



The Fiery Bones

Jeremiah 20:9

Text

Jeremiah 33:1-26

Topic

As the fall of Jerusalem rapidly approaches
God insists His love for Israel & Judah is unwavering

Title

"Might as Well Face It, God's Predicted to Love"

Introduction

They have titles like, *"Why Do Bad Things Happen to God's People?"* and *"Where is God When it Hurts?"* and *"The Problem of Pain."*

They are books by Christians which attempt to explain or defend the love of the omnipotent God of the Bible in light of the reality of human suffering.

There's an entire branch of theological study dedicated to the subject called *theodicy*.

My own attempt to answer the problem of pain is summed up in two words: Sin and Longsuffering.

- Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden ruined the world God created.
- God immediately acted to redeem what Adam had ruined and has been longsuffering throughout human history, allowing bad things to continue because He is not willing any should perish but rather come to eternal life.

Whether you like my answer, or have one of your own, people suffer. **You** are probably suffering in some way right now. It's not an academic subject for you; it's intensely personal. You need God to respond, and you need Him to respond today.

Our text will help. Jeremiah was suffering quite intensely. He was a mostly despised prophet who was under house arrest for nothing more than obeying God. Worse, he was under house arrest in a Temple that was soon to be set on fire, in a city that was under siege, among a people who would be taken captive.

If anyone could ask, "Where is God when it hurts?," it would be Jeremiah.

God answered His prophet especially powerfully in verse three, but really the whole chapter speaks to why bad things happen to God's people.

I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 There Are Things You Don't Know That God Wants To Show You For The First Time, and #2 There Are Things You Do Know That God Wants To Show You All The Time.

#1 There Are Things You Don't Know That God Wants To Show You For The First Time

(v1-3)

Verse three jumps out at you and offers comfort on a grand scale.

Jeremiah 33:3 'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'

It's one of those awesome, stand-alone verses that we like to pull-out in times of trouble. But what does it really say?

Most of the time we read it as a guarantee God hears and answers prayer. While it is true that God hears and answers prayer, that isn't exactly what these words say.

God was encouraging Jeremiah to "call" on Him, for sure; but God didn't promise to answer any particular prayer or prayers. He said He would "show" some things to Jeremiah - things Jeremiah did "not know."

The particular word for "show" is important. It's a word that means *to show for the first time*. It is used of something unknown and unknowable until it is told to you for the first time.

While we are talking words, "mighty" is another important one. It literally means *inaccessible or impossible*.

Keep in mind the context - Jeremiah was under arrest in a doomed Temple in a city about to fall among a people soon to be deported.

God invited Jeremiah to call upon Him in his time of trouble and He promised He would answer him by showing him things for the first time that were inaccessible and impossible to know apart from the unique suffering he was enduring as a servant of God.

What kinds of things would God show Jeremiah? We might be tempted to think the rest of the chapter are the "things" God showed him; but I think we'd be wrong. There's really nothing new in the rest of the chapter. It's a reiteration of the ultimate restoration of Israel that God had already revealed.

It leads me to the conclusion that the inaccessible, impossible knowledge that God wanted to show Jeremiah for the first time had to do with God's grace, God's love, and God's presence even in the darkest moments of life. God wanted to show Jeremiah things about Himself.

Bad things happen to God's people. When they do, and you call out to Him, He shows you things - intimate things, wonderful things - that are impossible to convey intellectually, that are inaccessible by any other means.

Job was shown these things. Job suffered immensely. He questioned God about it. In the end God gave him no real answer; God didn't tell Job why He permitted the devil certain freedoms to afflict him. But Job arrived at a knowledge that was previously inaccessible and impossible to achieve without suffering. He said to God, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You" (42:5).

Jeremiah 33:1 Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah a second time, while he was still shut up in the court of the prison, saying,

Jeremiah 33:2 "Thus says the LORD who made it, the LORD who formed it to establish it (the LORD is His name):

Jeremiah 33:3 'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'

The words for "made" and "formed" are words from the Genesis account of creation. God reminded Jeremiah that He was, in fact, omnipotent. Any good theodicy starts with the all-powerful God of the Bible.

God is also love. The ruin of His creation by mankind doesn't cancel out either His omnipotence or His love.

All great love stories portray the lovers as enduring incredible hardships to be with one another, or to get back to

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one another. In a ruined world God lets you know you are a character in the greatest love story ever told - that God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son and that in His longsuffering He waits for more people to respond to His Son and be saved.

While His longsuffering waits He comes to us in our suffering when we call. And in those intimate moments He shows us that we have in Him a Savior and a friend who understands our pain and who did something about it by dying on the Cross to defeat sin once and for all.

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God doesn't just want to do things for you; that's easy. He wants to be Someone to you - your intimate friend and companion.

#2. There Are Things You Do Know That God Wants To Show You All The Time

(v4-26)

If you are sick, God can heal you. But what would you know about Him other than His omnipotence? He wants you to know things impossible to know and inaccessible.

You live in a world ruined by sin, redeemed by God's Son. You need to understand that the whole creation currently groans waiting for the Son to return and claim what He conquered on the Cross.

In that broad context there are things God wants to show you all the time, e.g., how it's all going to work out in the end.

Since God was talking to Jeremiah about Israel and Judah, a lot of the remaining verses look at their ultimate future when God restores them.

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, which have been Pulled down to fortify against the siege mounds and the sword:

Jeremiah 33:5 'They come to fight with the Chaldeans, but only to fill their places with the dead bodies of men whom I will slay in My anger and My fury, all for whose wickedness I have hidden My face from this city.

The people were huddled inside the walls of Jerusalem as the Chaldeans laid siege. To reinforce the walls, the Jews tore down the palace and their houses that were adjacent to the walls.

What a powerful dramatization of what sin does to you. It causes you to pull down your own house with your own hands. God wants to build; the devil always has in mind only to destroy.

With that awful scene in mind we can thrill in the next set of verses. Nothing new is revealed but what a wonderful future they establish for Israel.

Jeremiah 33:6 Behold, I will bring it health and healing; I will heal them and reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth.

Jeremiah 33:7 And I will cause the captives of Judah and the captives of Israel to return, and will rebuild those places as at the first.

Jeremiah 33:8 I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned and by which they have transgressed against Me.

Jeremiah 33:9 Then it shall be to Me a name of joy, a praise, and an honor before all nations of the earth, who shall hear all the good that I do to them; they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and all the prosperity that I provide for it.'

Jeremiah 33:10 "Thus says the LORD: 'Again there shall be heard in this place - of which you say, "It is desolate, without man and without beast" - in the cities of Judah, in the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man and without inhabitant and without beast,

Jeremiah 33:11 the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who will say: "Praise the LORD of hosts, For the LORD is good, For His mercy endures forever"- and of those who will bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD. For I will cause the captives of the land to return as at the first,' says the LORD.

Jeremiah 33:12 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'In this place which is desolate, without man and without beast, and in all its cities, there shall again be a dwelling place of shepherds causing their flocks to lie down.

Jeremiah 33:13 In the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the lowland, in the cities of the South, in the land of Benjamin, in the places around Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, the flocks shall again pass under the hands of him who counts them,' says the LORD.

Jeremiah 33:14 'Behold, the days are coming,' says the LORD, 'that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah:

It's a description that looks beyond our own time to the Second Coming of Jesus to establish the kingdom of God on the earth.

Jeremiah 33:15 'In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David A Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.

Jeremiah 33:16 In those days Judah will be saved, And Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this is the name by which she will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.'

Jeremiah 33:17 "For thus says the LORD: 'David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel;
Jeremiah 33:18 nor shall the priests, the Levites, lack a man to offer burnt offerings before Me, to kindle grain offerings, and to sacrifice continually.' "

We know from Scripture that there will be a Temple in the kingdom and that sacrifices will be offered. If that troubles you I'd refer you to our studies from Wednesday night in Ezekiel. The sacrifices will be a memorial to show unsaved people born during the one thousand years of the kingdom on earth what it cost for Jesus to save them.

Jeremiah 33:19 And the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying,

Jeremiah 33:20 "Thus says the LORD: 'If you can break My covenant with the day and My covenant with the night, so that there will not be day and night in their season,

Jeremiah 33:21 then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levites, the priests, My ministers.

Jeremiah 33:22 As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.' "

These are serious future prophecies. God must, and He will, keep His promises to the physical descendants of Abraham. The Jews are back in the land never to be displaced again.

Jeremiah 33:23 Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying,

Jeremiah 33:24 "Have you not considered what these people have spoken, saying, 'The two families which the LORD has chosen, He has also cast them off'? Thus they have despised My people, as if they should no more be a nation before them.

Jeremiah 33:25 "Thus says the LORD: 'If My covenant is not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth,

Jeremiah 33:26 then I will cast away the descendants of Jacob and David My servant, so that I will not take any of his descendants to be rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will cause their captives to return, and will have mercy on them.' "

The suffering was so severe, so intense, that the Jews themselves believed God had abandoned His promises to them.
Not possible.

The Jews had God's Word to show them their future. It was something The Lord could show them all the time.

We have God's completed Word. We know the outline for earth's future and we have general but certain promises regarding our own futures as believers. It's stuff The Lord can show us all the time - whenever we refer to His Word.

We know how it's all going to end for us. It's either rapture or death and resurrection followed by reward and eternity.

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When we do, we can call upon God knowing He wants to show us impossible, inaccessible things about His love that we could never know any other way.

Are you in some trial, in the midst of suffering? Feel like you're failing? Can't hold on much longer? Ready to give up?

If nothing else God is showing you that it isn't up to you but it is on Him to keep you and bring you safely home. That He will never leave you nor forsake you. That nothing can separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

You might 'know' all that by the hearing of the ear. God wants you to see Him with the eyes of faith.