

## Jeremiah 31:35-40

Verses 35 - 37 of chapter 31 highlight the eternal guarantee for the continued existence of Israel. The final 3 verses of this chapter speaks of God's promise to the Jewish people that there will be a rebuilt city of Jerusalem (and nation) that surpasses anything previous to this Messianic kingdom certainty.

- 35 Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name:**

There are a few things we learn from this verse.

1. It is God who "gave us" (created) the sun, moon and stars. He is the One who provided the sun for daylight, the moon and stars for light by night (Genesis 1:14-19).

Genesis 1 should be clear for any who claim to believe the Bible is the word of God. God created everything in six days - not evolution, nor theistic evolution, nor progressive creationism. Consider Dr. Hugh Ross, perhaps the leading proponent of progressive creationism.

"Dr. Hugh Ross's views on Genesis 1 and the age and history of the creation have been endorsed by many Christian leaders and scholars on the inside or covers of many of Dr. Ross's books. But does his view (particularly about the origin the earth, sun, moon, and stars) really stand up to scrutiny with an open Bible? Here are some reasons why I reply "absolutely not" and why I conclude that his views seriously contradict the clear teaching of the Word of God and thereby undermine the Scripture's supreme authority and the gospel it proclaims.

As I heard Dr. Ross explain in this debate (which is consistent with his previous teachings over the years), his belief about Genesis 1 regarding the origin of the earth, sun, moon, and stars can be summarized as follows.

In the beginning God created the heavens by first creating the "cosmic egg" (the small and incredibly dense ball of matter, energy, and space) and then caused it to begin to expand (which, he said, occurred in Genesis 1:1). For the next 9.2 billion years the universe expanded and stars and galaxies gradually formed by physical and chemical processes as cosmic gas clouds collapsed due to gravity. Our sun formed about 8.7 billion years after the big bang (or about 5 billion years ago).<sup>3</sup>

For the first 7 billion years of history, the expansion of the universe was initially very fast and gradually slowed down due to gravity and then it started to expand more rapidly due to dark matter and dark energy (and the expansion has continued to accelerate over the past 7 billion years).<sup>4</sup>

*Critique of Hugh Ross's Creation Story*, by Dr. Terry Mortenson, May 8, 2013, AIG website (excerpts from the article)

2. God is stating His OMNIPOTENCE in order to emphasize that what follows, He has the power to bring it about.

**divideth** נָגַע raw-gah'

a primitive root; properly, to toss violently and suddenly (the sea with waves, the skin with boils); **figuratively (in a favorable manner) to settle, i.e. quiet; specifically, to wink (from the motion of the eye-lids):--break, divide, find ease, be a moment, (cause, give, make to) rest, make suddenly.**

**Young's Literal Translation:** "Thus said Jehovah, Who is giving the sun for a light by day, The statutes of moon and stars for a light by night, Quieting the sea when its billows roar, Jehovah of Hosts is His name."

The Milstein Commentary on Jeremiah makes an interesting statement (likely wrong though) in its *Jeremiah* commentary **which divides the sea**:

"Who agitates the sea that its waves roar. The nations of the world are compared to the waves of the ocean (see Isaiah 17:12) that try to inundate the land, but do not succeed (see Job 38:11). The nations have tried, and continue to try, to wipe the Jews off the face of the earth, but are restrained by God (*Netzach Yisrael 10*). According to this interpretation that the sea refers to the nations, God reveals here that He agitates them to attack the Jews, to atone for sin. Abarbanel renders *Who calms the sea after the waves have roared*. Just as the storm is always followed by calm, so, too, will exile be followed by redemption."

3. The use and statement that **The LORD of hosts is his name.**

The **LORD of hosts** is used 71 times in Jeremiah (158 times in the rest of the O.T.)

"The literal meaning in Hebrew is "Lord of armies": Tza-va (אֲבָצָה) is the word for army – tza-va-ot (אֲבָצָות) is the plural. The word אֲבָצָה is frequently translated as "host" rather than army, in most of our Bibles. "Host" could refer to either an army or a great number or multitude. The first time it appears in the Bible is right at the beginning, in the creation account: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." (Genesis 2:1). When we call our Heavenly Father the "Lord of Hosts", there is so much in that name. Yes, there are the myriad armies of angels at his disposal, and yes, he is a warrior, mighty in battle, but he is also the conductor of the beautiful orchestra that is the entirety of all creation. Every atom, every molecule, moves in accordance with his purposes and at his command. He sustains everything by his powerful word."

*What Does "Lord of Hosts" Mean?, One for Israel, June 2, 2016*

Jeremiah was a prophet to the nations - "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations," Jeremiah 1:5.

The nations hate Israel and marshal together to destroy Israel (Jeremiah 30:7-11). As **the LORD of hosts**, God is reminding all that this **is his name**. He will not let the nations destroy Israel!

**36 If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.**

The first way God offers people to destroy the nation of Israel forever For Israel to cease being a nation forever is to cause the sun, moon, and stars to vanish, cease to exist.

The damage people do to the clear teaching of the word of God, in the name of Christ, is extremely heretically. Perhaps even blasphemous, as it denies what God has clearly stated. Christians, such as Hugh Ross, put science before the Bible (despite their claims to the contrary), and others, such as those who believe in replacement theology reject, for whatever reason, the clear statements of scripture.

Matthew Poole Commentary

"for ever, it must be understood not of Israel according to the flesh, but of the church, the true Israel of God, which shall never fail."

Albert Barnes Commentary

"A nation - A people. Israel has long ceased to be a nation, but it still exists as a numerous, influential, and distinct people. In Matthew 28:19-20 Jeremiah's prophecy receives its Christian application, and Israel becomes the Church, with the promise of perpetual existence. It has no national existence, but its members ought to be a strongly marked people, refusing to be merged in the world, while everywhere they pervade and influence it."

Bruce Waltke writes:

"The Jewish nation no longer has a place as the special people of God; that place has been taken by the Christian community which fulfills God's purpose for Israel."

Bruce Waltke, "Kingdom Promises as Spiritual," in Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship Between the Testaments, Ed. John S. Feinberg [Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 1987] p. 275.

David James writes:

"The inherent danger of Replacement Theology, or whatever one may choose to call a theology that denies a future for the nation of Israel, is that historically it has often fostered incipient or outright anti-Semitism. This would be true of the Holocaust, the modern BDS (Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions) movement, as well as white supremacist movements. This is not to suggest that any given individual who embraces Reformed theology is anti-Semitic. But whenever any theology sets itself against the clear promises of God and His carefully outlined plan for the nation of Israel and the Jewish people, the potential dangers cannot be overstated."

<https://www.biblicalintegrity.org/2018/02/08/is-replacement-theology-inherently-anti-semitic/>

Gary Hedrick writes:

"Is Replacement Theology really worth arguing about? Or is this discussion much ado about nothing? One reason it's important to call attention to questionable theology, no matter how deeply entrenched it may be in traditional Christianity is that sooner or later, bad theology always leads to bad practice - and in this case, it already has! Replacement Theology has provided the basis for all sorts of mischief, persecution, and atrocities against the Jewish people throughout Christian history."

[http://www.jeremiah111.org/Replacement%20Theology/replacement\\_theology.htm](http://www.jeremiah111.org/Replacement%20Theology/replacement_theology.htm)

God's promises to Israel:

"For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed," Malachi 3:6

"And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book," Daniel 12:1.

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end," Jeremiah 29:11.

"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew...," Romans 11:1-2a

- 37 Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.**

The second way to destroy Israel is to measure the heavens and the depths of the earth.

The heaven is constantly expanding, so how can one possibly measure an expanding universe?

"For many years cosmologists have discussed whether the expansion of the Universe would stop in some distant future or continue ever more slowly. From the new supernova results it seems clear that the expansion is nowhere near slowing down. In fact, due to some mysterious property of space itself, called dark energy, the expansion is accelerating and will continue forever. This surprising conclusion came from combined measurements of remote supernovae with most of the world's top-class telescopes, including Hubble. Furthermore recent supernova results indicate that cosmos did not always accelerate, but began accelerating when the Universe was less than half its current age."

Hubble Space Telescope website: [https://esahubble.org/science/age\\_size/](https://esahubble.org/science/age_size/)

"Leading researcher at the Space Research Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Nathan Eismont, spoke about pressing issues of studying the Universe.

'This, of course, is a mystery, covered in darkness. This is a question that is constantly debated, because the dimensions of the Universe are not clear, it is not clear what are some fundamental characteristics of the Universe. As for the speed of expansion, here the latest estimates differ significantly. Here are such discrepancies, that they cannot be explained simply by measurement errors, these are already errors of such a fundamental plan, which suggests a certain idea of how this Universe is organized.'"

Planet Today website: <https://www.planet-today.com/2020/04/is-it-possible-to-measure-size-of.html#gsc.tab=0>

Michael Brown makes the following comment:

"From the vantage point of church history, however, the juxtaposition of vv. 35–37 with vv. 31–34 is significant, as though there is a divine anticipation that the days will come when another part of God's family—meaning the primarily Gentile church—will say, "If there is a new covenant, then there must be a new people—us! And if the old covenant is no longer relevant, then the old people are no longer relevant." This is supersessionism in its most basic, unrefined form." [www.preceptaustin.org/jeremiah\\_31\\_commentary](http://www.preceptaustin.org/jeremiah_31_commentary)

- 38 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the city shall be built to the LORD from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner.**
- 39 And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it upon the hill Gareb, and shall compass about to Goath.**
- 40 And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes, and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron, unto the corner of the horse gate toward the east, shall be holy unto the LORD; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever.**

"Behold is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within...drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." Charles Spurgeon

**Behold the days come** is the common phrase where God is going to state a reality about the future that is certain to come to pass. 15 of the 21 times the phrase is found in the O.T., it is found in Jeremiah.

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth," Jeremiah 23:5.

This "book of consolation" - Jeremiah 30 -33 - starts with "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," Jeremiah 30:3 and ends with "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah," Jeremiah 33:14. Two bookends tying these four chapters together.

"Wording of the prophecy points to a fulfillment in the distant future and sets seven boundary markers for the city: the Tower of Hananel, the Corner Gate, the Hill Gareb, Goah, the Valley of Dead Bodies and Ashes\ the fields asfar as the Brook Kidron, and the Horse Gate."

"Starting on 'its northern or weakest side' and moving in a counterclockwise fashion, Jeremiah details the landmarks and geographic markers of the city."

"Although the exact location of this gate has been debated, it is reasonable to locate it approximately 250 meters south of the Tower of Hananel, near the significant 'Broad Wall.'"

"Jeremiah's description indicates that the location of this site [the hill Gareb] is across the Hinnom Valley south and west from Jerusalem, closer to the "Shoulder of Hinnom," a well-known burial area."

"The precise location of Goah remains unknown; but in the context it must be southeast of Gareb, on the southern flank of the Hinnom Valley and west of the Kidron Valley."

"From Goah the southern boundary is described as the 'whole valley of the dead bodies and of the ashes.' This is most certainly the well-known Hinnom Valley, which curves around the southwest and southern flank of the city. It connects with the Kidron Valley at the southeast corner of the city, below the spur of the City of David."

"The eastern boundary is 'all the fields as far as the brook Kidron.' The *Brook Kidron* lay outside of the eastern wall of the city and the Temple."

"The Horse Gate was a gate in the city wall, which served as the east gate of the Temple and palace quarter."

EXPANSION OF JERUSALEM IN JEREMIAH 31:38-40: NEVER, ALREADY OR NOT YET? By Dennis M. Swanson

The city refers to Jerusalem. There are three promises.

1. The city will be rebuilt - **the city shall be built to the LORD**

Some of the same "boundary marks" are mentioned in both this passage and in Zechariah 14:8-21.

"Tower of Hananel - located in the NE corner of Jerusalem - Jeremiah 31:38 and Zechariah 14:10  
"holy to the LORD" - Jeremiah 31:40 and Zechariah 14:20-21  
"Corner Gate" - Jeremiah 31:38 and Zechariah 14:10

This is speaking of the rebuilt Jerusalem in the Millennial kingdom, not the heavenly Jerusalem in the eternal kingdom.

2. The city will be holy - **shall be holy unto the LORD**

The city certainly hasn't been holy since this was written. It will be in the future.

"In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar," Zechariah 14:20.

3. The city will never be destroyed - **it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever**

This can't be speaking of the Jerusalem in Jeremiah's day, or even after, as Jerusalem was destroyed in 586 B.C. and 70 A.D. It must be speaking of the rebuilt Jerusalem in the millennial kingdom.

John Calvin is wrong when he states:

"Moreover, this passage teaches us that the Church will be perpetual, and though God may permit it to be terribly shaken and tossed here and there, there will yet ever be some seed remaining, as long as the sun and the moon shall shine in the heavens, and the order of nature shall continue; so that all the elements, everything we see with our eyes, bear evidence to the perpetuity of the Church, even that it will ever continue: for though Satan and all the world daily threaten its ruin, yet the Lord will in a wonderful manner preserve it to the end, so that it will never perish. This is the import of the passage." John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. John T. McNeill and Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960) 3:25:5

"Calvin states of chiliasts or premillennialists, 'Now their fiction is too childish to need or be worth a refutation.'" Comments by John Calvin and the following conclusion found in EXPANSION OF JERUSALEM IN JEREMIAH 31:38-40: NEVER, ALREADY OR NOT YET? By Dennis M. Swanson

"As the future capital of the Messiah's earthly kingdom, it will be rebuilt and enlarged, a necessity from the severe damage which will occur during the tribulation (e.g., Rev 11:13). The city's topography will be altered so that the city is elevated (Zech 14:10). This enlarged and elevated city will be sanctified and become 'holy to the Lord.' The city will be inviolable, never again falling victim to the destruction of war or natural disaster. Even when Satan, during his short release from the bottomless pit (Rev 20:7), rallies the nations to march against the city, the city itself will suffer no harm. Before the rebels can launch their attack, God will intervene and 'fire [will come] down from heaven and devour them' (Rev 20:9). J. Barton Payne, late professor of Old Testament at Covenant Theological Seminary, was correct in assigning the fulfillment of Jer 31:38-40 to the period of the future "millennial kingdom."