

Jeremiah

Chapter 33

The LORD Promises Peace

The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah a second time, while he was still shut up in the court of the guard: 2 “Thus says the LORD who made the earth, the LORD who formed it to establish it—the LORD is his name: 3 Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known. 4 For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city and the houses of the kings of Judah that were torn down to make a defense against the siege mounds and against the sword: 5 They are coming in to fight against the Chaldeans and to fill them with the dead bodies of men whom I shall strike down in my anger and my wrath, for I have hidden my face from this city because of all their evil. 6 Behold, I will bring to it health and healing, and I will heal them and reveal to them abundance of prosperity and security. 7 I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel, and rebuild them as they were at first. 8 I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me. 9 And this city shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and a glory before all the nations of the earth who shall hear of all the good that I do for them. They shall fear and tremble because of all the good and all the prosperity I provide for it. 10 “Thus says the LORD: In this place of which you say, ‘It is a waste without man or beast,’ in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man or inhabitant or beast, there shall be heard again 11 the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voices of those who sing, as they bring thank offerings to the house of the LORD: “‘Give thanks to the LORD of hosts, for the LORD is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!’ For I will restore the fortunes of the land as at first, says the LORD. 12 “Thus says the LORD of hosts: In this place that is waste, without man or beast, and in all of its cities, there shall again be habitations of shepherds resting their flocks. 13 In the cities of the hill country, in the cities of the Shephelah, and in the cities of the Negeb, in the land of Benjamin, the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, flocks shall again pass under the hands of the one who counts them, says the LORD.

33:1–26 Concluding Jeremiah’s “book of consolation,” the section is divided into two roughly equal parts: (1) vv. 1–13, which continues and builds on ch. 32, and (2) vv. 14–26, which summarizes a wider range of earlier passages in Jeremiah and elsewhere—it is not found in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the OT). (CSB)

33:2 *who made the earth* – literally, "the Doer," He who performs what He promises and threatens, or, "He who prepares it to complete it," carrying out His plans without fail. (Kretzmann)

Lord is his name – Jehovah, the God of the covenant. (Kretzmann)

33:3 *Call ... and I will answer.* † Man’s prayer is assured of God’s response (see Ps 3:4; 4:3; 18:6; 27:7; 28:1–2; 30:8; 55:17; Mt 7:7; contrast 11:14). (CSB)

great and unsearchable. The Hebrew for this phrase usually refers to the formidable cities of Canaan and is translated “large, with walls up to the sky” (Dt 1:28; see Nu 13:28; Dt 9:1; Jos 14:12). (CSB)

hidden things...not known.† The Hebrew (with the change of one letter) for this phrase echoes Isa 48:6: “hidden things unknown to you.” As the rest of ch. 33 demonstrates, the Lord will act in ways that will be nothing short of incredible (vv. 6–26). (CSB)

33:4 Jerusalem’s houses—including those of the king—were torn down so that their stones could be used to repair the city’s battered walls (see Isa 22:10 and note). (CSB)

Another desperate maneuver in vain. Jerusalem’s last days are sketched in terse language suggesting the frantic efforts to save the city. (TLSB)

siege mounds. To help the invaders bring up battering rams and scale Jerusalem’s walls (see 6:6). (CSB)

33:5 *dead bodies.* Of Jerusalem’s defenders. (CSB)

Bodies, not reinforcements, would fill buildings. (TLSB)

33:6 *health and healing.* God would bind up the wounds of the war and heal the wounds inflicted by the enemies. (Kretzmann)

33:7 *restore the fortunes of Judah.* This was like when He first made them His people, at the time of the exodus from Egypt. (Kretzmann)

Judah and Israel. This would be all those who are his children in truth. (Kretzmann)

33:8 *forgive all the guilt.*† The basis of the new covenant (see 31:34 and note; see also 50:20; Eze 36:25–26). (CSB)

This is the basis of the lasting covenant of salvation, the Lord's pardoning grace over against all poor sinners. (Kretzmann)

33:9 *name of joy.* No longer will the nations be horrified because of all its wounds. (TLSB)

tremble because of all the good and all the prosperity. See Hos 3:5. (CSB)

They would tremble with the fear (awe) of repentant sinners and on account of the miraculous power of God displayed in behalf of the Jews. Even thus men everywhere, in coming to the knowledge of the true God, serve Him with fear and rejoice with trembling, walking before Him and increasing daily in holiness. (Kretzmann)

33:11 *voice of mirth...voice of gladness.* The glorious reversal of the judgment proclaimed in 7:34; 16:9; 25:10. (CSB)

Reversal of the chaos and grief threatened in 16:9; 25:10-11. (TLSB)

those who sing, as they bring thank offerings. Lit. “bringing thank offerings.” The repetition here of “bringing” from earlier in the verse separates the thank offerings from the other specific sacrifices mentioned and gives them the more general designation of offerings of thanksgiving. (CSB)

restore the fortunes. The people of Judah would again be His free people, as He had intended it from the beginning. (Kretzmann)

33:12 Many of which were, or were to be, heaps of ruins, would return to a time as under conditions of the utmost peace and security. (Kretzmann)

33:13 *cities of the hill country.* This included the mountainous region of Judah, toward the north and northeast, the plains or lowlands toward the Mediterranean Sea, and the semiarid region bordering on Arabia and the Sinaitic Peninsula. (Kretzmann)

flocks ... pass under the hand ... counts them. See Eze 20:37. (CSB)

The method by which a shepherd would count the sheep in the morning and evening as they walked out of or into the sheepfold. (Cf John 10:1-7. (TLSB)

All faithful shepherds kept a very careful count of the sheep entrusted to them. The words thus imply that a most watchful and provident care would again be exercised with regard to the believers. (Kretzmann)

33:1–13 Eventually, the Lord will restore the fortunes of His people, and the empty streets will once again ring with joy and laughter. God’s discipline must work itself out at this point before He will show mercy to His rebellious people. God plans a wonderful future for His people, ultimately fulfilled in Christ Jesus. • Strengthen us, O Lord, in trial and temptation. Keep our eyes on Christ and on our heavenly home. Amen. (TLSB)

The LORD's Eternal Covenant with David

14 “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. **15** In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. **16** In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness.’ **17** “For thus says the LORD: David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, **18** and the Levitical priests shall never lack a man in my presence to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings, and to make sacrifices forever.” **19** The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: **20** “Thus says the LORD: If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night will not come at their appointed time, **21** then also my covenant with David my servant may be broken, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and my covenant with the Levitical priests my ministers. **22** As the host of heaven cannot be numbered and the sands of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the offspring of David my servant, and the Levitical priests who minister to me.” **23** The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: **24** “Have you not observed that these people are saying, ‘The LORD has rejected the two clans that he chose’? Thus they have despised my people so that they are no longer a nation in their sight. **25** Thus says the LORD: If I have not established my covenant with day and night and the fixed order of heaven and earth, **26** then I will reject the offspring of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his offspring to rule over the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them.”

33:14-26 As in previous revelations of God’s eternal plan for mankind, Jeremiah’s vision of good things to come is not limited to the return of the chosen people from exile but penetrates to those

days when the messianic Branch, sprung from David's lineage, will establish His universal kingdom of grace. (TLSB)

33:14 *the days are coming* – This is like getting a wake up call. It gets their attention. It is like a splash of cold water in the morning. This is like saying “stop what you are going and pay attention to what I have to say.” Many of the Jews in exile had gotten comfortable with their lot in life and were making the best of it. They had lost sight of the long view of their spiritual life. It is easy for us to do that too. That is why we celebrate Advent each year. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 5, Part 1)

I will fulfill the promise I made – *dabar* – To arrange in order to keep a promise. It is the “good word” that something will happen as it had been declared earlier. I will bring you back to this place. What wonderfully sweet words of grace and promise! The promise is always the good word – God's good word – expressed personally, incarnationally, and universally in the Word, the Son – Jesus Christ. The promise here is not just the return of the Judean exiles; it includes much more. It is God's earlier promise to both Judah and Israel (the northern kingdom destroyed in 722 BC, over 100 years before Jeremiah). It is God's original plan of redemption, first articulated in Genesis 3:15 as to be carried out by the seed of Eve, then explained more fully as Abraham's seed (Genesis 12:1-3) and the Son of David (2 Samuel 7). Yahweh frequently reaffirms and elaborates this promise throughout the OT. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 5, Part 1)

Jeremiah 29:10 “This is what the Lord says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back.”

33:15–16 Repeated from 23:5–6 (see notes there). (CSB)

33:15 *righteous branch* – Jesus. Jeremiah wants to tell God's people that not all is lost. This branch will grow a shoot of new life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 1)

spring up – He would not only be a king but also a priest. For the Lord promised that the Levites would always have one to serve as priest before Him. He could not be as other high priests for they served only until they died. His service would have to extend beyond the temple and its worship, for that worship would be interrupted and finally cease altogether. (PBC)

he shall execute - *awsaw* – To get things done. To make it happen or to execute when it counts. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 1)

justice and righteousness - *mishpat* – A verdict or sentence. In this case the word comprises both “justification” (God's “justice – undeserved grace or salvation) and “sanctification,” a norm of behavior corresponding to God's norm. God's justice salvation by grace through faith in the Christ's death and resurrection. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 5, Part 1)

Ambrose writes, “He who looks upon the Son see, in portrait, the Father. Mark what manner of portrait is spoken of. It is Truth, Righteousness, the Power of God: not dumb, for it is the Word; not insensible, for it Wisdom; not vain and foolish, for it is Power; not soulless, for it is life; not death, for it is the Resurrection.” (NPN2 10:208) (TLSB)

33:16 *it will be called.* † Because the righteous Branch from David's line imputes his righteousness (23:6) to his subjects, they themselves will bear the holy name (for other examples see Jdg 6:24; Eze 48:35). (CSB)

The exact opposite of Judah's current atmosphere is about to fall. Babylon's forces are hr gates (Jere 6:6). There is no safety behind the walls made of stone and mortar. Jeremiah in prophetic vision sees the New Jerusalem and the kingdom of grace. Here there is safety and peace, for Jesus, the Prince of Peace, sits on David's throne and rules with righteousness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 1)

the Lord is our righteousness – By virtue of His righteousness imputed to the subjects of the King, they themselves will bear the holy name. They will have full access to the throne of God through His mediation, prefigured by the sacrifices offered by Israel's priests. These long-range promises will be fulfilled as certainly as God lets day and night follow each other. (TLSB)

33:17–26 In the face of the impending judgment in which the nation will be swept away and the promised land reduced to a desolate wasteland, all God's past covenants with his people appear to be rendered of no effect—his covenants with Israel, with David and with Phinehas (see chart on “Major Covenants in the OT”). This series of oracles, however, gives reassurance that the ancient covenants are not being repudiated, that they are as secure as God's covenant concerning the creation order, and that in the future restoration they will all yet be fulfilled. (CSB)

33:17 See 2Sa 7:12–16; 1Ki 2:4; 8:25; 9:5; 2Ch 6:16; 7:18. This passage is fulfilled ultimately in Jesus (see Lk 1:32–33). (CSB)

Zedekiah was the last of David's successors to rule in Jerusalem. The throne of the messianic King shall be established forever (see note, 2Sm 7:13). He will grant royal status to His subjects. They will reign with Him forever and ever (cf Mt 25:34; 2Tm 2:12; Rv 3:21; 22:5). (TLSB)

In other words, the kingdom of Christ was to be an eternal kingdom. (Kretzmann)

33:18 See Nu 25:13. The priestly covenant with the Levites, like the royal covenant with David, was not a private grant to the priestly family involving only that family and the Lord. It was rather an integral part of the Lord's dealings with his people in which Israel was assured of the ministry of a priesthood that was acceptable to the Lord and through whose mediation they could enjoy communion with him. That ministry was and is being fulfilled by Jesus, who administers a higher and better priesthood (see Ps 110:4; Heb 5:6–10; 6:19–20; 7:11–25). (CSB)

Levitical priests. Priests from the tribe of Levi. The promise of a perpetual priesthood will become a reality, for the messianic Branch will be also able to save those who draw near to God through Him (Heb 7:21-28). The unnumbered host of those reconciled to God by His perfect sacrifice will constitute a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices to God (1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rv 1:5-6; 5:9-10). (TLSB)

33:20 *my covenant with the day...night.* Although reference may be to God's sovereign establishment of the creation order in the beginning, more likely the covenant of Ge 9:8–17 (see Ge 8:22) is in view. (CSB)

33:21 *covenant with the Levites.* See Mal 2:4. (CSB)

The Lord would break His promise, neither to David nor to His servants in the office of the ministry. He would give them all the blessings of the Messianic era in full. (Kretzmann)

33:22† In words that echo the covenant promises to the patriarchs (Abraham, Ge 22:17; Isaac, Ge 26:4; Jacob, Ge 32:12), the Lord assures the flourishing of the two mediatorial (royal and priestly) families and thus the continuation of this ministry in the spiritual commonwealth to be established with his people. This promise of a numerous progeny to both the royal and priestly families is fulfilled in Christ, a priest forever and “able to save completely those who come to God through him” (Heb 7:25) and those who in Christ have been consecrated to be priests (see 1Pe 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6; see also Isa 66:21; Ro 6:13; 12:1; 15:16; Eph 5:2; Php 4:18; Heb 13:15–16). (CSB)

33:24 *two clans*.† Israel and Judah. But since the Hebrew uses a word here that commonly refers to families, the reference may be to the two mediatorial (royal and priestly) families. (CSB)

Judah and Ephraim, which ruled the two kingdoms of Israel. Cf 1Ki 12:16–24; (TLSB)

he chose. Israel’s present strength and prosperity gave rise to complacency about her privileged status as the Lord’s chosen people. She is shockingly reminded of the long-forgotten responsibilities her privileges entailed. (CSB)

33:26 *restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them*. Echoes Dt 30:3. (CSB)

This would be His spiritual children. All this was fulfilled and is being fulfilled in the kingdom of Christ, where those who have been redeemed from the bondage of Satan rejoice in the fullness of the grace given them by virtue of the Messiah's vicarious sacrifice. (Kretzmann)

33:14–26 As certainly as day follows night, so will God keep His promise that a Davidic King will rule over His people and that a High Priest shall intercede for them. In Jesus, the Lord sent a faithful King to rule over all His people and a High Priest to intercede. Entrust your cares to Him through prayer. His all-availing sacrifice and His compassionate rule will bless and keep you. • Remind us, Father, that we always have someone who speaks on our behalf: Jesus Christ the Righteous. Amen. (TLSB)