

## Jeremiah 23:1-8 (Christopher James Davis) 159517

Notes on Jeremiah, Notes on Jeremiah: Part 2 (23:1-8)

Our meditations on Jeremiah have suggested forcibly to our minds a great and precious truth, viz., the purpose of God in Christ. For this purpose of God in part, as connected with the Jews and Jerusalem—their future restoration and establishment in peace, blessing and glory in their own land—we find very plainly set forth in Jeremiah. But the purpose of God in Christ Jesus is in its extent much wider than its connection with Israel. It is far-reaching and all-embracing, and presents a sure ground of confidence, comfort, hope and assurance for the heart of the believer. God has been graciously pleased to reveal His purposes in regard to man; whether for Israel or the world; whether as affecting saints or sinners; above all, as concerning Christ, and also the church.

How wonderful that God should purpose that man should be exalted, above angels, above principalities and powers! The question, why all the failure and ruin from the beginning and all through the world's history—man, Israel, the nations, the church, everywhere failure and ruin?—has doubtless occurred to every diligent reader of the Bible. There is one answer. God's purpose is not in the first, but in the Second man. How important it is to see this! Whatever the state of things in the world and in the church, however distracting and discouraging, we know that the purpose of God in Christ can never fail.

Man, the first man, Adam, is said to be “the figure of him that was to come” (Romans 5:14). Made head and center of this lower creation, placed in the garden of delights, surrounded by every token of divine power and goodness, he soon fell and brought in sin and ruin. Since the fall man has been tried and tested in every way, and the result has proved his incompetence and unworthiness to stand in any position of privilege or responsibility. The Second man was tried and tested in every way and was found to be absolutely perfect; perfect in every thought, word and deed; perfect in dependence and obedience. Wherefore God highly exalted Him. And not only is He the man of Psalm 8—worthy that everything here should be put under His feet, but He has a name given Him above every name, that at the name of Jesus every created being—heavenly, earthly and infernal—should bow the knee, and every tongue confess Him as Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 2:5-9).

### ISRAEL

On the utter failure of man before and after the flood, Israel was called out to be Jehovah's peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation—to be a witness to the one true God, the Creator of all things, in the midst of an idolatrous world; but they alas soon broke down and were given over to Gentile rule and captivity.

Our chapter opens with a pronouncement of “woe” on those guilty kings of Judah who should have been as faithful pastors to Jehovah's flock, heeding and caring for them as the sheep of His pasture, but who helped by their wickedness to destroy and scatter them (vers. 1, 2). But if man is unfaithful God is faithful, and here makes known His love and care and purpose for His beloved though guilty people (vers. 3, 4).

Royalty, no less than priesthood, utterly failed in the hands of the first man. The best of the kings of Israel—David, Solomon and all the rest—broke down; and the wicked kings, as we see here, only helped to destroy and scatter the flock of God. The work of the enemy is to scatter and destroy. The work of grace is to save and gather.

This truth applies to Israel (chap. 31:10-14). The Jews will no doubt return to Jerusalem in unbelief; but grace will gather a remnant (verse 3) whose hearts will be prepared to receive Jesus their Messiah as their God (Isaiah 25:9; John 20:28); their King (John 1:49); their Savior (Isaiah 53); their Righteousness (verse 6). In that day Jehovah—in spite of all that the first man is in the power of the enemy, in spite of angry nations or aught else—will set His King, “the righteous Branch,” the Second man, the First-begotten, upon His holy hill of Zion (Psalm 2). Priesthood and royalty will be united in His person; the true Melchisedec (righteousness), King of Salem (peace) —Psalm 110:4.; Hebrews 7— “He shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both” (Zechariah 6:13). “In those days shall Judah be saved and Israel shall dwell safely” (verse 6) —not on the ground of the old covenant, the covenant of works, but on the ground of a new covenant, the covenant of grace. Covenants belong to an earthly people, and so also this new covenant that is yet to be made, will be with the house of Israel and the house of Judah (Hebrews 8:7-10). The Remnant will not come under the declaration of Romans 10:1-3, that “they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.” For they will have been brought to feel and own their guilt and unrighteousness, and will “know His name” — “Jehovah our righteousness.”

### THE WORLD

Nebuchadnezzar the king, and all kings, emperors and rulers of the nations of the world have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. And what a scene the world presents today! Are the angry nations unconsciously paving the way for the furtherance of the plans and purposes of God for the establishment of His righteous government of the world in peace, blessing and glory under the rule of the Second man, “[the Lord] from heaven”? Not only is He the King of the Jews (Matthew 2:2; 27:37), of Israel (Isaiah 44:6; John 1:49), of the nations (John 10:7); He is the “God,” “the Lord” — “of all the earth” (Isaiah 54:5; Micah 4:13; Zechariah 4:14). In that day He will ask and receive the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession (Psalm 2; Isaiah 32:1, 2). “And His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth” (Zechariah 9:10).

But judgment must precede the glory (Psalm 2). How astonished the nations will be! “The kings shall shut their mouths at Him; for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider” (Isaiah 52:15). How soon the Lord may come,

first as the Bridegroom to receive His own to Himself, and take them to the Father's house; then as Judge and King to punish the world for its iniquity—and bring in righteousness, peace, blessing and glory—complete deliverance for a groaning creation!

But there were deeper counsels, higher purposes and richer blessing in the mind of God before the ages of time than that which relates to millennial blessing, rest and glory for the world under the righteous and beneficent reign of Christ. There was the purpose of love and promise of eternal life in Christ for

#### SINNERS

made good in righteousness and truth to the glory of God in redemption through the precious blood of Christ; made known by the preaching of the glad tidings by "the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven" (1 Peter 1:12); and made good in the heart of sinners through faith. So that the apostle could say in full assurance of faith, "Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Timothy 1:9).

Next, the purpose of God for

#### SAINTS

"We know" (we Christians), says the apostle, "that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:28, 29).

Last, but by no means least, the purpose for Christ and the church, the consideration of which we must leave for another occasion.

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