“A Vision of the Future”

Jeremiah 30:1-3, 18-22  September 7, 2014

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Introduction:

“Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life” is what Proverbs 13:12 tells us. Going through hardships and being in a position of waiting can be wearisome. It can make one ache with longing for that which is hoped for to materialize. Oh, but when it does come to pass, it brings with it a renewal and reinvigoration of the soul.

Hope. It lies at the core of our Christian faith. It interweaves itself through our lives as we are tied up in Him. It’s our staying power when the storms of this life rock the boat. It is our anchor of the soul, Hebrews 6:19.

Why are we speaking of hope so much? Because, when one is discussing A Vision of the Future, everything hangs on hope and the belief of it. While in Babylonian exile God sent this message of hope and encouragement to His people through the prophet Jeremiah. Let’s take a peek inside and see what God has to say to them and to us.

Jeremiah 30:1-2 “The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD God of Israel, saying, Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book.”

“The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD.” Before delivering any message one has to receive it first. Jeremiah received a word “from the LORD.” Now, it is very important here the author of this message for the Bible tells us,
“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,” (Matthew 4:4; compare Deuteronomy 8:3).

Authorship verifies the source of what is being said and therefore, tells whether what is said is reliable. This “word” which is authored by the LORD is as reliable as the Lord for “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” (Numbers 23:19).

Back in Jeremiah 1:9 it says, “Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.” God filled “Jeremiah” with the power and authority to relay His word. The very one who gives the message to Jeremiah is the very one whose word sustains every area of life, particularly in times of hardship and affliction.

On His word all life depends. Therefore, He instructs Jeremiah to, “Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee in a book.” Have you ever played the game as a child when you whisper something in someone’s ear and have them pass the message on? Around the group it goes and when it gets back to you it’s not the same message at all.

Oral recitations are like this. The stories tend to sway to the will of the one who is in a position of passing it on with little details getting over or under inflated or even added or taken away until the message isn’t the same any more.

God didn’t want to take that chance with His promise; with His Word. When things are written down or inscribed there becomes permanence about them. It’s solidified as is.

Books are more than a good read of a good story. They can also become holders of records of truth. Books can be as a witness to worlds past and future coming. When the people in captivity experience their day of release, they can look back in the “book” where the promise was originally made and bless the Lord for the remembrance of where they once were and where He has them today.
God’s Word will forever stand as a written memorial for what He can and will do for His people.

Jeremiah 30:3 “For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.”

“I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah.” Their situation was not permanent. Though both “Israel and Judah” suffered and will suffer the consequences of disobeying God, God had not totally written them off, so to speak. He had something better on the horizon for their future.

This really speaks to the longsuffering of the Lord to bear with people and their faults. Though we must never take His grace for granted, we see over and over again His love in action in refusing to break a covenant He made with them centuries before (see Genesis 15:18).

“I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.” In Jeremiah 25:11 we read the prophecy that says, “And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.”

Seventy years was the prophecy that was spoken and they would not be released a day before God’s appointed time. Though the time may seem long; in fact, a lifetime for some, the comfort comes in knowing the Promised Land was still going to be theirs for the keeping. God’s covenant with them would still be in effect. They were out of their homes but they were not homeless; they were not hopeless. There would come a time for going back home. And, you know what they say: “There’s no place like home.”

Jeremiah 30:18-19 “Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob’s tents, and have mercy on his dwellingplaces; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof. And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry: and I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small.”
“I will bring again the captivity of Jacob’s tents, and have mercy on his dwellingplaces.” Long before they enjoyed the security of residences within the walls of Jerusalem, the people were tent dwellers (and some probably still lived in tents on the outskirts of town). Much like Abraham did and those who came after him, they moved about the area settling for a time here and there. When it was time to move again, tens and everything would be packed away and readied for another journey. Such was the life of a nomad.

Before the walls and while still in tents, God’s promise came that this land shall be forever theirs, (see Genesis 15:18; also compare to a previous lesson “A Promise of Land,” October 6, 2013 on www.wordforlifesays.com). Though the people went into captivity physically, God’s promise was never locked up. He had “mercy on his dwellingplaces.”

“The city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof.” Times of war bring with it devastations and ruin. Here, God wants to replace the ruin with restoration, and the destruction with development. When the time comes for them to arrive back home it would not look like it once did. They would need to rebuild in that very place “upon her own heap.”

In previous lessons, we studied in detail some of the renovations that went on with their faith and their land when the exiles returned home. In “Joyful Worship Restored” (June 25, 2013; www.wordforlifesays.com), we see an altar was built and worship was re-established. There would be so many things they would miss out on during those seventy years that can be restored once home again.

Other lessons to check out for restoration projects would be:

- “The Temple Restored” (July 7, 2013)
- “Celebrating with Joy” (July 17, 2013)
- “Dedication of the Wall” (August 18, 2013)

These are just a few and all are found here on www.wordforlifesays.com.
“And out of them shall proceed thanksgiving and the voice of them that make merry.” Compare this to the voice of lamentation they must be experiencing during captivity. While in captivity there was sorrow and heaviness:

“By the river of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the LORD’s song in a strange land?” (Psalm 137:1-4).

But, all that sorrow will be replaced with rejoicing. Hearts will be “merry” as “thanksgiving” goes up before God for His deliverance; for being the keeper of His promise.

“I will multiply them, and they shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small.” War not only ravaged their land but their people as well. Though there would be three waves of returnees that would eventually come back home, each would only be considered a remnant of what the people were and will be again. God, in His power, will cause them to grow again as a great nation.

Also, in their fall they faced derision and mockery, God would “glorify them.” Isaiah once prophesied, “The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of they feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the LORD, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel,” (Isaiah 60:14).

When it comes to restoring us from the hand of our enemies, God has the final say. He will cause the enemies to bow before His people. He will cause the enemies who ridiculed you to honor you with their mouth. God’s vision for their future was for EVERYTHING to be restored: land, people and honor.

Jeremiah 30:20-22 “Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me, and I will punish all that oppress them. And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed
from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the LORD. And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God."

“Their children also shall be as aforetime, and their congregation shall be established before me.” Is there any words to comfort the heart of a hurting captive parent than to hear their children are also going to be restored. Before the sin. Before the fall. Before captivity laid hold of them. Before the enemy invaded the land. Before they lost it all, their children would be once again favored as everyone is that belongs in God’s heritage. As they had been before so they will be again.

It makes one wonder what the conditions for the children in their current state must have been like. Are they suffering the same hardships as their parents? Are they made to labor and toil? In their restoration I can imagine these children being as children should be. Playing in the streets, tagging one another as "it." As the adults were making "merry," I imagine the blessed innocent songs of these little ones putting a smile on the faces of all nearby.

“And their congregation shall be established before me.” The sentiments echoed here gives me the impression of worship restored among the brethren (people) back to the one and only true God. Can you see the picture of families walking together once again, hand in hand, to worship? Neighbors connected by more than the community they live in, they are connected spiritually with one another.

God, once again is in His rightful place (though He never left, the people did) as the foundation of all that the people say and do. What a blessed place to be “before” the Lord.

“I will punish all that oppress them.” Once upon a time, Deuteronomy 32:35 said, “To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste,” (see also Romans 12:19).
Nothing gets past God! What a comfort! What blessed assurance! Pay day is coming after while! Retribution for good and for bad is found in the hand of God.

Don’t be disheartened at what the physical eyes see now. If someone is wrong, God has it recorded. One day the books will be opened and He “will render to every man according to his deeds,” (Romans 2:6). “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works,” (Matthew 16:27). There will be a time of reward and penalty. God will repay (compare Job 34:11).

“And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them.” Instead of servitude under the forces of Babylon, they will experience home-grown leadership. One of their own will rise up and take place as rightful ruler and prince to guide and shepherd the people. The ultimate fulfillment of this will be found in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be,” (Genesis 49:10).

“I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me: for who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto me? saith the LORD.” “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,” (1 Timothy 2:5-6). Jesus, whose heart is permanently tied to the will of His Father, will be He that ultimately approaches God with the sacrifice of Himself to stand in the gap for all mankind.

“And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.” Restoration complete. A Vision of the Future as it should be. At this point everything comes full circle back to where it should be: a solidified relationship between God and man.

Conclusion:

When God has a promise written or spoken concerning your future, you can remain in hope.