

Future Peace and Joy

Jer 33:1-11

SS Lesson for 09/28/2014

Devotional Scripture: Isa 55:6-13

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Introduction

Overview and Approach to Lesson

The lesson helps us to trust that God will lead us into a **Future Peace and Joy**. The **study's aim** is to recognize that God's character leads Him to offer His people a new and brighter future. The **study's application** is to understand how God's character ensures a new beginning for us, even when we have sinned against Him.

(Adapted from *the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary*).

Key Verse: Jer 33:11

The voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who will say: "Praise the Lord of hosts, For the Lord is good, For His mercy endures forever"-- and of those who will bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord. For I will cause the captives of the land to return as at the first,' says the Lord.

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

Chapter 33 concludes "The Book of Consolation." This chapter is structurally and chronologically related to chapter 32. Jeremiah 33:1-13 continued God's promise of blessing as He reaffirmed both the coming destruction and the future restoration of Jerusalem. God then reaffirmed His covenants with David and with the Levitical priests (Jeremiah 33:14-26).

Chapter 33 followed closely the message of chapter 32 as Jeremiah was still confined in the courtyard of the guard (cf. 32:1-2). God again identified Himself to Jeremiah by stressing both His power and His character. He is the God who made the earth (cf. 32:17). By revealing to Jeremiah that the Lord (Yahweh) is His name, God emphasized His covenant-keeping faithfulness on behalf of His people (cf. 32:18; Ex. 3:13-15). Jeremiah did not understand how God could restore a nation that was destined for doom (cf. Jer. 32:24-25), so God challenged the prophet to call to Him for understanding. God promised to answer by revealing great and unsearchable things. The word for "unsearchable" (bešūrôt) means something that is made inaccessible by fortifying it or enclosing it. It is used to describe heavily fortified cities (cf. Num. 13:28; Deut. 3:5; 28:52; Ezek. 21:20). God's plans for the future are inaccessible to ordinary people. Only God can unlock the secrets of the future, and He offered this knowledge to Jeremiah. God would share with Jeremiah "things" the prophet did not know or understand about Israel's future. The first revelation focused on Jerusalem's impending fall. As Babylon's siege wore away at Jerusalem's outer defenses, the houses of Jerusalem along with the royal palaces were torn down to provide wood and stone to strengthen the walls against the siege ramps. The object of this frantic effort was to prevent Babylon's soldiers (the sword) from making a breach in the walls and entering the city. God announced that Jerusalem's feeble attempts to shore up her defenses were futile. The partially dismantled houses would be filled with the dead bodies of those slain by the Babylonians. God would hide His face from the city, refusing to deliver it from this destruction (cf. 18:17; Ezek. 4:1-3). Jerusalem had to be destroyed because of all its wickedness. The secret to understanding God's seemingly contradictory prophecies of judgment and blessing is to realize that the judgment was to be only temporary. After the time of judgment God will someday bring health and healing to His city and people. God spoke to Jeremiah about three elements of this blessing. First, the blessing will involve a restoration to the land (cf. 31:8-11; 32:37). God will bring both Judah and Israel back from captivity. Second, the blessing will involve a restoration to the Lord (cf. 31:31-34; 32:38-40). God will cleanse the people from all their sin and forgive them of their rebellion. Third, the blessing will involve a restoration to a special place of honor among the nations (cf. 31:10-14). Jerusalem will bring... renown, joy, praise, and honor to God before all nations. Those nations will be in awe and will tremble as they marvel at the abundant prosperity and peace (cf. 33:6) God will lavish on His people. God elaborated on the contrast between Israel's present judgment and her future blessing by drawing two pictures of the changes that would come. Each picture began with a similar phrase (Jer. 33:10, 12) as God emphasized that this is what the Lord (or Lord Almighty) says. In each picture the scene in Jeremiah's day was similar (cf. 33:10, 12). Jerusalem was a desolate waste that was without men or animals (cf. 32:43). Though the siege was still in progress, the fall of Jerusalem was so sure that God pictured it as if it had already happened. At this point the two pictures changed. In 33:10-11 God illustrated the joy and gladness that will again return to Jerusalem and Judah, and in verses 12-13 He illustrated the peace and prosperity that will again characterize Judah. The streets of Jerusalem that were deserted after its destruction by Babylon (cf. Lam. 1:1-4) will again be filled with the sounds of

joy and gladness. This joyful sound will be typified by the voices of a bride and bridegroom in a wedding ceremony (cf. Jer. 7:34; 16:9; 25:10) and the voices of worshipers as they bring thank offerings to the house of the Lord (cf. Ps. 100:1-2, 4). The song to be sung by the worshipers, recorded by Jeremiah, resembled the refrain of several psalms (cf. Ps. 100:4-5; 106:1; 107:1; 136:1-3). Joy will come when God restores Judah's fortunes (cf. Jer. 30:18; 32:44; 33:26; Deut. 30:3). The towns of Judah that were destroyed by Babylon will also experience peace and prosperity. God will again provide safe pastures for flocks. This peace will extend from Jerusalem to the hill country of Judah in the east, the western foothills of the Shephelah in the west, the Negev in the south, and the territory of Benjamin in the north (cf. Jer. 17:26). Throughout the land flocks will again pass under the hand of the one who counts them as a shepherd counts his sheep to be sure none is absent. Possibly Jeremiah was using shepherd and sheep in a metaphorical sense to refer to the leaders of Israel and the people. He had already compared the leaders to shepherds and the restored nation was compared to a regathered flock (cf. 23:3; 31:10). Jeremiah had also used this imagery to introduce his message on the righteous Branch from David (23:1-6), which is the subject of 33:14-26.

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

The word "captivity" is defined as: "1: the state of being captive... 2 obsolete : a group of captives" (www.merriam-webster.com). In the above verse, the Lord was saying that He would enable the captives to return home and bring everything back to the way it was. I am not a big fan of surprises—even if they are good surprises. As a little girl, Christmas was quite a cause for anxiety. What was beneath the pretty wrapping paper? What was I going to find in my stocking? I could not handle the suspense! Therefore, as the days drew closer to December 25, I would sneak into my parents' and my brothers' rooms to investigate. I knew that hidden somewhere there were presents just waiting for me to find. In my eagerness to search the closets and the dresser drawers, I would sometimes cause an upheaval. Still, I knew that to keep my snooping from being detected, I had to return everything to its original state. In Jeremiah 33, the Lord was assuring the Israelites that although times looked tough right then, sooner or later, everything would return to the way it had been before. Jeremiah was still in prison. He did not have access to the outside world. Nevertheless, the Lord, who is omnipotent, was trying to encourage the prophet. In verse 3, the Lord urged Jeremiah, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." Only the Lord knows the outcome in our future. Only God can take a situation that looks hopelessly bleak and change it into something amazing. The Word of God promises, "Thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away" (Job 11:16). No matter what we have been through, God offers us hope and a new future. If we choose to forgive, we can move forward. We have two hands. With one hand, we are always holding on to the present. With the other hand, we can either hold on to the past or reach to the future. We cannot do both. If we do not choose to let go of the past, we can never move forward into what the Lord has planned for the future. In Jeremiah 33, the Lord shared His plan of reconstruction with His prophet. God let Jeremiah in on His secret that He would once again make the nation great. God informed Jeremiah that He would bring healing and prosperity to His people. He said that other nations would stand in awe and tremble in fear because of the blessings the Lord would bestow upon His people. Ecclesiastes says, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven" (3:1). There was a time for the Israelites to be held captive, and there was a time for them to come home. There was a time for their cities to be torn down, and there was a time for them to be rebuilt. God promised that it would be like it was at the beginning. Whatever is currently holding us captive—our past, our pain, our present circumstances—we must choose to believe that God seeks to set the captive free. If we submit to Him, He can bring us to a place where it will feel as though the captivity never happened.

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

I just read of a woman who was arrested for celebrating too loudly at her daughter's graduation. When her girl crossed the stage and received her diploma, the mother apparently did a lot of whooping and hollering! The stone-faced authorities—later heavily criticized—maintained that the crowd had been warned against excessive celebration. Therefore they thought it appropriate to have this woman handcuffed and led away at this moment of family triumph. Does this sound a bit like the Pharisees at the triumphal entry of Jesus? The crowds, shouting lots of hosannas and hallelujahs, were in a frenzy as Jesus rode into Jerusalem. But the grumpy Pharisees demanded that Jesus calm them down and cut the noise. Jesus answered these melancholy men with a wonderful rebuke: if the crowds were quieted, "the stones will cry out" (Luke 19:40). Heartfelt joy is hard to suppress! I have participated in scores of high school and

college graduation exercises, and it is common for family members to go a little overboard when their graduate crosses the stage. They are proud! In some cases, this is the first family member to graduate, a historic moment. Sometimes they are acutely aware of the great cost and effort that was necessary for this achievement, facts that make their expressions of joy just that more exuberant. This week's lesson sketches a citywide celebration of joyous praise and worship. There is no video or audio available, of course, so we will need to imagine the prophesied joy to get the full impact.

We recall from last week's lesson that Jeremiah was detained at a courtyard prison connected with King Zedekiah's palace as the Babylonians besieged Jerusalem. The prophet's situation and the reason for it still hold. Jeremiah's imprisonment seems to have been as much about taking him out of the public square as about any treason-able offense. The besieged city was on edge, and the king did not want that prophet exacerbating the morale problems. Jeremiah had been serving as a prophetic voice in Jerusalem for some 40 years at the time of today's lesson (587 BC), so he was a well-known figure in the city. Although he was never popular because of his dire warnings and harsh condemnations, his longevity attests to some degree of acceptance by the people (compare Jeremiah 26:16). He was not easily silenced.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Future Peace Through Prayer and Deliverance (Jer 33:1-5)

1 Moreover the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah a second time, while he was still shut up in the court of the prison, saying,

2 "Thus says the Lord who made it, the Lord who formed it to establish it (the Lord is His name):

3 'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'

4 "For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city and the houses of the kings of Judah, which have been pulled down to fortify against the siege mounds and the sword:

5 'They come to fight with the Chaldeans, but only to fill their places with the dead bodies of men whom I will slay in My anger and My fury, all for whose wickedness I have hidden My face from this city.

Peace through answered prayer (1-3)

Answered prayers because God's eyes are on the righteous (Ps 34:15)

15 The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry;

Answered prayers because God promises to answer even before speaking (Isa 65:24)

24 Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.

Answered prayers because God promises to fulfill answers and seeking (Matt 7:7-8)

7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

Answered prayers because of obedience (1 John 3:21-22)

21 Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God 22 and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.

Answered prayer through asking in the Name of Jesus (John 16:22-24)

22 So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. 23 In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. 24 Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

Answered prayer through being righteous (James 5:16-18)

16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. 17 Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

Answered prayer through obedience (1 John 3:21-22)

21 Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God 22 and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.

Answered prayer through asking according to God's will (1 John 5:13-15)

13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. 14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him.

Peace through God fighting our battles (4-5)

God fights our battles because He goes before His people and fights (Deut 1:29-31)

29 Then I said to you, "Do not be terrified; do not be afraid of them. 30 The Lord your God, who is going before you, will fight for you, as he did for you in Egypt, before your very eyes, 31 and in the desert. There you saw how the Lord your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place."

God fights our battles because He is God (Ps 46:8-10)

8 Come and see the works of the Lord, the desolations he has brought on the earth. 9 He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire. 10 "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

God fights our battles because the battles are His to fight (2 Chron 20:15-17)

15 He said: "Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the Lord says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's. 16 Tomorrow march down against them. They will be climbing up by the Pass of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the gorge in the Desert of Jeruel. 17 You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the Lord will be with you.'"

God fights our battles because He is the only with the power to do so (Ps 44:2)

2 With your hand you drove out the nations and planted our fathers; you crushed the peoples and made our fathers flourish.

God fights our battles when we are still (Exodus 14:14)

14 The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still."

God fights our battles through answered prayer (2 Chron 14:11-12)

11 Then Asa called to the Lord his God and said, "Lord, there is no one like you to help the powerless against the mighty. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rely on you, and in your name we have come against this vast army. O Lord, you are our God; do not let man prevail against you." 12 The Lord struck down the Cushites before Asa and Judah. The Cushites fled,

God fights our battles because He is for us (Rom 8:31)

31 What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?

God fights our battles because He loves us (Rom 8:37)

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Future Restoral brings Healing and Joy (Jer 33:1-5)

6 Behold, I will bring it health and healing; I will heal them and reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth.

7 And I will cause the captives of Judah and the captives of Israel to return, and will rebuild those places as at the first.

8 I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned and by which they have transgressed against Me.

9 Then it shall be to Me a name of joy, a praise, and an honor before all nations of the earth, who shall hear all the good that I do to them; they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and all the prosperity that I provide for it.'

10 "Thus says the Lord: 'Again there shall be heard in this place--of which you say, "It is desolate, without man and without beast"--in the cities of Judah, in the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man and without inhabitant and without beast,

11 the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who will say: "Praise the Lord of hosts, For the Lord is good, For His mercy endures forever"--

and of those who will bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord. For I will cause the captives of the land to return as at the first,' says the Lord.

Healing to Be Granted (6-7)

God heals physically (Matt 14:14)

14 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

God heals spiritually (Isa 53:5)

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Jesus healed to prove His Divinity (Matt 11:2-5)

2 When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples 3 to ask him, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" 4 Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: 5 The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.

God heals through prayer (James 5:16)

16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

God heals through Jesus (1 Peter 2:24)

24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

God heals the brokenhearted (Ps 147:3)

3 He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

Iniquity to Be Cleansed (8)

Cleansed by shedding of Jesus blood (Heb 9:22)

22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Cleansing of acts that lead to death (Heb 9:13-14)

13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. 14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

Cleansed by coming near to God (James 4:8)

8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Cleansed by focusing on and doing righteousness (Isa 1:16-17)

16 wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, 17 learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.

Cleansed by the word of God (1 Tim 4:5)

5 because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

Cleansed by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:11)

11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Cleansed by my heart being sprinkled by God through faith (Heb 10:22)

22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

Cleansed by the blood of the Lamb (Rev 7:14)

14 I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

God to Be Honored (9)

Honor God with our bodies (1 Cor 6:20)

20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Honor God because He is worthy of honor (Rev 4:11)

11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

Honor God with our finances (Prov 3:9)

9 Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops;

Honor God with our hearts (Matt 15:8)

8 "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

Honor God by honoring Jesus (John 5:22-23)

22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

Desolation to be Reversed (10-11)

Desolation reversed through well-being (Ps 35:27)

27 May those who delight in my vindication shout for joy and gladness; may they always say, "The Lord be exalted, who delights in the well-being of his servant."

Desolation reversed through righteousness (Ps 92:12-14)

12 The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; 13 planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God. 14 They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green,

Desolation reversed through delighting in God's word (Ps 1:1-3)

1 Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

Desolation reversed through remaining in Jesus (John 15:3-5)

3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Desolation reversed even in old age (Isa 46:4)

4 Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.

Desolation reversed through the fear of the Lord (Ps 128:1-2)

128 Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways. 2 You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts From Ray C. Stedman

In Jeremiah 33:1-3, there is something wonderfully helpful about that to me. God is saying here, in effect, that the man who takes his unbelief to God is the one who will be invited by God to enter into the secrets of the Almighty. Our problem is that we take our unbelief to each other. We are always complaining that God does not fulfill his word. I know we are not that bald-faced about it, but that is what we are really saying. "Well, this doesn't work for me," means God is a respecter of persons; he only does it for a certain favored few -- even though he says he is not that kind of a God. Or somebody will say, "Well, you may have faith enough to believe that, but I don't understand it that way at all. It's all in the way you interpret it." That is really a cop-out. You are saying, "I don't believe God is going to do it." We take our unbelief to each other, and that is why our faith does not grow.

But the man or woman of faith takes his or her unbelief to God, and lays the struggle before him. "God, I know you're this kind of a God, but I can't see how you're going to do this!" And God honors that. There is record after record in the Scripture of men and women who have struggled like this, who have taken their doubts and their unbelief and laid them before God. And never once is there a single suggestion that he ever rebuked them for that. There was that troubled father in the Gospels who asked Jesus to heal his demonically oppressed son. Jesus said, "According to your faith be it so." The man said, "I believe; help my unbelief," (Mark 9:24 RSV). Jesus immediately spoke and delivered his son. And Jeremiah brought his unbelief to the Lord, and so the Lord said, "Call to me, ask me, and I will answer you, and will tell you the great and hidden things which you don't understand."

Beginning with Verse 4, God outlines the process he is going to follow in bringing his promises about, giving Jeremiah the details. Then he outlines the power by which it is going to happen. Then he guarantees it by the processes of nature. This is just a brief outline of what we will look at in closing. Notice the process that God now unfolds to him. First, it will be destruction that leads to cleansing (Jeremiah 33:4-5).

Destruction is often God's first step, because we have been building on a false foundation, and God knows he must destroy what we have thought was true before he finally can cleanse us. Many of us could testify of the hour when God broke down everything we were counting on, and shattered our expectations, and disappointed our dreams, and we were stricken. And in that hour we began to look at ourselves anew, and saw how much we had been contributing to the problem, rather than blaming it on everybody else. And that was the hour when God cleansed us. Cleansing is his first act of restoration, but destruction is necessary to cleansing. The next revelation is that cleansing leads to joy, Verses 8-9:

The great thing to remember in all of God's process with us is that his purpose in our lives, in everything that happens to us, is to increase our joy. That is what God is after. You cannot read the Scriptures without seeing that his intention for men is that men should live in a continual sense of joy, of peace, of mirth and merriment and gladness of heart. That is what he has in mind. He knows the steps it takes to bring it about. And this is what he moves toward.

Finally, joy permits prosperity, Verses 12-13, there is a picture of prosperous conditions -- the countryside filled with shepherds and their flocks -- a beautiful picture. What God is saying is that this is the only time it is safe for us to be prosperous. When we have been cleansed and brought to joy, then prosperity will abide. We are always trying to short-circuit God and leap ahead, to forget the intervening steps and try to become prosperous. Prosperity never abides unless it is based upon joyful people who know how to live together in love. That is why God will withhold ultimate prosperity until that time.

Then he takes the prophet a step further still, and in a great passage of light and glory he reveals the power that will accomplish this:

"Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring forth for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it["she" in the Hebrew -- it is a feminine pronoun, referring to the city] will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.' [Literally, simply "The Lord, our righteousness".] (Jeremiah 33:14-18).

God would always have a king after the line of David, and a priest after the order of Melchizedek. As we know, in the course of time that man came: Jesus, the King who is our righteousness, whose righteousness is imparted to us -- "The Lord, our righteousness". In Chapter 23, Verses 5-6, Jeremiah had referred to this very thing, had recorded that God said something very similar. But there the wording was, "...he will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'" Here God says of the city, "...she will be called: 'The Lord, our righteousness.'" By this he indicates that we, who become the city of God, the new Jerusalem, are made to partake of the very righteousness of Christ our Lord.

In fact, the entire restoration is going to be characterized by this one word: "righteousness". Do you know what troubles us about the Watergate affair? There is no righteousness in it. Righteousness consists, first of all, of truth. And the thing about Watergate which so thoroughly upsets and disturbs the American people is that it is so devoid of truth. It is such a maze of lies and deceptions and cover-ups. And people are uneasy in the presence of that. Righteousness is truth, first. But it is more than that. It is also love -- truth operating out of love. Man's righteousness, at best, can be only truth. But the righteousness of God is truth which operates lovingly, not severely, sharply, harshly, not judging and condemning, but forgiving and understanding -- and yet utterly consistent with truth. That is to be characteristic of the city, because it is characteristic of God.

The final words of the chapter, which we will not read, are simply a repetition of the guarantee we saw in our previous study: the heavens and the earth, the sun and the moon, shall not pass away until God fulfills this word. It is absolutely guaranteed. It is as true and sure as the sun's rising tomorrow morning that as you come to the Lord and trust in him and walk by faith, all the personal dilemmas of your life, and all those of the world in general, shall find their solution at the hand of the God of righteousness. He will establish what he has promised.

Adapted from URL: <http://www.raystedman.org/old-testament/jeremiah/is-anything-too-hard-for-god>

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

1. The Creator of the universe is worthy to be heard and obeyed (Jer. 33:2)
2. We have an invitation to seek God for answers and the assurance that He will indeed answer (vs. 3)
3. Wickedness inevitably brings divine judgment (vss. 4-5)
4. Even in the worst times, there is always hope for those who turn to the Lord (vss. 6-7)
5. Material blessing can be fully appreciated only by those who also know the blessing of forgiveness (vss. 8-9)
6. Faith looks beyond hardships to the joyous blessings God has promised (vss. 10-11)