



THE HOPE OF A FUTURE



In this chapter you will ...

- (1) Feel the weight of a displaced people.
- (2) Understand the concept of exile.
- (3) Recognize the need for prophetic truth and the hope it brings.
- (4) See the promise of God to His people for a return ... and an even greater restoration.

Jeremiah 7:23-28 - The Nation That Did Not Obey God

 Our key text summarizes this sad period of the people of God. The Lord made a covenant with the people in the wilderness that He would be with them, and they were to obey His voice and walk in His ways. But they did not obey. Rather they walked in the counsel of their own evil hearts ... and went backward and not forward. From the time of their exodus from Egypt, God had always given them prophets to speak truth, but they would not listen. And now, God told the prophet Jeremiah to call them *"the nation that did not obey the voice of God."* Spanning three centuries, the ministry of the prophets to Israel and Judah called them to obey their God, repent of their sin, and hope in the covenant-keeping promises of God. The sixteen major and minor prophets carried this consistent message of truth, so that they would not be know as the nation that did not obey God, but the nation who put their hope in God!



A Future Hope

A careful reading of the prophets point the exiles to a restoration far greater than returning home. The hope that God offers His people is always something more than rescue from circumstances. Wrapped so powerfully in the prophetic words of these faithful men is a future hope ... not just returning to Jerusalem, but a new Jerusalem, not just the rebuilding of the earthly temple, but the glory of the heavenly temple. The Advent promises of the "coming" One are the sermons of the prophets - the awful Day of the Lord in judgment, and the Hope of the King and His glorious Kingdom!

The New Covenant ... The Greatest Of Them All



In the Old Testament prophetic books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel the greatest Gospel promise is made by God. In Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Ezekiel 36:22-32 the promise of a New Covenant is made. Not one where the people's heart of stone was like the law written on tablets of stone, but one where the law was written on their heart of flesh. Where once sin reigned because of the undoable nature of the law leading only to death, now there is freedom and liberty because of the ministry of the Spirit that has brought new life (2 Corinthians 3:1-8). God had called the nation to be His people, but they couldn't do it. The dark days of the judges, the divided kingdom, and the exile are proof of their disobedience. *"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light."* What was that light? *"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given ... on the throne of David from this time forth and forevermore"* (Isaiah 9:2-7)

Story-Tellers Takeaways ...

- (1) God never leaves His people as aliens ... a greater land always awaits them.
- (2) In exile there is a call to repentance, so that in rescue there can be a life of freedom.
- (3) There is no hope where there is no truth.
- (4) Returning to the land of Canaan was only part of the prophet's message. It was a greater hope of a greater future that motivated the ministry of the prophets.

My Notes:

How to Read the Story ... the Big into the Small, and the Small into the Big ... all to Penetrate Our Hearts!

Feathers - You must have an understanding of the epic narrative of God's story ... this is Biblical Theology that guides our reading of the story.

Shaft - You must approach each text of Scripture honestly and openly ... this is Exposition of Scripture that shapes our understanding of the story.

Point - You must have a soft heart to worship the author of the story ... this is Gospel Centeredness that changes life.

For Discussion:

- (1) Discuss the two-fold nature of the prophet's messages. How should we hear their words?
- (2) Why was it so important for the message of the prophets to include repentance? What was the aim of the prophets ... external conformity or internal contrition?
- (3) What is your current exile? What "Messiah" are you waiting for to deliver you? What do you find hope in?
- (4) How should the New Covenant promise of the Spirit impact how you think about obedience, sanctification, and worship?