***Jeremiah 31:1-14 “At the same time,” says the Lord, “I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people.” 2Thus says the Lord: “The people who survived the sword Found grace in the wilderness - Israel, when I went to give him rest.” 3The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you. 4Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel! You shall again be adorned with your tambourines, And shall go forth in the dances of those who rejoice. 5You shall yet plant vines on the mountains of Samaria; The planters shall plant and eat them as ordinary food. 6For there shall be a day When the watchmen will cry on Mount Ephraim, ‘Arise, and let us go up to Zion, To the Lord our God.’ 7For thus says the Lord: “Sing with gladness for Jacob, And shout among the chief of the nations; Proclaim, give praise, and say, ‘O Lord, save Your people, The remnant of Israel!’ 8Behold, I will bring them from the north country, And gather them from the ends of the earth, Among them the blind and the lame, The woman with child And the one who labors with child, together; A great throng shall return there. 9They shall come with weeping, And with supplications I will lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, In a straight way in which they shall not stumble; For I am a Father to Israel, And Ephraim is My firstborn. 10“Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, And declare it in the isles afar off, and say, ‘He who scattered Israel will gather him, And keep him as a shepherd does his flock.’ 11For the Lord has redeemed Jacob, And ransomed him from the hand of one stronger than he. 12Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, Streaming to the goodness of the Lord - For wheat and new wine and oil, For the young of the flock and the herd; Their souls shall be like a well-watered garden, And they shall sorrow no more at all. 13“Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, And the young men and the old, together; For I will turn their mourning to joy, Will comfort them, And make them rejoice rather than sorrow. 14I will satiate the soul of the priests with abundance, And My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, says the Lord.”***

We’re with Jeremiah this evening, as he continues the prophecy of the return of Judah and Israel in a future Messianic Kingdom. This prophecy brings great joy to the people, as they hear of a future restoration and realize that God is still keeping His promises and will tenderly lead them back from the Babylonian captivity, as well as provide a Savior in the person of Jesus. This provides great hope to the people, while they are in captivity in Babylon and dispersed in other countries.

Verse 1 *At the same time,” says the Lord, “I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people.”* At the same time, or in latter days, God will be the God of all the families of Israel, not just Judah. They shall be His people. God will show them favor and they will be gladly subject to Him, obeying and worshipping Him. God will restore all in the latter days. These will include all twelve tribes and the Gentiles. Romans 11:26-27 says *And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;* ***27****For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.”.* We know that Jesus came out of Zion and has provided Salvation for all, for both Jew and Gentile.

Verse 2 *Thus says the Lord: “The people who survived the sword Found grace in the wilderness - Israel, when I went to give him rest.”* The people who survived the sword refers to the Egyptian Exodus, when Pharoah first killed the male children and later pursued the Children of Israel into the Wilderness, intending to slay them. These found grace instead in the wilderness. God delivered them through many miracles, including manna, water from rocks, quail, and water crossings. God went before them by day and night. Now, they find themselves in Babylon. It would be easy for them to begin to believe themselves forgotten and lost. God assures them that He has neither forgotten nor abandoned them. They are His peculiar people. After knowing of the many deliverances through their history as a people, they need have no doubt that He will deliver them once again.

Verses 3-4 *The Lord has appeared of old to me, saying: “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you. 4Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel! You shall again be adorned with your tambourines, And shall go forth in the dances of those who rejoice.* Jeremiah has had God speak to him, as God did to the fathers of old. God has loved Israel with an everlasting love. His love is not temporary. It continues through all generations, even unto today. It extends to us through Jesus. *Therefore with loving-kindness I have drawn you.* God has shown His goodness to the people in so many ways. He has blessed opportunities and prevented calamities. He has protected and loved through many generations, though the people have turned to idols and false worship. He has drawn them to Himself and dealt graciously. Now, He plans to rebuild and restore them. *Again, I will build you –* He will rebuild and restore them as a nation short-term and provide Salvation through the Root of Jesse long-term. *You shall be adorned with tambourines –* This is saying that they will again dance and worship, in particular women who danced with tambourines and rejoiced in worship. They will be renewed.

Verse 5 *You shall yet plant vines on the mountains of Samaria; The planters shall plant and eat them as ordinary food.* All of Israel will again plant vines upon the mountains. Samaria is seen as representing the 10 tribes of Israel. This makes sense. God said He will be the God of all the families. Judah and Israel will be restored. Israel will be free of the curse found in Deuteronomy 28:30, when God said that disobedience would result in people planting vines and those that planted would not eat of them, but others would eat the fruit. This is a promise that the people will be allowed to eat of their own labors and not have to give to another, meaning that the Jewish people will live unthreatened in their own land, at peace and living in God’s provision.

Verses 6-7 *For there shall be a day When the watchmen will cry on Mount Ephraim, ‘Arise, and let us go up to Zion, To the Lord our God.’ 7For thus says the Lord: “Sing with gladness for Jacob, And shout among the chief of the nations; Proclaim, give praise, and say, ‘O Lord, save Your people, The remnant of Israel!’* Watchmen here means God’s prophets and His ministers. These will call upon God’s people to hear what the prophets and ministers are saying and act accordingly. Some theologians believe that this is most sharply focused on the prophets and teachers that will return from Babylon and begin the restoration of Jerusalem. All agree that this applies to those that preach the Gospel, as God calls people to Himself through Jesus. The Jewish people would have understood this, especially when the verse speaks of crying on Mount Ephraim. When a public proclamation was made in Judah, the public crier went to the top of the nearest high hill and cried out, so the voice carried a long ways. *Arise, and let us go up to Zion –* which was a custom in Israel to go in groups to the annual festivals. When the people see these things coming to be, they are to express joy and gladness. They sing with joy at the restoration. We are to rejoice with Israel even now. Romans 15:10 says - *Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people****!*** We are to glorify God for His mercies and His blessings.*Proclaim, give praise, and say, ‘O Lord, save Your people, The remnant of Israel! –* Give highest praise, as we proclaim the goodness of God and the completion of His glorious work. We are to give Him honor and glory in all things.

Verses 8-9 *Behold, I will bring them from the north country, And gather them from the ends of the earth, Among them the blind and the lame, The woman with child And the one who labors with child, together; A great throng shall return there. 9They shall come with weeping, And with supplications I will lead them. I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, In a straight way in which they shall not stumble; For I am a Father to Israel, And Ephraim is My firstborn.* God Himself will bring the remnant of His people home. He will bring them from Babylon, Assyria, Persia, and Media. God will be loving and compassionate to the firm and the infirm alike. He will show great love and tenderness. They will come from all ages and conditions, and God will be merciful. It will be a great number and mass of people, a throng. They will come with weeping. This has the idea of weeping with joy and relief at God’s deliverance. In Jeremiah 3:21, these same words in Hebrew are translated - *A voice was heard, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel.* This holds the idea that the Jewish people will gather with weeping and gladness, seeking the Lord with their whole hearts. God will pour out His love and spirit of Grace upon them and *cause them to walk by the rivers of waters –* they will walk and not be thirsty*.* God will provide all their needs abundantly. They will walk in a straight way and not stumble. This will not be like the wandering in the desert for 40 years. God is their Father. Ephraim, denoting Israel here, is called firstborn among the tribes of Israel. Recall that Jacob crossed his hands over and blessed Ephraim above Manasseh.

Verses 10-11 *Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, And declare it in the isles afar off, and say, ‘He who scattered Israel will gather him, And keep him as a shepherd does his flock.’ 11For the Lord has redeemed Jacob, And ransomed him from the hand of one stronger than he.*

*Hear the word of the Lord, O nations****,*** *-* Jeremiah now speaks to the Gentile nations that will be saved by the work of Jesus on the Cross. Take the Gospel to all nations. Every nation, as Jesus tells us in Matthew 28. This is telling the church to gain more followers and witness everywhere. *Declare it in the isles afar off**—* this represents the nations far off that they reached by sea. This is a way of saying – take it to the furthest places. *He that scattered Israel* ***–*** God, who brought about the scattering, because of the iniquities of the people, will now bring about the gathering.*And keep him as a shepherd does his flock* ***–*** God will care for the people as a shepherd. We know that Jesus in John 10:11 says - *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep*. ***For the Lord has redeemed Jacob –*** God has gathered and redeemed Jacob from those who served as conquerors. Likewise, Jesus redeems us from the enslavement to sin. He vanquished Satan. He freed us from the tomb of eternal death. Loose him and let him go.

Verses 12-14 *Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, Streaming to the goodness of the Lord - For wheat and new wine and oil, For the young of the flock and the herd; Their souls shall be like a well-watered garden, And they shall sorrow no more at all. 13“Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, And the young men and the old, together; For I will turn their mourning to joy, Will comfort them, And make them rejoice rather than sorrow. 14I will satiate the soul of the priests with abundance, And My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, says the Lord.” They shall sing in the height of Zion –* This means that they will come to the Temple, built on a hill adjoining mount Zion. Jesus calls believers *You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.* We are to live a life of Light and humility, showing others the way to Jesus. There will be blessings – flowing to the goodness of the Lord, with a soul like a well watered garden, cared for, watered, and fertilized. Fed by the Truth and Grace of God’s word. *And they shall not sorrow any more at all****.*** *They shall not hunger any more****.*** *Then shall the virgin rejoice****.*** The joy of Heaven will be universal. No more tears. Food and water plentiful. Eternity will be perfect, when we are in the presence of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

We will leave Jeremiah tonight, as he prophesies great hope and restoration to the people. There will be a short-term hope, in return from captivity. But we have an ultimate Hope in Jesus Christ. It is only with Him that all things will be made new again. Until that time, we are to be His Salt and Light! We are shine like a city set upon a hill. We are to *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* To which we enthusiastically respond - *Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*