

JEREMIAH 3:14-18

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Jeremiah 3:14-18 contains a great prophecy that would be fulfilled under the New Testament: “Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: *and I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.* And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord: *neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more.* At that time *they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem:* neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers.”

Pastors in the New Testament

In Jeremiah 3:15, God said, “*And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.*” This is clearly a prophecy of the New Testament time, because this promise would be fulfilled during the age in which the ark of the covenant would not be spoken of or remembered any more (Jer 3:16). The “pastors” of the New Testament are the elders in the Lord’s church. In accordance with Jeremiah’s prophecy, the major work of elders is to feed the flock of God, the church of Christ, with knowledge and understanding by teaching them the word of God. The overall goal and purpose of the elders is to shepherd and edify the congregation they oversee until all the members have the perfect love, like Christ (Eph 4:11-16). To accomplish this, they must feed the flock with the word of God (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim 5:17; 1 Pet 5:2). This spiritual food is what will cause the members to grow to be like Christ (Acts 28:32; Heb 5:12-6:1; 1 Pet 2:1-2; 1 John 2:5). The office of an elder and their main job are both found in the prophecy of Jeremiah 3:15.

The Old Covenant done away

The Lord said in Jeremiah 3:16, “*They shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more.*” This is a prophecy of the passing away of the Old Covenant. The law of Moses was nailed to the cross when Jesus was crucified and it was taken out of the way with all of its commandments and ordinances, which were only shadows of the New (Col 2:14-17; Heb 8:6-13). The Ark of the Covenant was central to the Law of Moses. It contained the golden pot of manna (Exod 16:32-34), Aaron’s rod that budded (Num 17:8-10), and the tables of the covenant (Exod 25:21; 40:20; Deut 10:1-5; 31:25-26), which were engraved with the Ten Commandments (Heb 9:4). The ark sat within the most Holy place in the tabernacle (and later, the temple), underneath the mercy seat and the wings of the cherubim that overshadowed the mercy seat

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(continued)

(Exod 25:10-22,33-34; 40:3,20-21; Heb 9:3-5). Jeremiah's prophecy uses the glorious Ark of the Covenant as a symbol for the passing away of the entire Old Covenant. The establishment of the New Testament fulfilled this prophecy, as under the law of Christ "we cannot now speak particularly" of those things done before (Heb 9:5). To try to follow the Old Covenant would cause us to be cursed (Gal 3:10), severed from Christ, and fallen from grace (Gal 5:1-4).

Jerusalem the throne of the Lord

In Jeremiah 3:17, the Lord said, "*At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord.*" Jesus is sitting on the throne of David as Christ (Anointed One) over his Kingdom (Luke 1:32; Acts 2:29-36). The "throne of the Lord" Jesus Christ refers to his rulership over his spiritual kingdom, which is the church of Christ (Matt 16:18-19; John 18:36; Acts 2:36-41,47). Jesus is the head of the church (Eph 1:22; 5:23; Col 1:18). The church began in Jerusalem (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8; 2:5,38-41,47), and the church is called the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb 12:22-23). The establishment of the church of Christ, the Lord's church, which is the seat of the throne of Christ, fulfilled this prophecy of Jeremiah 3:17.

All nations, the name of the Lord

In Jeremiah 3:17, the Lord said, "*All the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem.*" This prophecy was fulfilled by the inclusion of the Gentiles in the church of Christ (Matt 12:18,21; 24:14; 25:32; 28:19; Mark 13:10; Luke 2:10,30-32; 24:47; John 11:49-52; Acts 1:8; 2:16-21,38-39; 9:15; 10:34-35,45; 11:18; 13:46-48; 14:27; 15:3,7-19; 18:6; 21:18-19; 22:19-22; 26:15-20; 28:28; Rom 1:16; 2:9-10; 3:29; 9:24-26,30; 10:18-20; 11:11-31; 15:8-19; 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 2:2,7-14; 3:8,14,26-29; Eph 2:11-22; 3:1-15; Col 1:27; 3:11; 1 Thes 2:14-16; 1 Tim 2:7; 3:16; 2 Tim 1:11; 4:17; 1 Pet 2:9-12; Rev 5:9-10; 7:9; 10:11; 14:6-7; 15:4; 21:24-27; 22:2). The church is the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb 12:22-23), which is where the Lord's name (authority) is found.

A new heart

The Lord foretold through the prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah 3:17, that those under the New Covenant would not "walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart." The token of the Old Covenant was circumcision (Gen 17:11-14; Acts 7:8). Males entered this covenant with God when they were only eight days old (Gen 17:12; 21:4; Lev 12:2-3; Lk 1:59; 2:21; Acts 7:8). Therefore, those under the Old Covenant had to be taught to know God. Moreover, even the Jews who had been faithful forgot God and waked after the imagination of their evil heart (Jer 7:24; 9:13-14; 11:8; 13:10; 16:12; 18:12; 23:17). All those under the New Covenant would have to know God to even be a part of the covenant and would not have to be taught to know Him (Jer 31:31-34; Heb 8:8-12). The characteristic of spiritual Israel would be faithfulness to God, and not walking after the imagination of an evil heart.