prophets will cause them to be driven from the land (27:10; 8:19).

- 5) The nations that surrender to Babylon will be allowed to remain in their land (27:11).
- B. The Lesson Delivered by Jeremiah (Jeremiah 27:12-22).
 1. To Zedekiah (27:12-15).
 - a. He told Zedekiah to surrender to Babylon (27:12).
 - b. He announced the consequences of refusing to surrender: Death (27:13).
 - c. He told Zedekiah not to listen to the false prophets (27:14,15).
 - 1) They prophesy a lie (27:14).
 - 2) They speak without authority from Jehovah (27:15).
 - a) Jehovah did not send them (23:21).
 - b) Their claim to authority was false (23:25).
 - 3) Their false prophecies would cause both themselves and the people to perish (27:15; 6:13-15; 14:15,16; Matthew 15:14).
 2. To the priests and the people (27:16-22).
 - a. The authority behind the message (27:16).
 - b. He told them not to listen to the false prophets (27:16,17).
 - 1) They were saying the stay in Babylon was about over (27:16). They said the vessels taken by Nebuchadnezzar in 605 and 597 would soon be returned (28:3).
 - a) 2 Kings 24:13.
 - b) 2 Chronicles 36:7,10.
 - 2) They should have been saying, "Surrender" (27:17).
 - 3) If they were true prophets, they could intercede with Jehovah to spare the city and temple vessels. Since they cannot do so, they will be proved to be false prophets (27:18-22).
 - a) What Nebuchadnezzar left previously, he will carry to Babylon the next time (27:19-22; 22:28; 24:1; 2 Kings 24:12,14-16; 2 Chronicles 36:10,18).

b) There will come a time of restoration (27:22; Ezra 1:7-11; 5:13-15; 7:9,19).

CONCLUSION

A. When one fully appreciates Bible teaching concerning the land of Canaan and its relationship to the people of Jehovah, he will not be led astray by erroneous proclamations concerning that land.

B. May we learn to read the overall context of the Bible and make use of the principles found therein. May this help us not to be “tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error” (Ephesians 4:14).

C. There is no future restoration of Israel to Palestine. All of the prophecies concerning the land have been fulfilled.

ENDNOTES

1 Wayne Jackson, *Jeremiah & Lamentations*, (Courier Publications, Stockton, CA, 1997), p. 168.

2 Franklin Camp, “The Land Is Mine,” *The Word of Life*, Vol. XII, No. 5, May, 1983, p. 2.

3 Jackson, p. 68.

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