

***International Bible Lessons Commentary***

***Jeremiah 33:1-11***

**English Standard Version**

***International Bible Lessons***

**Sunday, September 28, 2014**

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The **International Bible Lesson** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, September 28, 2014**, is from **Jeremiah 33:1-11**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary* below.

**Study Hints for Thinking Further**, a study guide for teachers, discusses the five questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion; these hints are available on the **International Bible Lessons Commentary** website. The weekly *International Bible Lesson* is usually posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught.

***International Bible Lesson Commentary***

***Jeremiah 33:1-11***

**(Jeremiah 33:1) The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah a second time, while he was still shut up in the court of the guard:**

Jeremiah received words of consolation and hope for himself and the kingdom even while wicked King Zedekiah had him in the palace prison. Jeremiah had preached repentance to the king, the priests, the prophets, and the people for almost 40 years, and if they had turned back to God they could have avoided suffering the justice of God, death, and exile in Babylon.

**(Jeremiah 33:2) “Thus says the LORD who made the earth, the LORD who formed it to establish it—the LORD is his name:**

The Israelites had turned from the true God (Yahweh) to Baal and Molech and other idols – even sacrificing their own children by throwing them into a fire and burning incense to false gods from their rooftops. Jeremiah, therefore, had to tell them the name, nature, and character of the true God that he represented and spoke for as a prophet of Yahweh. Yahweh had created, formed, and established the earth: Yahweh was the one and only all-powerful and holy God – that Moses met on the mountain.

**(Jeremiah 33:3) Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.**

Yahweh gave this promise primarily to Jeremiah and to those who truly serve God. If the wicked call to God, their first words must express sorrowful repentance and a

sincere desire to return to God. God will not reveal great and hidden things to the wicked, but God will reveal great and hidden things to those who love and serve God (Yahweh).

**(Jeremiah 33:4) For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city and the houses of the kings of Judah that were torn down to make a defense against the siege mounds and against the sword:**

The Judeans themselves began the destruction of Jerusalem in order to strengthen the defenses of the city's walls. Of course, their manmade defenses could not stop them from suffering the discipline of God through the army of Nebuchadnezzar (who was unknowingly in the service of God and who was successful militarily because God was using him as a mere tool to bring corrective discipline upon His people).

**(Jeremiah 33:5) They are coming in to fight against the Chaldeans and to fill them with the dead bodies of men whom I shall strike down in my anger and my wrath, for I have hidden my face from this city because of all their evil.**

“Chaldeans” was another name for “Babylonians.” Because of the wickedness of those in Judah and Jerusalem, God would no longer look upon them with favor. They had been

wicked for so long in spite of all God's peaceful efforts through His prophets to lead them to repent that God expressed His justifiable anger as a holy God in judgment upon them. Through the army of the Chaldeans, God would strike them down and kill them; perhaps as some were dying they returned to God in repentance and true faith, to the God of steadfast love and mercy. Others may have repented and returned to God during their long march into exile in Babylon or while they suffered in Babylon.

**(Jeremiah 33:6) Behold, I will bring to it health and healing, and I will heal them and reveal to them abundance of prosperity and security.**

After God had punished them, He would restore them. His punishment was disciplinary and reveals that God is just and merciful, not desiring that any should perish: "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). God would heal the people in exile both physically and spiritually. They would learn to worship God even in Babylon and without their temple. They would find abundance, prosperity, and security in Babylon when they worshiped the true God. They would return to Jerusalem, rebuild it, and prosper once again as God provided for them after the defeat of the Babylonians.

**(Jeremiah 33:7) I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel, and rebuild them as they were at first.**

Throughout the Book of Jeremiah, God reaffirmed His love for both the northern and the southern kingdoms, for the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. For a time they prospered in spite of their rebellion against God and their idolatry until God had to punish them, because if He had not punished them His patience would have ceased to be a virtue and He would have been unjust. Because Yahweh is a God of steadfast love and faithfulness, God promised to rebuild them as a kingdom, and God would make them prosper and they would recognize the fact that all of their blessings came from God and God alone.

**(Jeremiah 33:8) I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me.**

The Israelites and Judeans identified their material prosperity with the blessings of God. As long as they prospered materially, they believed God was blessing them and they ignored Jeremiah's preaching and the law of God. They sinned as long as they prospered. After God punished them by touching them materially, God promised to heal and cleanse them morally and spiritually as well as forgive them after their rebellion had made it necessary for him to punish them severely.

**(Jeremiah 33:9) And this city shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and a glory before all the nations of the earth who shall hear of all the good that I do for them. They shall fear and tremble because of all the good and all the prosperity I provide for it.**

After their judgment and their return to obedience, the people would make Jerusalem a joy to themselves and a joy to God once again. All the nations of the earth would see the work of God among His people in the new Kingdom of Israel and they would reverence or fear the true God because of His good work of restoration among His people. This happened in a small measure after their return from exile in Babylon, and will happen fully when the Messiah returns.

**(Jeremiah 33:10) “Thus says the LORD: In this place of which you say, ‘It is a waste without man or beast,’ in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man or inhabitant or beast, there shall be heard again**

While still a prisoner and even before the Chaldeans breached the walls of the city and destroyed it, Jeremiah described the consequences of the people's rebellion against God: the city "is a waste." Yet, after the people were carried far away into exile, they would return and repopulate the city after seventy years of exile. No animals

were heard in the city because the people had eaten all of them while under siege, but animals and people would return after God corrected His people with the appropriate discipline.

**(Jeremiah 33:11) the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voices of those who sing, as they bring thank offerings to the house of the LORD: “Give thanks to the LORD of hosts, for the LORD is good, for his steadfast love endures forever! For I will restore the fortunes of the land as at first, says the LORD.**

When Ezra, Nehemiah, and others rebuilt the city, the city walls, and the temple, mirth and gladness returned to the city. People felt confident to marry and raise children in the city and to sing and give thanks to God. Only God could have restored the fortunes of His people, and the very existence of Israel as a people who worship Yahweh is a good reason to believe in God. Once again, Jeremiah's words of praise and thanksgiving remind us of the Psalms, and the fact that Jeremiah was very familiar with the Book of Psalms (which must have brought him great comfort when he was persecuted).

## Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. While Jeremiah remained in prison, how did God continue to encourage him?
2. How does God encourage you when you face troubles and you do not know the future?
3. Why did God hide His face from the people in Jerusalem? Do you think He will do the same thing today in cities around the world for the same reason?
4. In spite of their wickedness, what did God say He would do with the people?
5. Read Jeremiah 33:11 again. The New Testament teaches that the Church is the Bride of Christ (Revelation 19:7, Revelation 21:9, and Revelation 22:17). Compare what you have read to Christian worship today. What parts of Jeremiah 33:11 do you enjoy in a service of worship? What parts would you like to do more when you worship God? What does Jeremiah 33:11 teach you about how you can worship God every day even by yourself? What promise did God give Jeremiah for the people and how does it compare to some of the promises of Jesus to you?

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