

## 42. Defining Who Is God's Servant David (Jeremiah 30–33, 36, Lamentations 1, 3)

As with many messianic prophecies of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and others, Bible commentators have misinterpreted who the Lord's servant David is who appears in the prophecies of Jeremiah. Though many claim it is Christ, even a cursory analysis of what these prophecies actually say shows that it isn't. First, the mission of the Lord's servant David is temporal, not spiritual, as was Jesus' earthly mission. He gathers end-time Israel from its scattered condition among enemies to the lands of their fathers in a time of worldwide calamity. In that restorative context, the tribe of Ephraim plays a central role. As in the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel, he reunites the ten-tribed house of Israel and house of Judah just as ancient David did. We know from many scriptures that these are preparatory events to the Lord's coming in glory to reign on the earth.

Says Jeremiah, "Lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it" (Jeremiah 30:3); "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.

"Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid" (Jeremiah 30:7–10); "Behold, the whirlwind of the Lord goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind: it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked. The fierce anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have done it, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it" (Jeremiah 30:23–24);

"For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the Mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God. For thus saith the Lord; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them from the North Country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock" (Jeremiah 31:6–10).

As in the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel, the Lord makes a new covenant with the remnant of his people who are gathered home from dispersion: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto

them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:31–34);

“I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me” (Jeremiah 32:37–40): “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord Is Our Righteousness” (Jeremiah 33:14–16).

A second witness of these events that we find elsewhere in the prophecies of Jeremiah shows the context in which the Lord raises up the latter-day David: “Woe to the shepherds that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the shepherds that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord. And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.

“And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this *is* his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord Is Our Righteousness” (Jeremiah 23:1–6).

The name “The Lord Is Our Righteousness” (*yhvh tzidqeinu*)—by which both God’s people and the latter-day David are called (Jeremiah 23:6; 33:16)—resembles the names of other Davidic kings or persons such as Zedekiah (*tzidqiyahu*) and Zadoq (*tzadoq*). (While some translators assign capital letters to such names, it should be noted that Hebrew uses no capital letters.)