***Jeremiah 30 The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, 2“Thus speaks the Lord God of Israel, saying: ‘Write in a book for yourself all the words that I have spoken to you. 3For behold, the days are coming,’ says the Lord, ‘that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah,’ says the Lord. ‘And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.’ 4Now these are the words that the Lord spoke concerning Israel and Judah. 5“For thus says the Lord: ‘We have heard a voice of trembling,  
Of fear, and not of peace. 6Ask now, and see, Whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins Like a woman in labor, And all faces turned pale? 7Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob’s trouble, But he shall be saved out of it. 8‘For it shall come to pass in that day,’ Says the Lord of hosts, ‘That I will break his yoke from your neck, And will burst your bonds; Foreigners shall no more enslave them. 9But they shall serve the Lord their God, And David their king,  
Whom I will raise up for them. 10‘Therefore do not fear, O My servant Jacob,’ says the Lord,  
‘Nor be dismayed, O Israel; For behold, I will save you from afar, And your seed from the land of their captivity. Jacob shall return, have rest and be quiet, And no one shall make him afraid. 11For I am with you,’ says the Lord, ‘to save you; Though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, Yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, And will not let you go altogether unpunished.’***

We are with Jeremiah tonight at the beginning of what has become known as the Book of Consolation among theologians. Jeremiah 30 is divided fairly evenly into two distinct sections, but both begin with a theme of consolation that reassures the people that God has not forgotten them. They are in a very low place, having gone into exile, having suffered much from sword, famine, and pestilence, and being told this will last for 70 years. Now, God sends reassurance that they will again return from the captivity at the end of the 70 years. God also assures the people that those that have brought suffering to them will now find themselves suffering.

Verse 1 *The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, -* Chapter 30 is thought to have fallen chronologically right after chapter 29. In chapter 29, God established the exile for 70 years and, after that time, the descendants of the exiles will return to Jerusalem. God in His providence knows the length of time that the people must stay in exile to accomplish the goal of returning the people to God with humble and contrite hearts. The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord means God is speaking through Jeremiah.

Verses 2-3 *“Thus speaks the Lord God of Israel, saying: ‘Write in a book for yourself all the words that I have spoken to you. 3For behold, the days are coming,’ says the Lord, ‘that I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah,’ says the Lord. ‘And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.’* Thus speaks the Lord. God is telling Jeremiah to write down the words that are being spoken. Write it down for yourself. God’s memory is perfect… humans, not so much. God is making a promise here that He will restore the people, but there is not an established timeline for the full realization of this prophecy. Therefore, God wants this prophecy committed to writing so that it can be read and the people will know when God promised and that He delivered. We remember that Daniel 9 speaks of Daniel reading the prophecies of Jeremiah the Prophet. There is a possibility that Daniel read what is being written here! In years to come, this prophecy will be a great encouragement for the Jewish people. They will see that God’s providence is the ruler of their way forward and not chance or happenstance. They’ll know God can be trusted. One of the things I often like to do is write down prayers that I’ve prayed, put a date beside them, and then, from time to time, take out that list and marvel at how God has answered so many prayers and answered them so specifically! As our verses continue, God now says what He will do – Behold – I will bring back from captivity the people of Israel and Judah. The return of the people from Babylon in 70 years will consist primarily of the people of Judah. God makes it clear though that the people taken by Assyria in the conquest of Israel will return as well at some point in the future. This leads us to see that the people of Judah will return to Jerusalem and Judah in 70 years, but God will also bring a complete restoration of all the people in the future. As we have seen before, prophecy often has a short-term and a long-term fulfillment. Jesus will be the ultimate fulfillment of the restoration for all of Judah and Israel, as well as the Gentiles.

Verses 4-6 *Now these are the words that the Lord spoke concerning Israel and Judah. 5“For thus says the Lord: ‘We have heard a voice of trembling, Of fear, and not of peace. 6Ask now, and see, Whether a man is ever in labor with child? So why do I see every man with his hands on his loins Like a woman in labor, And all faces turned pale -* These are the promises that God instructed Jeremiah to write down. They are as dependable as the Ten Commandments. When God speaks a promise, it will never go unfulfilled. God has heard a voice of trembling from the people. They quake with fear and have great dread of the evil that is befalling them. This has a sense of God hearing the people feeling hopeless. God now invites the people to ask or make a diligent inquiry of the matter. Seek diligently the answer. And the answer is very obvious. Is a man ever in labor with child? Now, CNN and the woke crowd would have us believe that a man having a baby is possible, but we know it is as ridiculous as God says it is here. No man knows the pain of labor nor the joy of delivering a new life into this world. God reserved that for women alone. God now says – why then do I see the men behaving as though they were in labor, pale and trembling with hands on hips.

Verse 7 *Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob’s trouble, But he shall be saved out of it.* We read of this great day in other books of the Bible. Joel 2:11, Zephaniah 1:14. This verse holds the idea of a day of great tribulation that encompasses everything that has happened to Israel, here described with the name Jacob. The series of events includes the sieges and taking of Jerusalem on many occasions by the Babylonians, the destruction of the city and temple by Nebuchadnezzar, and the carrying away of the people captive on two different occasions. And then a day of great salvation occurs. God again gives the people assurance that the nation of Israel will be saved out of even this great day trouble into a day of great deliverance through a coming Messiah.

Verses 8-9*‘For it shall come to pass in that day,’ Says the Lord of hosts, ‘That I will break his yoke from your neck, And will burst your bonds; Foreigners shall no more enslave them. 9But they shall serve the Lord their God, And David their king, Whom I will raise up for them.* In that day when Jacob will be saved out of all his troubles, in that remarkable time of salvation made possible only through the Providence of God, God will break his yoke from off his neck. We know that the Babylonian yoke was broken when Cyrus released the Jewish people and allowed them to return from captivity to Jerusalem and Judah. But, as I said earlier, this is primarily the people of Judah and not the people of Israel. Strangers will no longer inhabit the land of Judah or force the Jewish people to serve them. But the people will serve the Lord their God. They will live in obedience to the One True God and, in future time, a descendant of the lineage of David will be their King. We know, of course, that this is Jesus the Messiah. He will deliver the ultimate promise of restoration. Judah and Israel will no more be under the rule of foreigners. We know this verse is forward looking, because it speaks of the Messiah ruling a restored and unified Israel. The Jews returning from Babylon had a leader named Zerubbabel, and they lived as a vassal state in submission to the Persians and the Medes. So too when the Greeks assumed power, and then the Romans. The rulers changed, but the situation didn’t. It is only by the Messiah that true restoration will take place. God will raise up the Messiah to Jews and Gentiles. And we know at that time that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess Christ as King.

Verses 10-11 *Therefore do not fear, O My servant Jacob,’ says the Lord, ‘Nor be dismayed, O Israel; For behold, I will save you from afar, And your seed from the land of their captivity. Jacob shall return, have rest and be quiet, And no one shall make him afraid. 11For I am with you,’ says the Lord, ‘to save you; Though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, Yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, And will not let you go altogether unpunished.’* Do not be afraid as though God has utterly forsaken the people of Jacob. Do not be dismayed at these sayings. I, God, will restore you. I will restore from all nations where you have been scattered. Jacob will enjoy peace and safety. God will make a full end to the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Babylonians, and Egyptians, yet He will not make a full end of the Jewish people. When we look today, Babylon is no more. The Chaldeans no longer exist as a people. The Assyrians are unknown. Even the Egyptians are a shadow of their former glory. Yet, the Jewish people have still prospered and survived. They remain as a people, though they have been slain and persecuted. Persecution that lasts even to this very day around the world. God promises instead to correct the people in justice and by His measure. He will punish in the correct measure and no more. He will use affliction to correct the people because He loves His people. He will not leave the people altogether unpunished. Hebrews 12:5-6 reminds us - *And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: “My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;* ***6****For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.”* The time to be deeply concerned is not when God chastises or affliction arises, but when we receive no correction and no chastening. For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges whom He receives.

And so we will leave Jeremiah tonight. The people are receiving reassurance that God not only has a short-term plan for the 70 years, but He has a long-term plan to send the Messiah to restore all peoples. Jeremiah is told to write this down so the people will see that God’s word and promise did not return void. Isaiah 55:11 *So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.* When God promises, those promises will be accomplished. His word will not return void but will accomplish what He pleases. We can take great rest in that and have deep trust. He has promised He will never leave us nor forsake us. He has promised that He will come again and gather us. He promised “*Surely I am coming quickly*.” In hearing that, we eagerly respond - *Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus*!