

Jeremiah 31:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus saith the LORD; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy.

Analysis

Thus saith the LORD; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. This verse directly answers Rachel's weeping in v. 15 with divine comfort and promise. **Refrain thy voice from weeping** uses *mana* (מָנַע), meaning to withhold or restrain—not suppressing emotion but ceasing because grief's cause will be removed. **And thine eyes from tears** parallels this, emphasizing complete cessation of mourning.

The basis for this command is twofold: **thy work shall be rewarded** (pe'ulah, פְּעֻלָּה, labor/deed, and sakar, שָׂכָר, wage/reward) acknowledges that Rachel's 'work'—bearing and raising covenant children—will not be in vain. God will recompense her investment. Second, **they shall come again from the land of the enemy** promises concrete restoration. **Come again** (shuv, שׁוּב) is the key Hebrew word for return/repentance—physical return from Babylon and spiritual return to covenant faithfulness.

This promise reveals God's character: He sees and rewards faithful labor (Hebrews 6:10), even when circumstances seem to nullify it. The 'land of the enemy' was not final destination but temporary trial. This speaks powerfully to Christian hope—present suffering is not final; God will restore what was lost (Romans 8:18-23, Revelation 21:4).

Historical Context

For exiles watching Jerusalem's destruction and facing decades in Babylon, this promise offered tangible hope. Their parents' and grandparents' faithfulness in raising children in covenant faith would be rewarded—the next generation would return and rebuild. Historically, Cyrus's decree (538 BC) enabled return, vindicating this promise. Yet full restoration awaited Messiah, who reverses the curse, defeats the ultimate enemy (death), and restores God's people eternally. Paul applies similar logic in 1 Corinthians 15:58—labor in the Lord is 'not in vain' because resurrection ensures ultimate restoration.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does God's promise that 'your work shall be rewarded' comfort those whose faithful service seems fruitless?
2. What does it mean that exile to 'the land of the enemy' is temporary, not permanent, for God's people?
3. In what ways does Christian hope for resurrection and restoration enable us to 'refrain from weeping' even amid present loss?

Interlinear Text

כֹּה	אָמַר	יְהוָה	מְנַעַי	קוֹלִי	מִבְּכִי	וְעֵינַי יָרָא
H3541	Thus saith	the LORD	Refrain	thy voice	from weeping	and thine eyes
	H559	H3068	H4513	H6963	H1065	H5869
מִדְמָעָה	כִּי	יֵשׁ	שָׂכָר	לְפַעֲלֶתְךָ	נֹאֵם	יְהוָה
from tears	H3588	shall be	rewarded	for thy work	saith	the LORD
H1832		H3426	H7939	H6468	H5002	H3068
וְשָׁבוּ	מֵאֶרֶץ	אֹיְבָיו:				
and they shall come again	from the land	of the enemy				
H7725	H776	H341				

Additional Cross-References

Ruth 2:12 (References Lord): The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.

Jeremiah 30:3 (References Lord): For, 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.

Hebrews 6:10 (Parallel theme): For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

Hebrews 11:6 (Parallel theme): But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

2 Chronicles 15:7 (Parallel theme): Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded.

Jeremiah 33:7 (Parallel theme): And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first.

Isaiah 30:19 (Parallel theme): For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.

Jeremiah 30:18 (References Lord): Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwellingplaces; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof.

Ecclesiastes 9:7 (Parallel theme): Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works.

Isaiah 25:8 (References Lord): He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.