

Jeremiah 31:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

At the same time, saith the LORD, will I be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.

Analysis

This opening verse introduces the restoration oracles of chapters 30-33, often called the 'Book of Consolation.' After chapters of judgment, God now promises comprehensive restoration: 'I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people.' This is covenant language echoing God's promise throughout Scripture—'I will be your God, and you will be my people' (Exodus 6:7; Leviticus 26:12; Ezekiel 37:27; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Revelation 21:3).

The phrase 'all the families of Israel' is significant. Not just Judah (the southern kingdom) but all Israel—including the northern tribes scattered by Assyria in 722 BC. God's restoration will reunify His divided people. This points beyond the historical return from Babylon (which involved mainly Judah and Benjamin) to the eschatological gathering of all God's people. Paul develops this in Romans 11, explaining that 'all Israel will be saved' as the fullness of both Jews and Gentiles come into God's kingdom.

The timing phrase 'at the same time' connects this promise to the end of the seventy years (29:10). When judgment is complete, restoration will commence. This establishes the biblical pattern: God's judgment has limits; His mercy endures forever. Even in pronouncing judgment, God promises ultimate restoration. This gives hope to suffering saints—discipline is temporal, but God's covenant faithfulness is eternal.

Historical Context

The return from Babylon began in 538 BC with Cyrus's decree, but it was partial and disappointing. Most Jews remained in dispersion, the returned community struggled with opposition, and political autonomy was not restored. This set up expectation for a greater fulfillment—the Messiah who would truly reunify God's people. Jesus began this work, calling disciples from all Israel, and after Pentecost the gospel went to Jews scattered throughout the Roman Empire before extending to Gentiles.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the covenant promise 'I will be your God, and you will be my people' define what it means to be God's people?
2. What is the relationship between the historical return from exile and the ultimate gathering of God's people in Christ?
3. How should the promise that judgment is temporal but covenant faithfulness is eternal encourage us in difficult seasons?

Interlinear Text

בָּעֵת	בְּנֵם	הַיְהִי	יְהִי הָאָהָרָן	אָהָרָן	לְאֱלֹהִים	לְאֱלֹהִים
At the same time	saith	the LORD	H1961	will I be the God	H3605	
H6256	H5002	H3068	H430			

מִשְׁפָּחָה	וְתִּלְכְּדָה	לְעַמִּים
of all the families	of Israel	and they shall be my people
H4940	H3478	H5971

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 30:22 (References God): And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Isaiah 41:10 (References God): Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

Jeremiah 30:24 (References Lord): 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 3:18 (References Israel): 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.

Zechariah 13:9 (References God): And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.