

Dr. Allan MacRae, Jeremiah, Lecture 10

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Blessings on Israel before Jer 30-33

Assignment: In Jer 32 what is predicted? [0:0]

Let me give the assignment for next time. I want you to go through Jeremiah 32 and see what is predicted in that chapter, what specific predictions are made. Now if you find something predicted, put down what is predicted and then the verse it is in. Then if you come to the same thing predicted again, don't write it again, just add the verse number to the one you already listed. It is not a list by verses, it is a list by subject. But arrange the subjects in the order you first find the prediction. Whatever you find predicted, put down what it is and then the verse, and if it's predicted again, just add the verse after that one.

Meaning of Historical Background [1:05]

But I should just say a word about that. I have always understood that in connection with any literary writing or with the life of an individual, anything like that, you may ask: what is the background of this? For example, what is the historical background of the life of Theodore Roosevelt? Well, a book about Theodore Roosevelt might tell about his relationship with his family--about his terrible sorrow when his first wife died, how he gave up all his hopes of advancement and later changed. But the fact is that all during his lifetime there was the Spanish- American war--what caused it, and what the results of it were, and the great industrial development of the country during his life and various

historical things like that--but you might not mention all this in a story of his life, at least not go into it fully, and yet they are in the background. And so by historical background I meant: who were the various kings that reigned during the activity of Jeremiah? What were the political things that happened? What were those things which were not discussed especially in this book, but are nevertheless, the background of various portions of the book.

But the very first paper that I got, as I said, and about a third of the others, understood “background” as being what came before him instead of what happened elsewhere during his life, and I couldn’t figure at first how anybody could interpret “background” in that way.

Then I realized that in literary studies “background” is regularly used to mean the outside events that are in the background that affects one’s whole life, such that if the person is applying for a job, or you are speaking about a new person entering an organization, you say, “What is his background?” You mean what was his previous history. So I see how it was largely people with a scientific training who understood it in a different way than I have always understood it, while those with a literary background understood it more the way I do. So about two-thirds understood it the way I did.

Importance of Words in Translation [3:32]

Now, I just want to mention something about the matter of words, for that is tremendously important in understanding Jeremiah or any part of the Bible: that is to know how words are used. Words are difficult, slippery things. They vary

from time to time. They vary from language to language. They rarely exactly correspond--a word in one language to a word in another. Their meanings overlap, but they do not correspond. In English the word "great" and the word "large" are entirely different. The word "tall" again is very different in English, but in German, one word covers all three meanings. In German they used to use that word "big," and in those days I weighed a third less or at least a fourth less than I do now. I certainly was not large there, and I don't think that anybody would have called me "great." But I certainly was tall, and my American friends would be greatly amused when they would refer to me as "the great, slender man." We could say, "the large, slender man." Of course, the correct translation would be "the tall, slender man." So when you translate such a thing, an exact translation is impossible. You can get the general idea, but when it comes to minute points, you have to get into the original language in order to get those minute points.

Fortunately, our standard translations are all made by people who study the sentence as a whole, study the various meanings of the words and try to see what are the best ways to give the meaning in English, and so our translations are very good, for the most part. But unfortunately, sometimes they fail, and if you are going to understand the Scripture exactly and you are going to take questions on it, perhaps even to enter the mind of the original translators, we have to get into the original.

Jer 1-20 God's Disobedient People and Jeremiah's Feelings [5:55]

Now, we were speaking last time about the fact that the book of Jeremiah is divisible into a few large sections. One may subdivide the sections, and there may be a certain amount of opinion as to the subdivisions, but in this particular book, the main divisions are quite clearly marked and we notice that Jeremiah 1-20 is sharply distinguished from the rest of the book. These first chapters largely relate to God's disobedient people with glimpses of Jeremiah's own feeling, which reach a climax in chapter 20. After this chapter, you occasionally learn about things that Jeremiah did or things that Jeremiah said, or about how Jeremiah felt--his personal struggles within himself to push forward and do the work that the Lord wanted him to. We have noted very interesting glimpses of this important aspect of his life between chapters 1 and 20. You hardly have anything comparable to that afterwards. We have very little personal mention of other individuals during these first twenty chapters. These 20 chapters represent his message, calling the people to repent, pointing out how far they had gone, telling them of the terrible disasters that were ahead though not with much specific detail about these disasters. Almost everything in these first 20 chapters could have been written during the early part of Jeremiah's life.

Now, I am not sure that it was, there may be parts of it that were written later. But these chapters form a group by themselves, and they have many, many sentences in common language that are frequently quoted. He had a tremendous ability with words, which we often hear said without realizing that they come from

the book of Jeremiah at all. It is a very fine section of the book, but it is unfortunate that the average reader, in fact all readers, start Jeremiah there because they want to read it straight through, although it is much less interesting than later parts of the book. Also, after looking at later parts, it is much easier to understand this first part, and that is why I gave a good many assignments, which we discussed to some extent in class, about later portions of the book.

Jer 21-29 Rebukes of Kings and False Prophets [8:37]

Now as we have mentioned, the second portion is again sharply divided. Chapters 21-29 are quite different from what precedes and it is quite different from what follows. It consists of rebukes to kings and to false prophets. Practically everything in these nine chapters relates to one of these two--kings or false prophets--most of them before the time of the actual siege. There are some references to Zedekiah, but largely before the final siege. There are many references to Jehoakim in them. We looked at the individual chapters in this section. Usually the chapter divisions are quite well made; 21 to 29 is divided in a natural dividing place, all but one chapter. Chapters 1 to 20 run along continuously and very often you could have a great question whether this was the best place to make a chapter break, or rather it could have been made just as well in a different place.

Chapter Division Jer 22/23 misplaced [9:44]

The one place where I feel quite convinced that the chapter division in 21-29 was not made at the best place, is at the end of chapter 22. And you remember,

we looked at chapter 22 and saw that included judgment on various kings in chapter 22. And then we noticed that chapter 23, from verse 8 on, is giving the judgment on false prophets, and it may well be that when the archbishop made his chapter division, being aware of false prophets in the latter four-fifths of chapter 22, noticed this statement: “Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep from my pasture.” This can’t be talking about kings; it must be talking about prophets because there would only be one king at a time. But while there is only one king at a time, Jeremiah had to do with a number of different kings who were discussed in the previous chapter. And if you go along to verse 8, you find that in those eight verses he is telling about the coming of a new king. So since it is the coming of a new king and great blessing for the people, contrasting with the previous chapter, it seems to me that quite reasonably verses 1-8 belong with what precedes. It ends with that marvelous prediction of the coming of the righteous branch to David, the king who will reign wisely.

Jer 24 Jeremiah’s Object Lessons: Baskets of Figs [11:29]

Chapter 24 made quite a sharp difference of subject. It gives another of Jeremiah’s object lessons. We have a number of these in the book, as you’ve noticed. I might conceivably in our final exam ask you to list as many as you can remember of Jeremiah’s object lessons because this is rather typical of Jeremiah. We have more object lessons than in any other of the prophetic books. We do have them occasionally in all the books.

Here Jeremiah goes before the people with two baskets of figs and the

people say, “What’s that fellow up to now? Look at him holding up two baskets of figs! Why does he have two baskets there he is holding up for us to look at? Why does he have those two baskets? This one here, it smells so bad I can’t get near it! It is entirely decayed; it’s terrible, these figs. But look at these other luscious figs, I just long to eat one of them. They look so delicious. What’s the idea?” Then Jeremiah says, “These figs, these wonderful, good figs, are the people who are in exile. These awful figs are you people here.” You can see why they loved Jeremiah after that!

But he was trying to show them that the people who had been taken into exile were not necessarily taken because they were more wicked than others. He was trying to show them that God was sending the exile upon the people and that actually these who were left were every bit as bad as those who had gone before into exile. In fact, those who were gone may even have included more people who were fine in character than those who were left. It is a warning to us against taking a figurative thing in the Scripture and carrying it to an extreme. It is very easy to do. All the people in Jerusalem were wicked; they are like these awful figs. All the people who were taken to Babylon are good people just like these figs. If anybody thought that those exiled were perfect all he would have to do is read the book of Ezekiel who wrote at the same time and told what he thought about the people in exile and he was just as hard on them as Jeremiah was on the people in Jerusalem. In fact, Jeremiah elsewhere refers to the sin of the people who had gone into exile.

Troubles Don't Prove What We Are Doing is Wrong [15:06]

But he wanted to bring up the point that just because we have troubles and difficulties in our life it is not proof, in itself, that we are doing what is wrong, that we are making a bad mistake, or that we are wicked and need to change in some particular way. We are to learn whether we are doing right or wrong by discovering the standards that God's word gives, not by seeing what happens to us afterwards. In general, if we do what is right, God will bless us, and if we do what is wrong, ordinarily we will suffer as a result of it.

Yet, there are many, many cases where the wicked prosper and there are many, many cases where God has a lesson to teach us by bringing some misery, or some trouble, into our lives. There may have been people who were taken into exile that had been drifting along carelessly believing the Scripture, thinking they should follow it but it didn't mean a lot to them, and then when they were dragged off to exile it drove home to their mind about the results of their sin. This impressed them, and God used it for his purpose for development in their life. We can have situations in our life that God has sent us for his good purpose and not the result of a particular evil in our lives. That is one thing that we need to keep in mind throughout our lives. The important thing is whether we are following the Word of God, not whether the results as they work out are what we would like to have. But this illustration of the figs is another illustration of which Jeremiah has quite a few in his book, and we have looked at a number of them. Then that was chapter 24.

Jer 25: Judgment on Judah & 70 years exile [17:13]

Then in chapter 25, Jeremiah speaks in general of God's judgment on Judah and on the surrounding nations in verses 1 to 11. Everything in 1 to 11 is about Judah except verse 9, which says the surrounding nations are also destroyed but then he ends this particular part of the chapter with a declaration of God's judgment upon Babylon.

Babylon is God's instrument for his purposes, but Babylon is not wanting to be God's instrument. It is a wicked nation, and God is going to punish it for its sin. So we have these things brought out and a particularly interesting thing is in verses 11 to 12 where we have that prophecy that we have already looked at of the 70 years. "These nations will serve the king of Babylon 70 years, but when the 70 years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, the land of the Babylonians for their guilt."

Now, could somebody reading this know exactly when God was going to punish the Babylonians? Well, the chapter began by telling us this was given in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, 605 BC. 70 years after that would be the year 534 BC and it was actually 539-538 when the Babylonians were completely overcome. So the 70 years is not an exact designation, but it is very close. It is within three or four years of the exact time when it would happen.

So this is a warning to us again, thinking that we can make precise dates out of predictions. It is not the Bible's policy to give us precise dates. It does give occasional general statements like this. And it said that the nations would serve the

king of Babylon 70 years and then God will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, and they were overcome by Cyrus the Great at about 65 or 66 years after this time. The later chapter, in chapter 29, goes on to say that Babylon will become desolate, and it did become desolate, but it doesn't say that it will become desolate exactly at the end of the 70 years. That happened a couple hundred years after that time.

**Jer 26-27: Jehoiakim's Attempt to Kill Jeremiah. Nations Put under
Nebuchadnezzar's Yoke [19:58]**

Chapter 26 was Jehoiakim's attempt to kill Jeremiah, which we looked at earlier this semester. Then in chapter 27 the sovereign God places the nations under Nebuchadnezzar's yoke. This is a very interesting chapter showing that God declares He controls all the world and that He is placing all the nations under Nebuchadnezzar. He doesn't say in this chapter how long they are to be under him. We learn from other chapters they will be under him and under his successors for a period of about 70 years. And the chapter ends with telling the exiles not to think they are going to come back to Jerusalem right away (like the false called prophets were predicting). That is not the case; they are going to have to stay there for the rest of the 70 years.

Yoke Object Lesson – Jer 27 [20:51]

In this chapter, we have an interesting object lesson in verse 2, "The Lord said to me, 'make a yoke of straps and crossbars and put it on your neck.'" So Jeremiah walked about Jerusalem with this yoke put about his neck, a yoke made

of crossbars and straps--like he was a horse, or an ox--and walking about with this. He was quite conspicuous and people saw him and wondered what is the idea of his going around that way. He was to show that God is putting all the nations, including his nation, under Nebuchadnezzar; that it is God's will the exile not be permanent but for a period that will continue for another 70 years.

Jer 27-28: Jeremiah's Yoke broken by Hananiah [21:43]

Chapter 27 can't be sharply separated from chapter 28 because in chapter 28 we find another man who called himself a prophet breaking this yoke off of Jeremiah's neck. He was going to make an object lesson, too. So Hananiah came and broke the yoke off of Jeremiah's neck and he said, "Just as I have broken this yoke, so God is going to break the yoke of the king of Babylon off the nations in the next year or two, and all our people that have been taken into exile will come back." (28:4)

What a beautiful object lesson. Unfortunately, it represented what was false rather than what was true. And it reminds us of the fact that you cannot prove anything by an analogy. We want to be aware of that. You can illustrate something by an analogy; you can't prove anything by an analogy. An analogy is a comparison like some kind of a parable or an act one performs. It illustrates something, but you have to see what the point it is illustrating. Sometimes it will illustrate quite a few aspects, sometimes it will illustrate one main aspect and you have to see the difference. But an illustration never fits all the aspects. We have to

be careful at that point because there is an awful lot of reading into the Scripture from carrying analogies, or parables, further then they were intended to go.

Hananiah and Jeremiah's Conflict (Jer 28) [23:25]

So Hananiah broke the yoke off of Jeremiah and said, "See? This yoke he tells about, it is going to come to an end pretty soon." Jeremiah went home with his yoke broken off, but the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah and said go tell Hananiah, "This is what the Lord says, 'You broke a wooden yoke but in its place you will get a yoke of iron.' This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'I will put an iron yoke on the neck of all those nations to make them serve Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, and they will serve him'" (Jer. 28:13-14). And so this prediction is given opposite to the lesson that Hananiah tried to give.

But God went beyond that: verse 15, "Then the prophet Jeremiah said to Hananiah the prophet, 'Listen Hananiah! The Lord has not sent you, yet you persuaded the nation to trust in lies. Therefore, this is what the Lord says: "I am about to remove you from the face of the earth. This very year you are going to die because you have preached rebellion against the Lord." In the seventh month of that same year, Hananiah the prophet died.'" This is one of the cases where God permitted his prophet to give a specific prediction about somebody, and it was fulfilled to give people evidence that he truly was a prophet of God.

But we are told in the Deuteronomy 13 that the fact that somebody makes a true prediction does not prove he came from God. It does not prove it at all. If a prophet gives you a sign, Moses said, and the sign is fulfilled and then he says,

“let us go and do this”, which is contrary to God’s demands, you are not to pay any attention that prophet. He is a false prophet. So these kind of signs like Jeremiah’s are intended to lead people to learn and look to the true prophet. But the devil also can make signs, and so we are to be very wary of putting too much attention on such signs. There were doubtless many others who opposed Jeremiah who lived for many years after they had done it. But in this particular case, God allowed Jeremiah to give this prediction as an added evidence to the people of the fact that Jeremiah did really speak from God.

Jeremiah’s Letter to the Exiles (Jer 29) [26:08]

Chapter 29 gives a letter that he wrote to the exiles and he told them that they should not be expecting to return very soon. Rather they should settle in and live where they are and they should try to help the prosperity of the city where they were because they had another 70 years to stay there. So he wrote to the exiles, but a man among the exiles who claimed to be a prophet spoke against it, as we are told in the latter part of the chapter. This was chapter 29 and that finishes this section of the book.

Prophecies of Deliverance and Restoration (Jer 30-33) [26:44]

And now we have a section which is sharply different from what preceded. You would almost think they were two different books. In fact, this section is very different from the first part and from the second part of the book. It consists of four chapters: chapter 30 to chapter 33. In these chapters, this third part of the book, I am calling it, “Prophecies of deliverance and restoration”. The whole tone

is very different in these four chapters. In the first twenty the emphasis is almost entirely on the punishment for sin and calling people to turn away from their sin. He makes constant predictions of God's judgment in the first twenty chapters and many of them in the next nine. But in these four chapters, 30-33, the whole emphasis is on the fact that though God is going to punish them for their sin, God is not through with them. In fact, God has very great blessing that He is going to give them. Now, this is not a complete change from the previous part of the book, but it is a change from the general attitude that we feel from most of the previous parts because the emphasis there was on rebuke and punishment for sin.

Blessings in Early Chapters before Jer 30-33: Jer 3 [28:10]

But we do have a brief section in chapter 3 which looks forward to God's blessing. In chapter 3, verses 14-18, there the Lord said, "Return faithless people." He is referring particularly to the people from the Northern Kingdom. He says, "'Return, for I am your husband. I will choose one of you from every town and two from every clan and bring you to Zion. Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart who will lead you in knowledge and understanding. In those days, when your numbers have increased greatly in the land,' declares the Lord, 'men will no longer say, "The ark of the covenant of the Lord;" it will never enter their minds or be remembered. It will not be missed, nor will another one be made. At that time they will call Jerusalem the "throne of the Lord" and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the Lord. No longer will they follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts. In those days the house of Judah will gather with

the house of Israel and together they will come from a northern land to the land I gave your forefathers as an inheritance.”” There is a brief section of five verses there in chapter 3 which gives a marvelous picture of God’s future blessing.

Return from Exile [29:37]

Now, this picture is a return from exile, but it is not only a return from exile; it is a return which will be followed by leadership which God has; it is a blessing because they are leaders after His own heart. And it will be a time when Jerusalem will be called the “throne of the Lord” and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the Lord. In those days the house of Judah will join the house of Israel. Now, these are wonderful predictions about what is going to happen and 70 years later when Cyrus said that the people could come back and they were given opportunity to return, there was a comparatively small party of people who went back. Then after another 50 years or so, Ezra came back with another group of people, but the greater mass of them at that time stayed in the other regions of their exile. And of these people who came back, there were some of them who were very godly and who rejoiced in the chance to reestablish the Temple, but before long we find the prophets Haggiah and Zechariah saying, “Why are you living in your own fine houses and happy with your own life and not rebuilding the Temple? You started, but you let the work lag. Why don’t you go ahead and push it.”

So we find that among those who returned there was not an unanimous heart to put the Lord first. And as you look at the history of the next four hundred

years and you see the fights and strife among the people, and some very godly people but a great many who were ungodly, it is rather difficult to think that Jeremiah's prophecy of complete rest had been fulfilled during that period.

Fulfillment Israel or the Church [31:29]

Now I believe there are some who might say that this is not to be fulfilled in Israel but in the church. As you read the words from verses 14 to 18 about the house of Judah and the house of Israel coming together, no longer any jealousy between them, they are joined to be one, shepherds after my own heart and so on... You find it hard to think of it as fulfilled in the years between about 550 B.C. and 70 A.D. You find it hard to think of it as fulfilled then. Why, there have been Bibles which would say on the part that precedes, "God's punishment on Israel" and in the part that follows, "God's punishment on Israel," but on this, "God's blessing on the church."

So you wonder whether this is a description on the present-day church, which has shepherds after God's own heart who will lead it with knowledge and understanding. Well, there have been shepherds of that type in the Christian church, no question about that. But I am not sure they have been in the majority; I am certainly sure that it has not been all of them who have been shepherds after God's own heart.

"And the house of Judah and the house of Israel will be joined together." Well, you might say that there is going to be no disunity in the Christian church; they all are going to live together as brothers and we have no strife or confusion or

anything among us and that is what is represented in this figurative speaking about the house of Israel and the house of Judah. But if you can interpret this particular passage this way, I think you can just about make anything mean anything. It seems very clear as you read the passage that Jeremiah is giving a marvelous picture of something that is going to happen to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. God says, "This is going to happen," and it looked to Ezra and the leaders who brought the people back that this is what was now going to happen when they came back from exile. But the situation fell far short of this and if God's word is true and what God predicts is sure to happen, it certainly would seem to be required that this will be fulfilled about the house of Israel and about the house of Judah in some way in time that is yet to come because no one can point to a time when it has yet been fulfilled regarding them.

Certainly, you cannot think that Israel of today is quite fulfilling this situation. You have some very, very zealous people in Israel today who will go and lie on the streets in order to keep automobiles from driving on the Sabbath and who will enter into very excited efforts to compel following the precise rules they find in the Scripture, but they are a comparatively small minority. The mass of the people in Israel today are quite indifferent toward religion. It certainly does not seem to be that this passage has been fulfilled as yet, at least in the present. It would seem to require something that is yet in the future.

Jer 3 – God Curing Their Backsliding [35:12]

Now there was a brief, very wonderful picture of blessing coming here in chapter 3, verses 14-18 and a brief touch on it in the first part of verse 22. “Return faithless people, I will cure you of backsliding.” That is a marvelous promise God gives, “I will cure you of backsliding” and how we must wish, every one of us, that we could claim that for ourselves. “I will cure you of backsliding”, but I fear we have to look into a future time before we will reach that point. I doubt if there is any Jew or Christian in the world who has not had periods of backsliding. We try to follow the Lord and we fall far short, time after time. We plan to put Him first and then we get gradually interested in various things that move us away, and then we realize how we have gradually slipped from the clear consecration we had vowed to show toward the Lord, and we have to turn toward Him and ask Him to forgive us. We know our sins are all forgiven on the cross, laid on Christ, and yet He wants us, day by day, to come to Him and confess how far short we fall of His standard.

“I will cure you of backsliding.” Does that simply mean that when we die we will never backslide again? Or does it mean that there will be a time when God’s people will be so completely perfected when the time comes that we can say, “God has cured us of backsliding.” Or does it simply mean that when we get to heaven we will never backslide again? Well, there are various possible interpretations, but I think many of them can be discarded quite readily.

Israel's Restoration (Jer 23:3-8) Righteous Branch [36:56]

Going back to chapter 23, verses 3 to 8 we have more wonderful promises about Israel's restoration. This comes after the end of the statement in chapter 22, which told about the wickedness of the kings through King Jehoiakim. It does not tell us much about Zedekiah. Chapter 22 was doubtless written before Jehoiachin was taken into exile. It predicts his being taken into exile and it tells us of the wickedness of the kings and of the way God treated them.

Then at this part that follows it, we find this wonderful prediction (verse 5), "The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up to David a righteous branch, a king who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his day Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called, the 'Lord of our righteousness.'" And then continues in the next few verses about how wonderful it is going to be and the blessing that God will bring when He brings the people back from all over the earth.

Jer 24 – God's Blessing [38:06]

Then in chapter 24, verses 5-7 have a very brief message of God's blessing, speaking specifically of the people in exile. He says, "My eyes will watch over them for their good and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up and not tear them down; I will plant them and not uproot them. I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord. They will be my people and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their hearts." Now this does not say all of the people, and certainly all of them didn't. Certainly there were many among

those exiles who came back, who came back because of their desire to serve the Lord with their whole heart. So this certainly was fulfilled, in that return from exile. But the previous passage that we looked at (Jer. chapters 1 and 23) would seem to require something that is still future.

Jer 30-33 Very Different Than Rest of the Book [39:06]

Now, that is almost all the predictions of blessing that we have before chapter 30. Most of the rest of it is condemnation for their sins. And in chapter 30, specifically chapters 30-33, we feel that we are in a different area all together; and yet, it is the same prophet. It shows the great heart of Jeremiah who longed to bring what is good to the people, who longed to bring them God's promises of blessing, but who was put in a situation where he had to constantly be pointing to their sin and to be telling them of the terrible punishment that was just ahead. But God permitted him in chapters 30-33 to give a marvelous section promising of deliverance and restoration.

Now, some of the chapters are not as sharply divided as the ones before. Whether there should be a division between chapter 30 and 31 is highly questioned, especially as chapter 31 begins with the words, "At that time, declares the Lord, I will be the God of all the clans of Israel and they will be my people." That is not the usual way of starting a chapter, and the thought runs straight through from chapter 30 to 31. Now, chapter 32 begins with a date, and so it would seem that there is a good division at the beginning of 32. And chapter 33 is possibly separate from chapter 32, but from chapter 30 to 33 it is quite closely

joined together. It is a wonderful section of promises of deliverance and restoration.

Jer 30 Misery Presented in Light of Blessing [40:48]

I was rather hoping that we could get half or two-thirds through this section today, but I don't want to make any of you late to your next class. Maybe we can just quickly glance at the way in which the first part of this section is arranged, and as you look at the beginning here of chapter 30, you find a picture here; you find an introduction: "This is the word that came to Jeremiah, 'The days are coming when I will bring back my people Judah and Israel from captivity, and I will restore them to the land I gave their forefathers.'" But then we find in verses 5 and 6, "Cries of fear are heard; terror not peace. Ask and see. Can a man bear children? Then why do I see every strong man with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor? Every face is turned deathly pale." Now, as you read this--and certain parts of chapter 30--you can say, "Well, we are back in rebuke for sin again, telling of the miseries ahead?" But if you read it carefully, you find that that is not true. He is not here in these sections in chapter 30 telling what God is going to bring. He is describing a situation which is partly present and partly in the near future, in contrast to the blessing God will bring in the more distant future. And so He is not saying here, "You are going to go through misery because of your sin" (there is an occasional reference to sin but it is not stressed here). He is saying, "You are in this situation of misery, you are in a situation with problems,

with troubles, with difficulty, but God is going to give you wonderful blessing in the future.”

And so we have a reference to their present misery, and then a discussion of future blessing, then another reference to present misery, then a discussion of future blessing. And you have about four such alternations. And so those would make a logical division for this section here. Starting from the present, not in the sense here of giving a rebuke, but in saying, “Here is what you are in, but look what God is going to do.” Then he comes back, “Here is what you are in, but look what God is going to do.” And if you go through chapter 30 and the first part of chapter 31 with that in mind, it breaks into very natural divisions which I would like to discuss in full but won’t have time to because there is much more we have to follow; but we will speak of that part briefly at the beginning of the next hour. Remember the assignment. Look through chapter 32 and mention the predictions and say what verses they are in.

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