

Conversations on
Jeremiah 33:14–16

Discuss this passage in light of the commentary below.

Idea! Listen to “Hope” by Royal Tailor. Select phrases from the song that resonate with the hope found in Jeremiah.

WHAT is important to know?

Opening with a formula typical of salvation oracles, “the days are surely coming,” verse 14 introduces divine first-person speech. God is assuring the audience that God will fulfill “the promise,” literally “the good word” with a definite article—not “a” promise, one of many, but a particular one made to both the house of Israel and the house of Judah. Harkening back to Jeremiah 23:5–6, another eschatological interlude, verse 15 reiterates what was promised there, namely, that God will birth a “righteous” (*tsedaqah*) offspring of the Davidic monarchy, who will act in ways that will promote “justice and righteousness” (*mishpat* and *tsedaqah*). (*Angela Bauer-Levesque*)

- ✎ Why was it important for Israel to believe in a God who fulfills promises?
- ✎ Why was the prophecy of a coming righteous offspring of David’s line important?
- ✎ What would a leader who promotes justice and righteousness do?

WHERE is God in these words?

Here we meet the God who promises to protect and restore the people, even as they are in the midst of great suffering and at the edge of despair. It is in precisely this context that God speaks the promise, and it is in precisely this context that despair opens the door to creativity and hope. Calvin acknowledged that the promises of God seem to disappear, but that with faith and patience, we look forward to their fulfillment. (*Jennifer Ryan Ayres*)

- ✎ On what basis could the people believe God’s promise to protect and restore the people?
- ✎ In what ways is God able to open doors to creativity and hope in the midst of despair?
- ✎ What can keep hope alive for the future when the promises of God seem to disappear?

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

This text insists that covenantal life in all its expressions is characterized by justice and righteousness, allowing no dichotomy of “prophetic” and “pastoral.” Life together is to embody the nature of God, “The LORD is our righteousness.” Jeremiah uses the name first for a promised person (23:6) and again here, intentionally, for a promised place (33:16). The vision of the time to come impugns the time at hand. What leader and what community could claim “The LORD is our righteousness”? The promise challenges our reality, and drives a reappropriation of “righteousness.” The word is uncommon, if not pejorative, in common parlance and unwelcome in the lexicon of many faithful because of its frequent companionship with “self.” (*Deborah A. Block*)

- ✎ In what ways does the vision of “The LORD is our righteousness” lead you into new directions for living?
- ✎ How does the righteousness of the Lord change your views of what right living includes?

NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

As I listen to the cries of Jeremiah throughout the scope of his prophecy, I long for the day that is surely coming when God’s future will be a reality beyond the violent boastings of the ruling Babylon of the day. I long for the day that is surely coming when in God’s future the poor are not sent to shelters or forced to sleep on the streets. I long for the day that is surely coming when God’s future has no space for violence, when we will stop producing body bags—because there are no dead soldiers to fill them. I long for the day that is surely coming when God’s future affords no room for rancor, a day when our world is no longer torn asunder by racism and sexism and homophobia. (*Gary W. Charles*)

- ✎ How might Jeremiah’s prophecy lead you into new actions?
- ✎ To what actions is the church today called in light of Jeremiah’s prophecy?
- ✎ In what ways is God calling you to work toward the realities Jeremiah’s prophecy predicts?

God of hope, remind us of your words to Jeremiah when we lose hope. Amen.