

The Return of the Jews

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1. Jeremiah's Prophecy

Jeremiah 19

¹ Thus says the Lord, Go and get a potter's earthen bottle, and take of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests;

² And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell you,

³ And say, Hear the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever hears, his ears shall tingle.

⁴ Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents;

⁵ They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spoke it, neither came it into my mind:

⁶ Therefore, behold, the days come, says the Lord, that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but The valley of slaughter.

⁷ And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place; and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hands of them that seek their lives: and their carcasses will I give to be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth.

⁸ And I will make this city desolate, and a hissing; every one that passes thereby shall be astonished and hiss because of all the plagues thereof.

⁹ And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall straiten them.

¹⁰ Then shall you break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with you,

¹¹ And shall say unto them, Thus says the Lord of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again: and they shall bury them in Tophet, till there be no place to bury.

Please read over and consider carefully that passage of Scripture. First, notice the point of time at which it certainly applies: then its force and bearing upon this subject will be more fully discerned. The point of time at which it applies is not the siege and destruction of the city and the captivity of the people by Nebuchadnezzar:

- a) Because in that siege there was no such straitness as is here described; although "all the bread in the city was spent," and there was great distress; yet they were not so sorely driven by want as to eat human flesh, much less the flesh of their own children.
- b) Because the same prophet Jeremiah told that same people that the destruction of the city and the scattering of the people by Nebuchadnezzar would be for only seventy years (*Jeremiah* 25:8-11), and then they should be gathered again from every nation, and the city would be rebuilt, saying,

Jeremiah 33

¹⁰ Thus says the Lord; Again there shall be heard in this place, which you say shall be desolate without man and without beast, even in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, that are desolate, without man, and without inhabitant, and without beast,

¹¹ The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the Lord of hosts: for the Lord is good; for his mercy endures for ever: and of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord. For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, says the Lord.

⁵ They come to fight with the Chaldeans, but it is to fill them with the dead bodies of men, whom I have slain in my anger and in my fury, and for all whose wickedness I have hid my face from this city.

⁶ Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth.

⁷ And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first.

⁸ And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.

⁹ And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honor before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it.

These facts make it certain that the prophecy of *Jeremiah* 19, given by the symbol of the potter's earthen bottle and the breaking of the bottle, had no reference to the destruction of the city and the captivity of the people by Nebuchadnezzar.

A study of the facts and the Scriptures, however, makes it certain that the point of time at which *Jeremiah* 19 does apply is the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the people by the Romans, under Titus:

- a) Because at that time the siege and straitness was so desperate that the frantic people did actually eat their own children. Read the terrible story, in literal fulfillment of *Jeremiah* 19:9, in Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, book 5, chap. 10; and book 6, chap. 3.

b) This was also foretold by Moses in *Deuteronomy* 28:53-57. And Moses said that this siege would be by “a nation whose tongue you shall not understand,” which absolutely fixes it to the Romans; for the Jews never had any difficulty in understanding the Babylonians, while the Latin of the Romans was altogether a strange tongue. For the number of captives and the destruction and scattering of the people at this time, read Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, book 6, chap. 9; and Milman’s *History of the Jews*, last paragraphs of book 16.

It being certain then that the time at which *Jeremiah* 19 applies is the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the people by the Romans, what now says this scripture as to the return of the Jews?

What was done with that bottle?

Jeremiah 19

¹⁰ Then shall you break the bottle in the sight of the man that go with you.

What kind of bottle was it?

¹ ...A potter’s earthen bottle.

What of such a bottle when it has been broken?

¹¹ [It] can not be made whole again.

If it were a glass bottle or a brazen bottle, and it were broken, it could be made whole again, even if only by melting and molding again. But when clay has once been burned, nothing can ever be made of it afterward even if it be reduced again to dust. An earthen bottle, therefore, once broken, literally “can not be made whole again.”

And when he had broken that bottle, which could not be made whole again, then he said to the witnesses:

¹¹ Thus says the Lord of hosts: Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter’s vessel, that can not be made whole again.

Then as an earthen vessel, when broken, “can not be made whole again,” even so the people and nation of the Jews since their having been broken by the Romans, “can not be made whole again.”

And whatever any other may say, even “Thus says the Lord of hosts.”

2. Ezekiel’s Prophecy

Ezekiel was one of the persons who had been carried captive to Babylon in the second captivity that was made by Nebuchadnezzar. In captivity he wrote his book; and in the sixteenth chapter of his book he wrote of the wickedness of Jerusalem in comparison with the wickedness of Samaria and of Sodom, and said that though Samaria had been wicked, and Sodom had been wicked, the wickedness of Jerusalem was even greater than theirs; and then he said:

Ezekiel 16

⁵⁵ When your sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate, then you and your daughters shall return to your former estate.

As in the passage noted last week—*Jeremiah* 19—it is plain that this verse can have no connection with the subject of the return from the captivity to Babylon, because of that the word was plainly given that they should return in seventy years, while of this the only possible thought conveyed is that there can not be any return; for Samaria was utterly destroyed, and her people scattered: nevermore mentioned nor known. Sodom, as everybody knows, was consumed with fire from heaven.

Now that the destruction of Sodom was final, and that from it there can be no possible return, is certain from the word which says that in that destruction, Sodom, with her neighboring cities, suffered “the vengeance of eternal fire;” that is, the destruction accomplished by that fire was so thor-

ough that from it there can be no possible return until the day of Judgment, of which Jesus spoke.

And, indeed, these words of Ezekiel are confirmed by the words of Jesus when he upbraided “the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done.” *Matthew* 11:20. Among these cities was Capernaum, to which he said:

Matthew 11

²³ And you, Capernaum, which are exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in you, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

²⁴ But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of Judgment, than for you.

And this same thing was said by Jesus concerning every city and every house which received not him, nor his messengers, nor hearkened to their words; for when he sent forth his disciples to the cities and houses of the people of Israel in that day, he said:

Matthew 10

¹⁴ Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, shake off the dust of your feet.

¹⁵ Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of Judgment, than for that city.

And when Jerusalem, the national city, and by the national authority, through the national representatives, did even worse than did these cities, how can it possibly be better with her than with them? And when it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for her, then what can possibly be for her?

Upon all this is can be said of the return of the Jews, exactly in the words of Ezekiel: When Sodom shall return, then the Jews shall return. And as it is certain that Sodom will not return until the Judgment, and will then return only unto

judgment; so it is just as certain that the Jews will not return until the Judgment, and will then return only to judgment, and a severer judgment than that of Sodom and Gomorrah.

3. The Vineyard

In *Matthew* 21:33-44 Jesus spoke to the Jews the parable of the householder, who planted a vineyard, and hedged it about, and dug a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country, expecting the husbandmen to render to him the fruits of the vineyard.

But, lo! when he sent his servants to receive the fruits, instead of rendering the fruits to the master of the vineyard, the husbandmen took the servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another, and continued so to do until at the last the owner of the vineyard sent unto them his son, saying,

Matthew 21

³⁷ ...They will reverence my son.

But instead of reverencing the son; and, even at the last, rendering the fruit of the vineyard to the owner, they said among themselves:

³⁸ This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.

Now, though this is a parable, it is not by any means an imaginary story; for, from the very first word of it until the last, it is simply the report of actual occurrences. It was all, from first to last, simply gathered from what for ages had been written in the Scriptures, which those people were constantly studying, and which they pretended to reverence so highly as to make them above all things “the people of the Book.”

The most of the scripture which is the basis of the story is

in *Psalms* 80:8-16 and *Isaiah* 5:1-7. And in *Isaiah* the appeal is made:

Isaiah 5

³ And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.

And when Jesus had recounted the story up to the point where they had caught the son, and cast him out of the vineyard, and had slain him, he said to them:

Matthew 21

⁴⁰ When the lord therefore of the vineyard comes, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

Here now is the time for the decision and the judging; and the judging is submitted to those very husbandmen to whom had been committed the care of the vineyard.

What, then, is the judgment which pronounced in this case, as between the master of the vineyard and the husbandmen to whom he had committed its care? Whatever it is, it is the judgment which they passed upon themselves. What judgment is it, then, which they passed now upon themselves?

⁴¹ They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

Then said Jesus:

⁴³ Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

Thus it is certain, by the judgment of the nation of the Jews, which they pronounced between the Lord and themselves, and thus pronounced upon themselves; and by the word of God plainly spoken, that the kingdom of God was taken from the Jews and given to another nation.

And there is no word that it should ever be taken from this other nation, and given back to the Jews. The only thing

henceforth is that, whatever part the Jews shall have in that kingdom, they must get it exactly as do this other nation to whom the kingdom is now given. In other words, they must get it exactly as the Gentiles do.

And that this is so, is plain from the word of the Lord in the passage in Isaiah, which is a principal part of this parable spoken by Jesus. There the Lord appeals to all, thus:

Isaiah 5

⁴ What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?

If there could have been another thing which could possibly have been done by the Lord for that people, it would have been done before they were scattered. But when the Lord had done everything that even he could do; and had so thoroughly done everything that he could appeal to the wide universe for anybody to tell him what more could have been done, then it is certain that there is nothing more that can possibly be done.

From this appeal, it is plain that if anybody can suggest anything that can be done that has not been done, he will in that have discovered something that the Lord never could find out. But that never can be. Nobody can conceive of anything that could be done for the Jews that has not already been done for them by the Lord.

And any Jew who is not brought to God and saved to the uttermost by that which God has already done, can never be brought to God at all; which is only to say again that since the kingdom of God, by their own judgment, has been justly and rightly taken from the Jews, and given to another nation, all of them that shall ever see the kingdom of God must find it exactly as do all those of this other nation who find it.

4. The Gospel Supersedes the Old Order

For anybody to claim, to advocate, or to believe in, the “re-

turn of the Jews,” shows that such person has no true conception of the gospel. This is plain from the words quoted in last week’s article,—the Lord’s appeal to all people before this people were scattered,

Isaiah 5

⁴ What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?

The final thing which the Lord did, was, as he himself says, to send his Son. And, in his Son, God gave himself; for

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁹ God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself; and

Colossians 2

⁹ ...in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

And whosoever accepts him is, in the nature of the case, “complete in him.” *Colossians* 2:10.

And any Jew can find all this any moment that he chooses, and at any place that he may be in this wide world. He can find it in America as well as in Palestine: he can find it in New York City, in Hongkong, in Calcutta, in London, or anywhere else, just as well as in Jerusalem.

Then, what possible need can there be that the Jews should return to Jerusalem? What can God do for them there, more than he did for the Jews before they were ever scattered from there? Has he another Son whom he can give? Has he yet a greater gift than himself that he can bestow? Has he a greater gift than “all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” to give, even though he had another Son whom he might send?

It is perfectly plain, therefore, that any claim of the return of the Jews to Jerusalem, or to Palestine, betrays an utter lack of the true value of the gospel. For there can be no question whatever that what we have here suggested must inevitably be involved in any return of the Jews; but there is no possible

place for any such that as that. God has no other Son to give. He has no greater gift than “all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,” to give, even though he had ten thousand other sons, greater even than Jesus.

Then, as he has already given his only begotten Son; as in him he has given “all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;” as all this was given to the Jews while they were yet a people, and was rejected by them, and upon their own judgment was given “to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof,”—as God has thus done all that it can be possible for even him to do; and as the benefit of all this can be had by any Jew, wherever he is on earth, at any moment when he will choose to receive it; so there is neither necessity, nor place, nor yet a possibility, of any return of the Jews to Palestine or Jerusalem, or of their re-establishment there as a nation and a peculiar people for whom and by whom God is to do great things.

Another feature of this claim of the return of the Jews, which betrays an absolute lack of knowledge of the gospel, is that those who claim it actually hold not only that the Jews are to return, but that they are to rebuild the city of Jerusalem, to rebuild the temple, and re-establish the temple services, sacrifices, offerings, etc., etc.

But since the time of the offering of Christ once for all, the offering of a sacrifice is the denial of Christ. And the establishment of a priestly service on earth is a denial of the priesthood of Christ, which is simply denial of his intercession. To establish a sanctuary service on the earth would be only to deny the sanctuary and its services in heaven.

Thus any such scheme as is proposed in the claim of the return of the Jews is a denial of all that God has done in the gift of Christ, and if carried out, would be only a repudiation of all that Christ has done since his ascension to heaven, and all that he is now doing.

But this whole subject was discussed, and this whole

ground was covered, in the first days of Christianity, in the contest carried on by “the Pharisees which believed,” against the gospel as preached by Stephen in the earliest days of the gospel after the ascension of Christ, and by Paul afterward.

And the truth of the question—the truth of the gospel, as against this destructive error—is all made plain in the book of *Galatians*. There it is made plain that all distinctions in behalf of the Jew are utterly broken down, exactly as Jesus said in the parable; and exactly as the Jews decided in their judgment upon the case as presented in the parable,—that the kingdom of God was taken away from them and given to others,—and that whatsoever the Jew obtains must be obtained precisely as by any others. Accordingly, over and over it is written:

Galatians 3

²⁸ There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek.

A thorough study, therefore, of the book of *Galatians* is the best course to an understanding of the truth of the gospel as concerns the Jews, and so is the best refutation of all claims of “the return of the Jews.”

From these considerations it is perfectly plain that under the present order of things in the gospel, there can be no “return of the Jews” according to the claims that are made as to the return of the Jews; that the only possible way that there can be any such return of the Jews would be to pass by all the present order of things in the gospel, and for the Lord to set up an altogether new system of things, an absolutely new procedure.

Accordingly, to every claim of the “return of the Jews,” there is inevitably attached an “age to come,” in which is involved the millennium. And this is why it is that the subject of the “return of the Jews” and “the millennium” are so intimately connected. And thus we are brought to the study of the truth as to the millennium, as further answer to all claims of the “return of the Jews.”