

12.1.24**The Days Are Surely Coming****Jeremiah 33.14-16****Doug Scalise, Brewster Baptist Church**

Today is the first Sunday of what Christians call, Advent. Advent describes the days and weeks of preparing our hearts and lives to celebrate the birth of Jesus as well as the hope that Christ will one day return. Our theme for the four Sundays in Advent is, Listening to Prophetic Voices. We're going to hear from two of the great Hebrew prophets, Jeremiah, and Isaiah, as well as from three people in the Gospel of Luke, Zechariah and Elizabeth the parents of John the Baptist, and Mary the mother of Jesus. All of them speak challenging prophetic words that we need to hear and respond to with repentance, trust, and obedience. They also all speak words of hope and promise about God's plans for the future.

The Prophet Jeremiah was born 645 years before Christ, and he began to be involved in public life at the age of twenty-two. His ministry reflects the influence of the prophets Hosea, Isaiah, and Amos. Forbidden by God to marry or have children; his truth-telling made him enemies and he had only a few loyal friends. He spent more than a decade of his life in prison and died in exile in Egypt at the age of sixty. Jeremiah was a prophet during a time when Judah, the southern kingdom of the split kingdom of Israel, was experiencing crumbling political, social, moral, and religious conditions. If you've ever found yourself feeling caught in overwhelming circumstances, you might resonate with the plight of the people in Judah during the time of the prophet Jeremiah.

The little kingdom of Judah had the misfortune to be caught between two much stronger powers: Egypt to the south and Babylon to the east. In Jerusalem it was a tense time of political maneuvering with one faction being pro-Egypt and the other pro-Babylon. Jeremiah was in the Babylon camp. Judah's kings and not surprisingly most of the prophets and priests leaned in the other direction. Jeremiah's outspoken claim that the Babylonians were the instrument of God's discipline and judgment led to charges of treason and accusations that he was unpatriotic. Most of the prophets and priests associated with the temple opposed Jeremiah. They said he was wrong in asserting that Judah would be destroyed.

However, Judah was completely conquered, and its capital city of Jerusalem was destroyed along with the temple by Babylonian forces in 587 BC. The Babylonian

leader, Nebuchadnezzar, who knew a thing or two about empire building, took the elite of the land of Judah and brought them back as exiles to his capital city of Babylon where he could benefit from their skills and leadership and make it much harder for the poor people of Judah who were left behind to revolt. It was one of the most devastating parts of ancient Israel's history, and Jeremiah says this was the judgment of God on the people and nation. Jeremiah was one of many prophets "prophesying" during that time. His ministry is included in the scriptures because his message eventually rang true, while other prophets were found to be false. Jeremiah was called and compelled to speak God's truth in a time of falsehood and that's a difficult job. The word "falsehood" appears 72 times in the Bible, half of them in the Book of Jeremiah. The Book of Jeremiah begins with the prophet in Jerusalem proclaiming God's unwavering faithfulness and the people's unfaithfulness. For example, God's description of the unrepentant people uninterested in a relationship with their Creator is summed up in **Jeremiah 4:22**, *"For my people are foolish, they do not know me; they are stupid children, they have no understanding. They are skilled in doing evil, but do not know how to do good."*

When Jeremiah's words were spoken, they were largely rejected. Then and now, God's people often prefer the message of *"God is on our side!"* Rather than *"God wants us to repent because this disaster is largely our fault,"* which is Jeremiah's essential message. The book of Jeremiah is filled with warnings of judgment, calls to repentance, and declarations of God's displeasure over the sin of God's people. Yet, even in the grimmest chapters of this prophetic book, God continues to promise a future of hope, restoration, and justice. This is where we find ourselves in **Jeremiah 33:14-16**. Amid judgment and devastation, God speaks words of future hope. ¹⁴ **The days are surely coming**, says the Lord, when I will fulfill **the promise** I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵ In those days and at that time I will cause **a righteous Branch** to spring up for David; and **he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land**. ¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: ***"The Lord is our righteousness."***

This passage is rich in historical context and theological significance, and we'll explore how it speaks to God's faithfulness, justice, and the ultimate hope of redemption.

The Days Are Surely Coming – A Promise of Hope in a Time of Despair

The words of Jeremiah 33 were spoken during a perilous time in the history of Judah. The city was surrounded by enemy forces, and the prophet Jeremiah himself was imprisoned in the royal palace, a prisoner for speaking the word of the Lord in a time when the king and the people rejected God's message because they didn't like it. Jeremiah's prophecies were not the kind of words people wanted to hear. He foretold the fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of the temple, and the exile of God's people to Babylon. These were days of judgment—days when the sins of the people could no longer be ignored, when the consequences of their idolatry and injustice would be felt in full force. And yet, in the middle of this judgment, God speaks a word of promise.

"The days are surely coming," says the Lord. These words are an assurance that there's more to the story. The exile which would last around 70 years, the devastation, and the judgment will not be the final word. God's plans for His people go beyond their present circumstances. Amid their hopelessness, God speaks of a future hope. How often do we need to hear a similar message in our life and in our time? When we're struggling, hurting, or feeling defeated, to believe there's more to the story, that God's not done, God's not through with us, God hasn't given up on us, there's still yet reason to hope even beyond the evidence of our present circumstances; this is important to hear and believe. This phrase, *"The days are surely coming,"* is promise that God is faithful to fulfill His word, and that no matter how bad things seem, there are days coming that will bring restoration, justice, and salvation.

II. The Righteous Branch – A Promised Savior

At the heart of this promise is the coming of a *"righteous Branch"* from the line of David. In verse 15, God declares, *"In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land."*

To understand the significance of this promise, we need to reflect on the importance of the Davidic covenant in the Hebrew Bible. King David was Israel's greatest king, chosen by God to lead the people. God made a covenant with David, promising that his descendants would sit on the throne of Israel forever (2 Samuel 7:16). However, as time passed, the kings who descended from David became

increasingly corrupt, leading the people of Israel and Judah into idolatry and injustice. By the time of Jeremiah, the Davidic line was deeply compromised, and Israel was a shadow of its former glory. It's to Israel's credit that they allowed their story with all its failures to be preserved and shared through the centuries so all may learn from their experience. God's promise to David didn't end with the failures of his descendants. God would raise up a "righteous Branch"—a new king, from David's family line, who would be unlike the kings who had failed. This "righteous Branch" would bring justice and righteousness.

Jeremiah's emphasis is on righteousness. The coming King will be one who does what is just and right in the land and will rule with integrity, fairness, and truth. His reign will restore order and justice to a land that had been broken by corruption, sin, and violence. Only after the people have faced the consequences of their failures to love God and neighbor will an alternative future be possible. Like Jeremiah, we need to acknowledge the lack of righteousness in our own time and critique individuals, systems and traditions that deny justice. We can ask ourselves, what in our own society deserves critique and change before we can expect a more hopeful future?

For Jeremiah's original audience, this word about **a righteous branch, a promised savior was** a message of hope. It reminded them that God had not forgotten the promises to David and to God's people. God would send a righteous king to lead them and to restore them to their rightful place in God's plan. We believe this "righteous Branch" is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Jesus, the Son of David, came to fulfill all the promises of God. He came as the true King who would bring justice and righteousness, not just to Judah, but to the world. Jesus is the "righteous Branch" who reigns with justice, who rules with truth, and who brings salvation to all who trust in Him.

III. The Promise of Salvation and Security

Verse 16 elaborates on the fruit of this coming King's reign: *"In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: **'The Lord is our righteousness.'**"* Amid the destruction and suffering Judah was enduring, these words must have seemed too good to be true. How could salvation and security be possible when Jerusalem lay in ruins? But the promise was not just about political stability; it was about the ultimate restoration that God would bring. The

coming of the “righteous Branch” would usher in a time of salvation for the people. Judah would be saved, and Jerusalem would dwell in safety. The peace and security they longed for would not come through military might or political maneuvering, but through the righteous reign of their Savior.

The promise of salvation and safety was not only for the physical city of Jerusalem but also for the spiritual well-being of God’s people. The Messiah would bring peace, not just in a political sense, but in a deeper, more lasting sense—a peace that reconciles sinners to a holy God, a peace that transforms hearts and lives.

For us today, this promise of hope and salvation is present in Jesus Christ. He is *“The Lord is our righteousness.”*—the one who saves us from the power of sin, who secures our place in God’s kingdom, and who grants us the peace that passes all understanding. In the face of the struggles, uncertainties, and challenges of life, we’re reminded that our true security comes not from our circumstances in this world, but from the salvation we have in Christ.

IV. The Lord is Our Righteousness— A Call to Trust and Hope

The name, *“The Lord is our righteousness,”* describes the essence of God’s plan for the people and points to the dual roles of Jesus as both Lord and Savior. He’s the Lord—sovereign over all creation, worthy of our worship and obedience. And He’s our Savior—the one who rescues us from sin, from death, and from the power of the evil one. In Jesus, the righteousness of God is made manifest, and through His life, death, and resurrection, we’re made right with God.

For the people of Judah in Jeremiah’s day, the promise of the righteous King was a call to hope. During their most difficult days, God was assuring them that the future was not lost, that the days of judgment would give way to a new era of grace and justice. They were called to trust in the promises of God, to look forward to the coming King, and to hold on to hope even when their present reality seemed hopeless.

For us today, this promise calls us to do the same. The *“days are surely coming”*—not just for Judah, but for all of God’s people. The promise of a Savior is not just an ancient prophecy; it’s a reality that we live in today. We’re invited to put our trust in Jesus Christ, our Righteous Savior, who has already come, who reigns now, and who will return one day to make all things new.

As we live in the tension between the “already” and the “not yet”—between the fulfillment of God’s promises in Christ and the waiting for His return—let’s remember the hope of Jeremiah 33:14-16. The days are surely coming. God is faithful to His promises. The righteous Branch, our Savior, has come and will come again. Even with the struggles of this world, we can look forward to the fulfillment of God’s promise, trusting that God will bring justice, peace, and salvation to all who trust in the Lord. Let’s live in that hope, for the days are surely coming when God will make all things right.

Blessing: As you go from this place, may you hold fast to the promise that the days are surely coming. May you trust in the Lord, our Righteous Savior, who has come to save and who will return to restore all things. And may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. How does the image of "righteous Branch" sprouting from David’s line emphasize hope for Israel? What’s significant about the promise of a leader from David’s lineage?
2. In what ways do we see Jesus fulfilling the prophecy of the "righteous Branch"?
3. How does this passage connect to the New Testament teachings about Jesus, especially in terms of justice, righteousness, and salvation?
4. What are some ways we can live in hope and trust in God’s promises, especially when circumstances seem bleak or uncertain, like how the Israelites might have felt during Jeremiah’s time?
5. How can we be agents of righteousness and justice in our own communities, following the example of the "righteous Branch"?
6. What role does the idea of God’s timing play in this passage? How do we trust God’s promises even when they seem delayed or unfulfilled in the present moment?