

Bible Study Class

Date: 10/9/13

Chapter 3: 12 - 20

Commentary on Jeremiah 3:12-20

See God's readiness to pardon sin, and the blessings reserved for gospel times. These words were proclaimed toward the north; to Israel, the ten tribes, captive in Assyria. They are directed how to return. If we confess our sins, the Lord is faithful and just to forgive them. These promises are fully to come to pass in the bringing back the Jews in after-ages (Romans 11:26). God will graciously receive those that return to Him and by His grace, He takes them out from among the rest.

Here is a great deal of gospel in these verses. God's readiness to pardon sin and to receive and entertain returning repenting sinners and those blessings which were in a special manner reserved for gospel times and the uniting of Jews and Gentiles, typified by the uniting of Israel and Judah in their return out of captivity.

The prophet is directed to *proclaim these words towards the north*, for they are a call to backsliding Israel to show that God had not forgotten them, though their brethren Judah had refused to answer the calls given them by God. One might as well call to those who lay many hundred miles off in the land of the north; they would as soon hear and will sooner accept of mercy and have the benefit of it than *treacherous Judah*.

And perhaps the proclaiming of these words towards the north looks as far forward as the *preaching of repentance and remission of sins unto all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Lu 24:47)*. A call to Israel in the land of the north is a call to others in that land, even as many as belong to the election of grace.

Let us see John 7: 35 - ***Then said the Jews among themselves, whither will he go, that we shall not find him? Will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?*** So here is an invitation given to *backsliding Israel*, and in them to the backsliding Gentiles to *return unto God* whom they had revolted.

Acts 3:19 says "***Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord***"

God's anger is ready to fall upon sinners as a lion falls on his prey and there is none to deliver, as a mountain of lead falling on them to sink them past recovery into the lowest hell. But if they repent it shall be turned away. We that are sinful were forever undone if God were not merciful; but the goodness of His nature encourages us to hope that if we by repentance undo what we have done against God, He is ready to pardon us.

God is calling today and asking sinners only to acknowledge their sins. Own yourself in a fault and thereby take shame to yourself and give glory to God. He *will not keep my anger for ever* (that is a previous promise). You shall be delivered from that anger of God, from the wrath to come which is everlasting. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive them. God will graciously receive those that return to him, nay, it is he that by his distinguishing grace takes them out from among the rest that persist in their backslidings.

Christ's flock is a little flock and *few there are that find the strait gate*. Of those few, though dispersed, yet not one shall be lost. God will find out that one; he shall not be overlooked in a crowd, but shall be brought safely to Zion, safely to heaven.

Verse 15 says "*I will give you pastors after my hear...*". When a church is gathered it must be governed. "*I will bring them to Zion*, not to live as they list but to be under discipline, not as wild beasts that range at pleasure but as sheep that are under the direction of a shepherd. It is well with a people when their pastors are *after God's own heart*. Those pastors who are after God's own heart will make it their business to feed the flock, not to *feed themselves and fleece the flocks*, but to do all they can for the good of those that are under their charge, who would *feed them with wisdom and understanding* (that is, wisely and understandingly), as David fed them, in the *integrity of his heart* and by the *skillfulness of his hand*, Ps. 78:72 . Those who are not only pastors but teachers must feed believers with the word of God which is wisdom and understanding, which is able to make us wise to salvation

The Ark of the Covenant was not found after the captivity. The whole of that dispensation was to be done away. God promises that there shall be no more occasion for the *ark of the covenant* which had been so much the glory of the tabernacle first and afterwards of the

temple and was the token of God's presence with them; that shall be set aside, and there shall be no more enquiry of it. For Christ, the truth of all is exhibited to us in the word and sacraments of the New Testament. Jesus Christ *is the ark*; He is the peacemaker, or mercy-seat; and He is the spiritual presence of God in his ordinances that we are now to expect. Even backsliders, if they return and repent, shall be *put among the children*; and who could ever have expected that? *Behold what manner of love is this! 1 Jn. 3:1* . How should we who are so mean and weak, so unworthy and so provoking, ever be *put among the children*? To those whom God puts among the children he will *give the pleasant land, that goodly heritage* which nations and their hosts wish for and prefer to their own country. It was a type of heaven, where there are *pleasures for evermore*.

A happy state of the church is foretold. He can teach all to call Him Father; but without thorough change of heart and life, no man can be a child of God and we have no security for departing from Him.

References:

- Holy Bible: KJV
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