

Jeremiah 31:7-14

⁷ For thus says the LORD:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;
proclaim, give praise, and say,
'Save, O LORD, your people,
the remnant of Israel.'

⁸ See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north,
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,
among them
the blind
and the lame,
those with child
and those in labour,
together;
a great company,
they shall return here.

⁹ With weeping
they shall come,
and with consolations
I will lead them back,

I will let them walk
by brooks of water,
in a straight path
in which they shall not stumble;

for I have become a father to Israel,
and Ephraim is my firstborn.

¹⁰ Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,
and declare it in the coastlands far away;
say,

'He who scattered Israel will gather him,
and will keep him as a shepherd a flock.'

¹¹ For the LORD has ransomed Jacob,
and has redeemed him
from hands too strong for him.

¹² They shall come and sing aloud
on the height of Zion,
and they shall be radiant
over the goodness of the LORD,
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,
and over the young of the flock and the herd;

their life shall become
like a watered garden,
and they shall never languish again.

¹³ Then shall the young women
rejoice in the dance,
and the young men and the old
shall be merry.

I will turn their mourning into joy,
I will comfort them,
and give them gladness for sorrow.

¹⁴ I will give the priests their fill of fatness,
and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,
says the LORD.

Ephesians 1:3-14

*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,
To the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus:
2 Grace to you and peace
from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has blessed us in Christ
with every spiritual blessing
in the heavenly places,

⁴just as he chose us in Christ
before the foundation of the world
to be holy and blameless
before him in love.

⁵He destined us
for adoption as his children
through Jesus Christ,
according to the good pleasure of his will,

⁶to the praise of his glorious grace
that he freely bestowed on us
in the Beloved.

⁷In him
we have redemption
through his blood,
the forgiveness of our trespasses,
according to the riches of his grace
⁸that he lavished on us.

With all wisdom and insight
⁹he has made known to us
the mystery of his will,
according to his good pleasure
that he set forth in Christ,

¹⁰as a plan
for the fullness of time,
to gather up all things
in him,
things in heaven
and things on earth.

¹¹In Christ
we have also obtained
an inheritance,
having been destined
according to the purpose
of him who accomplishes all things
according to his counsel and will,

¹²so that we,
who were the first
to set our hope on Christ,
might live
for the praise
of his glory.

¹³In him you also,
when you had heard
the word of truth,
the gospel of your salvation,
and had believed in him,
were marked with the seal
of the promised Holy Spirit;

¹⁴this is the pledge
of our inheritance
towards redemption
as God's own people,
to the praise
of his glory.

John 1:1-18

In the beginning
was the Word,
and the Word
was with God,
and the Word
was God.

²He was
in the beginning
with God.

³All things
came into being
through him,

and without him
not one thing
came into being.

What has come into being

⁴in him
was life,
and the life

was the light
of all people.

⁵The light shines
in the darkness,

and the darkness
did not overcome it.

⁶ There was a man
sent from God,
whose name was John.

⁷He came as a witness
to testify to the light,
so that all might believe through him.

⁸He himself
was not the light,
but he came
to testify
to the light.

⁹The true light,
which enlightens everyone,
was coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was
in the world,
and the world
came into being
through him;

yet the world
did not know him.

¹¹He came to what was his own,
and his own people did not accept him.

¹²But to all who received him,
who believed in his name,
he gave power
to become children of God,

¹³who were born,
not of blood
or of the will of the flesh
or of the will of man,
but of God.

Reding the Prophet This Week

¹⁴ And the Word
became flesh
and lived among us,

and we have seen his glory,
the glory as of a father's only son,
full of grace and truth.

¹⁵ (John testified to him
and cried out,

'This was he
of whom I said,

"He who comes after me
ranks ahead of me
because he was
before me." ')

¹⁶ From his fullness
we have all received,
grace upon grace.

¹⁷ The law indeed
was given through Moses;

grace and truth
came through Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ No one has ever seen God.

It is God the only Son,
who is close to the Father's heart,
who has made him known.

I confess I've only preached verses 31-34
from this chapter 31 in recent years

I did post audio of the whole book in 2022 –
Here's the whole of chapter 31:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ieZKxGaCb7pVvJbkZtMIfmshXYSCa7iT/view?usp=sharing>

It's an eloquent song of a remnant's return
Jeremiah may have been ready to dream,
Even before exile, of this remnant return
Have we in the sideline church 'got it' yet?

Reading the Epistle This Week

I tend to lump Ephesians with last week's Colossians,
Post-Paul cosmic frameworks and hierarchies
Inextricable here from modern 'blood atonement' talk

I last made that case in 2023:

<http://www.hereticslikeus.com/2023/04/ephesians-grander-visions.html?q=Ephesians>

For just this chapter 1, go back to 2019:
(though bit-rot lost my Hart translation audio)

<http://www.hereticslikeus.com/2019/02/monday-wk-5-ephesians-1.html?q=Ephesians>

Reading the Gospel This Week

On this 12th day of Christmas,
A rare second Christmas Sunday before Epiphany,
We're offered John 1, if we missed it in this Luke year

Search my sermon notes for 'John 1'
and you get 18 sermons in this century
But rarely adjacent to Epiphany like this

From Jan 6, 2002 I indulged in some post-modern stuff
[http://www.billbrucewords.com/2002/01/seeing-word-dwelling-
among-us.html](http://www.billbrucewords.com/2002/01/seeing-word-dwelling-among-us.html)

In 2021, relating Ephesians on Jan 3:
[http://www.billbrucewords.com/2021/01/do-you-see-what-i-see
.html](http://www.billbrucewords.com/2021/01/do-you-see-what-i-see.html)

Way back in 2008, here's a summary of 4th gospel:
<http://www.hereticslikeus.com/2008/05/john-word-flesh.html>

Next week, we're back into our Zoom discussions –
Baptism of Jesus Sunday!