*Finding Grace*

*in the*

*Wilderness of Loss:*

*Lessons for Today from Israel’s Exile*

How a Glimpse of the “Latter Days” Offers Hope and Change for Present Day Believers:

A Study of Jeremiah 29-31

Lesson 1 Answer Key – Intro and Jeremiah 29:1-14

Winnetka Bible Church

Adult Discipleship Seminar

Dear friends,

The attached study outline with answer keys (in italics) is offered for your personal Bible study. This is the first part of an Answer Key supplement to the full three-part study of Jeremiah 29-31 previously posted on the WBC website. This first lesson is not strictly a complete study of Jer 29, but rather an introduction to the theme of loss, and then the message of the first part of Jer 29 as the context for Jeremiah’s additional words of hope to the exiles in chapters 30-31.

In addition to the answers offered to the questions in the study outline, there are a few additional resources for use through all three parts of the study:

**APPENDIX 1: Who/What is “Israel” in the Bible?** The multiple referents of “Israel” can make it confusing sometimes when reading the OT, especially the prophets. You may find this short resource helpful in clarifying this issue.

**APPENDIX 2:**  **A historical timeline of the nation of Israel** from birth to present-day. This is important in understanding the relation of Israel to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, a land to which they first went in the Exodus. Hundreds of years later the northern 10 tribes were destroyed or driven out of the land (722 BC), and later the southern two tribes were taken into captivity in the Babylonian Exile (586 BC). Only a remnant of the exiles returned 70 years later; many others were scattered, dispersed among the nations. **There was no king in Israel after 586 BC.** They were not a sovereign nation after return from exile, but always under another world power – Medo-Persia, then Greece, and finally Rome. This first “regathering” in the land ended shortly after their rejection of the offer of Messiah-Jesus as King. Rome destroyed the Temple in AD 70, and the final expulsion of Jewish people from the Promised Land of the Covenant was in AD 135, again at the hands of Rome. They were scattered among the nations for “many days” (1,813 years) as prophesied. But in AD 1948, after the horrors of WWII and the Holocaust caused a near-extinction of ethnic Israel, ending with scenes eerily reminiscent of the Valley of Dry Bones described in Ezekiel 37, Israel once more became a nation in the covenant land. In 1967, Israeli troops occupied the Old City of Jerusalem. This “second regathering” of Israel to the land has thus far been merely physical, with no spiritual life in them yet (Ezekiel 37:8). But one day the breath of the Lord’s Spirit will blow upon them, and a remnant of them will turn to Messiah Jesus, and the second regathering of true Israel to the Land *and* to the Lord will be completed (Isa 11:9-12; Ezekiel 37:9-14).

This study primarily addresses the question, “How does God offers His people hope and grace in a time of loss, whether personally or societally?” The “answers” offered by these scriptures inevitably draw our focus beyond our present problems to the promises of the latter days, when Messiah-Jesus will return as King for all his people, to rule over all the world in peace and justice. Only there is found the fullness of hope that can sustain us through any wilderness.

With sincere hope you find this study edifying and applicable to today,

Pete J.

**FINDING GRACE IN THE WILDERNESS OF LOSS: Part 1 – Jeremiah 29:1-14**

**Getting a Glimpse of Latter-Day Hope**

**Setting:** Final Days of Judah and Exile into Babylon; multiple deportations (605 BC?, 597 BC, 586 BC) culminating in destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 586 BC. A time for Lament.

**Author:** Jeremiah: mocked, despised, rejected for his message of inevitable, coming judgment on Judah for their sin; thrown in a cistern; forcibly exiled to Egypt by countrymen; persevering.

**Jeremiah’s Overall Message:** imminent judgment on Judah for covenant infidelity, yet hope in restoration and a new covenant which God will establish with Israel and Judah in the latter days

**A Letter of Hope: Read Jeremiah 29:1-14**, take a few minutes to acknowledge the hopefulness in the letter Jeremiah sent to the exiles in Babylon, and open in Prayer.

1. **The PROBLEM: How was the Exile a Loss?**

**The Babylonian Exile was a Great Loss – the Loss of a Homeland, of a National Identity**

1. **Loss Brings Grief:** Contrast Emotions of the Exodus (Psa 136) and the Exile (Psa 137)
* **EXODUS:** Leaving the Bondage of Egypt to go to the Promised Land

Read Psa 136:1-2, 10-16. What was the predominant emotion of the Exodus?

***Psalm 136*** *is a great song of* ***gratitude*** *– giving thanks to God for His steadfast love that endures forever, and His great works, most specifically for the Exodus out of Egypt and through the Red Sea. There is great joy in these miraculous events of deliverance. Nowhere does this Psalm allude to the failings, grumblings, rebellion, idolatry, and unbelief which occurred during their wilderness wanderings. For a different historical review of the Exodus which lists many of their failings in the Exodus, see Psalm 78.*

* **EXILE** (860 years after Exodus):Forced to Leave the Land for Bondage in Babylon

Read Psa 137. What was the predominant emotion of the Exile?

*What a contrast this Psalm is from the preceding Psalm!* ***Psalm 137*** *is full of* ***bitterness, sorrow,*** *and* ***hatred*** *of the Babylonians, as was the Exile which Jeremiah was attempting to prepare his people for. They cannot sing the songs demanded of them. They long for Jerusalem and for the destruction of Babylon. They even bless those who might one day kill the babies of Babylon against the rocks. (Contrast this last vengeful emotion with their blithely giving thanks to God for striking down the firstborn of Egypt in Psa 136:10, and compare to the loss of their own children in their present-day distress during the Exile in Jer 31:15). War, societal destruction and displacement of people can lead to a great sorrow over loss of children, as well as an attitude of cheapening the value of the lives of children of one’s enemies, even wishing them dead.*

1. **Loss Brings Guilt:** Discuss Real Guilt, Psychological Guilt, Survivor Guilt

**The Exile was because of the sin of Israel (30:14-15).** A loss sometimes prompts us to ask,

 *Did I sin?* If so we must repent. Recognition of **real guilt** brings godly sorrow that leads to

 repentance 2 Cor 7:8-11. But not all loss is directly a result of sin.

 **Psychological guilt** may come from our own unwillingness to forgive ourselves, or from

 the accusations of the enemy (Zech 3:1-10; Rev 12:10). We must resist these.
 **Survivor Guilt**: Why did others die while I am spared to live on in this disaster?

*Followers of Christ are called to a life of repentance. We know from 1 John 1:8, “if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” Taking up our cross daily includes putting to death those aspects of our old nature which still war against the Spirit within us.*

***Psalm 19:12*** *“Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from* ***hidden faults****.* ***13*** *Keep back your servant also from* ***presumptuous sins****; let them not have dominion over me! Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.”*

*We sometimes sin not realizing it – our “hidden faults.” Illustration: Nowadays many of us in healthcare are forced to enhance our practice of proper technique in isolation rooms. Any slight break in protective protocol, however unknowing, may expose us to the Covid19 virus. Like Covid, sin seeks any unguarded entry point. Once on us, it may then get in us and wreak havoc.*

*But perhaps more often we sin presumptuously; we know it is wrong, yet we do it anyway.*

*God has a way of convicting us of our sin. When we come into His Presence, His light shines on our darkness.* ***Psalm 90:8*** *“You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence.” We then experience godly sorrow which leads us to repentance, a change of heart, a turning away from sin toward the Spirit. (2 Cor 7:8-11)*

*Clearly the Exile happened because of the covenantal failure and sin of Israel (Jer 30:14-15).*

*Times of loss, like the Exile, force us to look at our lives and take stock. Where may I have drifted from God? What is He calling me to do or to change in light of my present suffering? We must examine our hearts regularly – Psa 139:23-24; 1 Cor 11:28; 2 Cor 13:5.*

*But not all loss is a direct result of sin. Here Satan seeks to demoralize and discourage us, as he did Joshua the High Priest in Zechariah’s vision (3:1-10). The LORD rebukes such accusations from the evil one. If you have trusted in Christ, you are a brand plucked from the fire, you are given clean clothes to replace your dirty clothes. Your iniquity was removed in a single day (Good Friday), just as the iniquity of the land will one day be removed when the Branch (Jesus) returns to rule in Jerusalem (Zech 3:8-9; 14:9). If you have never trusted in Christ’s work on the cross to cleanse you from sin, you can do so right now. Pray to Him and be saved.*

*And do not resurrect your guilt for old sins which you have acknowledged and confessed. 1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” He removes our sins and remembers them no more – Psa 103:12; Heb 8:12.*

1. **Loss Brings Grace:** How can we draw near to God in our pain? Where are the opportunities for God to show His everlasting love for us? **Jer 31:2-3**; **2 Cor 12:7-10**

*Loss can bring great grief and guilt. But loss is also God’s opportunity to bring us grace that is greater than our grief or guilt. The Theme Verse(s) for this entire study is the great promise found in* ***Jeremiah 31:2-3:***

***“Thus says the LORD: "The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness; when Israel sought for rest, 3 the LORD appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.”***

*Finding grace in the wilderness of loss is not often easy. It involves a struggle in prayer. The Apostle Paul discovered this in his wrestling with God (remember, the name Israel means “one who contends with God”). Paul had a thorn in his flesh, and three times he pleaded with God to take it away. God did not take it away. But He did extend His all-sufficient grace to Paul. Through this Paul learned that God displays His strength in our own weaknesses, and God’s grace is sufficient for each of us. When I am weak in myself, then I am strong in the grace God supplies to me in that troubling situation.*

***Read 2 Cor 12:7-10 and discuss how Paul found grace in his personal wilderness, the “thorn in the flesh.” How has God helped you learn the lessons Paul learned through suffering?***

1. **The PRIORITIES for God’s People in the Wilderness of Loss – Jeremiah 29:1-14**
2. **What are to be the Priorities for the Exiles in the Wilderness of Loss? Jer 29:4-9**

*The setting of this passage is described in 29:1-3. Jeremiah wrote a letter from Jerusalem to the exiled survivors in Babylon. These had been exiled in 597 BC and they included elders, priests, prophets, and all other people of Judah, except the poorest. Even the 18 year-old King Jeconiah (Jehoiachin) was exiled (2 Kings 24:8-17).*

*Jeremiah 29:4-9 spells out the new priorities brought about for Israel in their new normal – displaced and thrust down into the wilderness of a foreign nation. Remember Psalm 137, how they sat down by the rivers of Babylon and wept, how bitter that sorrow was, how they wished for Babylon to be destroyed and for Babylonian children to be killed.*

*The priorities God gives to His people in exile are listed in 29:5-9.*

* *Build houses, live in them, plant gardens, eat what they produce*
* *Build families, have children, raise the next generation*
* *Build the city you are in – seek its welfare*
* *Pray for the city you are in – its welfare will be your welfare*
* *Do not listen to false prophets among you who claim that the exile will be short-lived (an example of these is Shemaiah, described in 29:24-32)*

*God wants His people to go on with life – settle down, take the next step in front of you, establish yourself and your family, be a good member of society, pray for Babylon, prolong your heritage. Keep living a God-honoring life in this wilderness, and He will watch over you.*

1. **The PROMISES for God’s People in the Wilderness of Loss**
2. **What are God’s Promises of Hope for the Exiles? What Change does He call for? 29:10-14**

***God Brings Hope to the Exiles (29:10-11):***

* *The Captivity in Babylon will end – 70 years. And so will your wilderness.*
* *God will then visit them and fulfill His promise and bring them back to Jerusalem*
* *God had a plan for them. And He has a plan for you in your wilderness also.*
* *God’s plan is known to Him, and it is a plan for their good, for their future, for hope. And so is His plan for you.*

***God Calls Them to Change (29:12-13):***

* *Call upon Me, come to Me, pray to Me.*
* *Seek Me with all your heart. These are the priorities for pilgrims in the wilderness.*

***God Announces Hope for the distant Future (beyond return from Babylon) 29:14***

* *A gathering of God’s people from all nations and places where He drove them. This promise awaits future fulfillment, as the return from Babylon (the first regathering) was only for a remnant, and that only from Babylon. Many Jewish people remained in Dispersion after that (e.g., Esther, Mordecai, Daniel). The “second regathering” spoken of in Isaiah 11:11 will be much more far-reaching and have a far greater worldwide spiritual impact.*

**APPLY:** How has God provided hope, grace and change for you in a wilderness of loss?

What is the “blessed hope” of the believer? Titus 2:13 *A: The Return of Christ*

How do the Prophets (Prophetic Books of the Bible, as well any prophetic sections of scripture) strengthen our faith and our hope? 2 Peter 1:19-21

*Peter speaks of the prophetic word as a “word more fully confirmed.” That is, fulfilled prophecy is a more publicly checkable means of validating the truthfulness of scripture than mere eyewitness reports. Peter, James and John had seen the glory of Christ at the Transfiguration (2 Peter 1:16-18). However, others could only assume the three of them were telling the truth and not colluding on a false story. But when a prophet such as Isaiah wrote approximately 160 years before it happened that someone named Cyrus would deliver Israel from the Babylonian captivity (Isa 44:28-45:7), and then that historically verified event occurs as predicted, there is a greater degree of certainty in the truth of that testimony than in mere eyewitness accounts.*

*So the prophetic word can strengthen our faith in the veracity of God and His Holy Word. And thus the prophetic word is something we should pay attention to. Christians miss out on an essential means of establishing a mature faith when we ignore prophecy.*

*But beyond the strengthening of our faith, the fulfilled claims of the prophetic word then become a light of hope in our darkness when all other lights have gone out in a wilderness of loss. If such supernatural predictive prophecies have been shown to be true (and there are hundreds more beyond the Cyrus prophecy, many related to the first coming of Messiah-Jesus, his life and ministry, death and resurrection), then we can rely on the truthfulness of all those yet-unfulfilled prophecies pointing to the great Day when He returns to bring in everlasting peace and righteousness, when “the morning star rises in your hearts”. The prophetic scriptures become the great source of hope for the believer, sustaining us through any wilderness.*

**Read 2 Tim 4:7-8. Do you love (*agapao*) the return of Christ? Does it motivate you?**

*“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to* ***all who have loved his appearing****.” 2 Tim 4:7-8*

*When we learn the veracity of scripture through the reliability of the prophetic word, and then experience that certainty as a light of hope experienced through dark wilderness places in our lives, we begin to love the promise of the return of our Savior and King, the Lord Jesus Christ. We should find ourselves loving His return so much that we begin praying the last prayer of the Bible – “Even so come, Lord Jesus,” at least every now and then.*

*But beyond longing for His return, that love should motivate us to purity (1 John 3:2-3) and to our mission as His ambassadors, calling those in our world who don’t know Him to be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:10-11,14; our accountability to and love for Christ constrain us to this mission).*

C.S. Lewis wrote, *“If we find ourselves with a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world.”*

*The more we love Christ and His return (our Wedding Day!), the more this world cannot satisfy our true and deepest longings. We long for another world that only King Jesus can bring to pass. Do you love the appearing of Christ?*

**APPENDIX 1 – Who or What is “Israel” in the Bible? Some Various Usages of this Name**

1. **Israel, the new name given to Jacob –** Gen 32:28, “one who contends with God.” This is the name given by God to Jacob after he had wrestled with God all night. God wants His people to wrestle with Him in prayer. See Gen 37:3 for another example of Jacob as Israel.
2. **Israel, the family descended from Jacob –** Gen 34:7; 47:27.
3. **Israel, the 12 Tribes descended from Jacob –** Gen 49:28
4. **Israel collectively as the people of all the 12 Tribes –** Exodus 1:7, 9, 12, 13
5. **Israel collectively as God’s firstborn son –** Exodus 4:22
6. **Israel as God’s people –** Exodus 5:1;7:4
7. **Israel as a gathered congregation –** Exodus 12:3;6; 16:1; Lev 16:17
8. **Israel as an army, on the move, or encamped, or in battle –** Exodus 13:18;14:20; 17:11
9. **Israel called to be God’s covenant people, a holy nation –** Exodus 19:1-6
10. **Israel as the nation entering the land of the covenant –** Joshua 3:17
11. **Israel the nation God redeemed out of Egypt to be His people forever –** 2 Sam 7:23-24
12. **Israel as a united nation under King David –** 1 Kings 2:11
13. **Israel, the Northern 10 tribes, in rebellion against Judah –** after death of Solomon, Rehoboam’s harsh rule leads to civil war and the enduring split between northern 10 tribes (“Israel”) and southern two tribes (“Judah,” plus Benjamin) 2 Kings 12:16-21. **Note that these northern tribes are also sometimes referred to as “Ephraim” after one of the two tribes descended from the sons of Joseph.**  Northern kingdom destroyed in 722 BC by Assyria, Southern kingdom in 586 BC by Babylon.
14. **Israel still referred to as one nation by some of the prophets, and elsewhere acknowledging the division –** Isa 1:3-4; Jer 13:11
15. **“Israel and Judah” –** united as one kingdom under David and Solomon (2 Sam 3:10; 1 Kings 1:35), torn apart as the North rejected the royal rule of the house of David after Solomon’s death (1 Kings 12:20), yet one day by God’s prophetic promise to be reunited under a Davidic King, the “Branch” (Jesus), who come to save Israel and Judah to dwell in the land. This regathering and reunion will one day replace the Exodus in the national story of Israel (Jeremiah 23:5-8). This reunion is also predicted in Jer 30:3 (see Lesson 2), Ezekiel 37:16-23, and Hosea 1:11. It has yet to be historically fulfilled, awaiting the Return of the King to those Israelites who will turn to Him as Lord and find grace through His blood.

1. **Israel Scattered (Diaspora, dispersion) -** predicted to one day be scattered from the land for their rebellion, then in the latter days to be regathered when they seek the Lord – Deut 4:25-31;Hosea 3:4-5. The first such scattering was the Babylonian Exile; then a second Diaspora under Rome in AD 70. Not until AD 1948 was there nation Israel in the land again, and even with that they have not yet acknowledged the true Messiah as King. The majority of Jewish people (70% as of 2018) remain in Diaspora among the nations.
2. **Israel the children of promise (true spiritual Israel) as distinct from unbelieving ethnic/national Israel –** Romans 9:1-8. Being a blood descendant of Jacob does not count as righteousness, but only faith in the promises of God, ultimately realized in Christ.
3. **Israel’s remnant who will be saved, distinct from unbelieving Israel –** Rom 9:27
4. **Unbelieving ethnic/national Israel, culminating in those who ultimately reject Christ:**
* did not attain righteousness, whereas Gentiles who received Christ did attain righteousness –Romans 9:30-33
* stubbornly rejected God’s offer of righteousness in Christ – Romans 10:19-21
* was present inElijah’s day, yet there was also a remnant of true Israelites who shunned idols and followed God, elected by grace – Romans 11:1-6
* is hardened in unbelief, but those elect from Israel receive what was promised through the gospel(along with elect believing Gentiles) – Romans 11:7, see also 11:25
* may be made jealous of those who find the grace of the gospel(perhaps eventually bringing some to inclusion, to seek and find Christ?) **–** Romans 11:11-12
* are only partially hardened, and that hardening is only temporary, while we are still on the current page of God’s prophetic calendar **–** that is, “until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in,” when God has brought all the elect Gentiles to faith. (See also “until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” in Luke 21:24)
1. **Israel as the elect remnant of ethnic/national Israel who will be saved –** Jewish believers in Jesus as Messiah-Redeemer; see Romans 11:27
2. **The “Israel of God”** in Galatians 6:16 – in the context, Paul has rebuked the Galatians for lapsing back into the legalism of the law, including circumcision requirements. Now he concludes with the point that circumcision doesn’t matter, only Christ crucified. Verse 16 thus extends peace and mercy to all who follow this rule (true Christians), and then with specific emphasis, to the “Israel of God,” implying the true believers in Christ of Jewish descent who refuse to lapse back into legalistic Judaism. Some would argue that “the Israel of God” refers to the church as a whole, as though the Church has replaced Israel as the recipient of all the unfulfilled old covenant promises. But in the context, that reading would be redundant, and would miss the point of emphasis Paul is making by specifying “the Israel of God.” It makes most sense to apply it to believing Jews in the NT church.

**APPENDIX 2 – TIMELINE OF THE NATION OF ISRAEL (Dates are approximate)**

Sources: Archer, *Survey of OT Introduction* (Moody; 1994). NIV Study Bible (Zondervan; 1984).

 Unger’s Bible Dictionary (Moody; 1980). Encyclopedia Brittanica online.

**2166 BC** Abraham born

**1876 BC** Jacob goes to Egypt to reunite with Joseph; Israel in Egypt for 400 years

**1446 BC** The **Exodus** from Egypt; unbelief at Kadesh-Barnea leads to 40 years of

 wandering in the wilderness (Numbers 13-14)

**1406 BC** Conquest of Jericho; **Israel enters the Covenant Land promised to Abraham**

**1389-1050 BC** Period of the Judges

**1050-1010 BC** Reign of Saul

**1010-970 BC** Reign of David

 **970-931 BC**  Reign of Solomon; Temple dedicated approx. 966 BC

 **930 BC** Civil War: Northern 10 Tribes (NK = Northern Kingdom”) led by Jeroboam

 rebel against Rehoboam, establish Samaria as capital city; Judah and

 Benjamin remain in south with Jerusalem as capital

 **722-721 BC** Invasion by Assyria and Fall of Samaria and NK; **Northern tribes destroyed or**

 **dispersed** **out of the Covenant Land**, taken to Assyria; NK resettled with

 people from other nations, then one priest from NK allowed back in,

 creating a mixing of religions (2 Kings 17:22-41)

 **701 BC** Assyrian siege of Jerusalem, but miraculous deliverance by God in response to

 prayers of Isaiah and Hezekiah (Isaiah 36-37)

 **605 BC** First wave of deportation from Judah/Jerusalem to Babylon under

 Nebuchadnezzar, including Daniel and friends (see Daniel 1:1-2)

 **597 BC** Second wave of exiles taken from Jerusalem to Babylon, including King

 Jehoiachin and most of the key leaders, as well as all the gold from the

 Temple of the LORD (2 Kings 24:10-17)

 **586 BC** Final destruction of Jerusalem, the Temple, and Exile to Babylon; Last king,

 Zedekiah taken prisoner (2 Kings 25:1-21). **Judah exiled to Babylon; those**

 **who escaped fled to Egypt. First Temple destroyed.** Jeremiah’s prophetic

 ministry was 626-586 BC in Judah and then into Egypt with countrymen.

 **539 BC** Cyrus of Persia conquers Babylon

 **538 BC** Cyrus decrees that the people of Israel may return to their land and rebuild

 the Temple (Ezra 1:1-4)

 **520-516** **BC** Second Temple rebuilt (70 years reckoned from 586 – 516 BC); **a remnant**

 **of Israel returns to the Covenant Land, but without a King, under Persia**

 **457 BC** Ezra’s return to Jerusalem

 **444-445 BC** Nehemiah’s return to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, authorized by the decree

 of Artaxerxes (March-April 444 BC?)

 **336 BC** Rise of Alexander the Great; Israel still in Land, but now under Greek rule

 **168-165 BC** Antiochus Epiphanes defiles Temple by sacrificing a pig and erecting statue of

 Zeus. Maccabeans revolt and rededicate Temple (origins of Hanukkah).

 These events are referenced prophetically by Daniel 8:9-14 and 11:31-35.

 This blasphemous act by Antiochus prefigures another “abomination of

 desolation” spoken of by Daniel 9:27 and referred to by Jesus in Matt 24:15,

 likely to be fulfilled by antichrist in a rebuilt Third Temple.

 **63 BC** Pompey conquers Syria-Palestine, bringing it under Roman rule. Jewish

 nation remains in land, but without a king, again under the next world

 Empire, following Persia and Greece – Rome.

 **4-6 BC? King Jesus born.** Persian magi likely knew of Daniel’s prophecy in 9:24-27,

 which gave a chronology of 483 years from the decree of Artaxerxes to

 rebuild the wall until Messiah the prince comes to Jerusalem, and then be

 cut off. The “Star” of Bethlehem likely affirmed their intuition that the birth

 of this Messiah was imminent in their day – “we have seen his star.”

 Separately, Simeon had been told by the Holy Spirit that he would not die

 until he had seen the Messiah. He was waiting in the Temple to see Messiah

 when Mary and Joseph walked in to dedicate baby Jesus (Luke 2:25-35).

 **AD 26-29?** Start of Jesus’ earthly ministry: proclaiming the kingdom at hand (Matt 4:17),

 coming to His Temple as the Messenger of the Covenant and as a refining

 fire, cleansing the Temple (John 2:13-22/Malachi 3:1-4).

 **AD 29-32?** Culmination of earthly ministry: **Jesus presented to Jerusalem as King on**

 **Palm Sunday** and once again cleansing the Temple (Matt 21:1-17), then is

 **rejected as King 5 days later**, though He affirms his Kingship before Pilate; is

 scorned and **crucified, only to rise from the grave on Easter morning**. Prior

 to His Ascension, disciples ask, **“Lord, are you at this time going to restore**

 **the kingdom to Israel?”**  He redirects their understandable question to the

 new day of God’s working through the coming power of the outpoured Holy

 Spirit on them as His witnesses, the new *ekklesia,* what would become the

 Church for all people, Jew and Gentile. **The restoration of the kingdom to**

 **Israel is left hanging, to be answered in another Day.**

 **AD 30-40s As the apostles spread the message of the gospel of Jesus, they are largely**

 **rejected by Jewish people in Jerusalem** (Acts 4:1-22) **and by Jews in the**

 **Dispersion** (Acts 13:44-52).

 **AD 70 Romans destroy the Temple** and much of Jerusalem due to a revolt.

 **AD 135** Romans completely destroy Jerusalem and plow it under due to another

 revolt under the false Messiah, Simon bar-Kochba. **Jews are driven out of**

 **the Covenant Land and forbidden to enter Jerusalem.**

 **AD 1948** After the horrors of the Holocaust, **Israel once more becomes a nation in the**

 **Covenant Land**, following 1,813 years of total worldwide dispersion.

**Pieces of the Puzzle: A Brief Outline of the Prophetic Perspective on God’s Dealings with Israel**

1. A people promised a land through whom all nations will be blessed; blessing will be through a divine suffering servant-King who will be a Light to all nations Gen 12:1-3; Isa 49:6
2. A people promised a day when they would inhabit the land forever in God’s blessing, in many passages such as Jeremiah 31 and Isaiah 60
3. A people who rejected their servant-King at His First Appearing (Isa 53:3; John 1:11)
4. Yet in His New Covenant the servant-King offered redemption to all who would believe, Jew or Gentile, breaking down the ethnic barrier and making peace through His cross so His salvation could extend to all peoples (John 1:12; Eph 2:13-22; Isa 49:6)
5. A people whom, because of their majority rejection of Jesus as servant-Messiah-King, have undergone a “partial hardening” of heart toward Jesus (Acts 13:48-52; Rom 11:25)
6. During that time they will be scattered, captives among the nations (Luke 21:24)
7. The “hardening” is only until the “fullness of the Gentiles has come in” (Rom 11:25)
8. Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles (not governed by the people of Israel), until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. (Luke 21:24)
9. There will be a regathering of Israel to the land, out of their seeming extinction (Valley of Dry Bones), in successive stages, to restore them as a nation in the land (Ezekiel 37:1-14).
10. This process will culminate in a time of great distress for “Jacob” (Israel), yet they will be saved out of it (Jer 30:1-7; compare the attack of satan on the woman in Rev 12:1-6, 13-17).
11. This salvation of “latter days” Israel will occur only when, at the time of greatest distress, when all nations are surrounding Jerusalem and she faces certain destruction, God will pour out His Spirit on a remnant of Israel. They will turn to see their true Messiah, Jesus, the one whom they pierced, and mourn over Him as for an only child. At that time, a fountain of cleansing through the blood of Jesus will be opened for them, as it is for anyone, Jew or Gentile, who repents and calls upon the name of Jesus. They will “come alive” (Ezek 37:10, 14) and thus become part of the redeemed people of God. They will become part of true Israel, “all Israel” who will be saved by grace. Then Jesus will return to the Mount of Olives and be King over all the earth. (Zechariah 12:1 – 14:9; Joel 2:28 – 3:16; Rom 11:26-27).
12. When Jesus returns as Judge and King, He will fulfill for all the true remnant of Israel the promises of great blessing in the land as chief of the nations as described in Jeremiah 31, Isaiah 60, Joel 3:17-21, and many other such passages in the OT which are yet unfulfilled.

NOTES