

Jeremiah (Quality: Good)

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[0 : 0 0] as the lord may be pleased to help me i direct your attention again to the words in the prophecy of jeremiah chapter 31 and the ninth verse they shall come with weeping and with supplications when i lead them i will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way wherein they shall not stumble from a father to israel nephraim is my first born jeremiah chapter 31 verse 9 we venture to try and consider a little the character of the people before us in this text as pilgrims journeying to zion journeying to the heavenly city such as are called by god's grace and led in this way described in this verse before us and what a mercy if you and i have any evidence whatever in our hearts are being found in that way and although there are those things to remind us that it is it is not a flesh pleasing way yet it is indeed the right way and indeed if the lord is our leader it must be the right way though sometimes the way may be a dark some path you cannot see the way you cannot see your signs yet sometimes it pleases the lord in his wisdom that the way shall be a dark some path but then we have to remember that the darkness and the light are both a light to the lord and although our evidences may be hidden the lord still watches over his pilgrim people as they journey on in this wilderness here below and how surely they will be led i like to think of the certainty of these words you see there's so many things that are uncertain aren't there things to do with this life things in the world there's uncertainty stamped on everything but when we come to consider the things that accompany salvation and the way the lord has revealed his mercy and grace in his word concerning his dealings with his people there is a blessed certainty about these things and surely the certainty of god's truth does become at times a foundation for the hope of god's dear people and as god's word reveals these things to us in the certainty of them it is indeed a wondrous foundation surely it leads us and may it lead us to him whose word it is even the lord jesus christ who is the incarnate word and he who is that one foundation of his church and will be the foundation of all his dear people in their experience we read in god's word of that foundation being laid in zion and as it were the church built upon that foundation and how this is so in the experience of all who should be made manifest as zion's citizens inhabitants that foundation will be as we're laid in their hearts and sometimes

as the truths of god's word may be revealed to us in the certainty of them it brings us to consider this wondrous foundation and it rests in the faithfulness of god and his unchanging character you see men may use words and may make promises but then how often those words come to nothing promises not kept when we consider the word of god and what he has declared he will do concerning his dear people it must come to pass nothing can prevent it and so then there are these blessings certainties but may we be helped now to try and consider the word a little further trusting it might be helpful and or may there be those things which will be to the glory of god's name you know the the gospel in the purity of it and in the proclamation of it and even the simplicity of it is that which does redound to the glory of god's name and is indeed becomes a prophet to his dear people and friends it's a great mercy if we've come to hear the gospel if god has opened our ears for those who are called to walk in this way their ears are open to god's truth and as we would try and consider now in this further part of the text where the lord says i will cause them to walk by the rivers of water in a straight way well this this is this is the way of truth isn't it indeed the right way and you see in contrast to the way of the wicked the way of the ungodly or what crookedness there is through sin and everything that may be crooked in us in our lives it all stems from this that we're sinners but then the word of god solemnly describes the character the wicked that they walk in crooked paths thus the ungodly pursue their path but our text speaks about a straight way we read in the chapter just now those words of the lord jesus christ himself in answer to to philip and his question to the lord jesus christ and jesus said to philip i'm the way the truth and the life i am the true way i am the living way and also the word of god in various methods we see how god has revealed this way this straight way this way of truth and think of the mercy of it dear friends there should be those who have been delivered from their crooked ways and their feet put in this straight way it can only be traced to the sovereign mercy and grace of god there is nothing else to merit his esteem or give the creator delight and for any evidence of being found this way and to be as mourning ones in this way as sapiens in this way you can only be traced to the mercy

of god and think of the mercy that is conveyed in this the lord has seen fit in his wisdom that there should be those who shall come into the blessings of his grace of salvation to be taught of god we have we read in this chapter this morning didn't we that they shall be all taught of god they shall be taught of god for they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them and this straight way is a way wherein they are taught yes of the lord the lord is the god of their salvation the lord jesus christ and what wondrous knowledge this is although we feel to know so little and how slow we are to learn aren't we but good it is if there is that in our hearts a desire which we trust the lord has put there a desire to be taught and to be led in this straight way yes this way of truth and as it is described here as a straight way it does suggest this surely that we have to be as it were straight and in it yes straightened in it and to find that it is a straight way there can be no as it were deviation although we have to realise that through sin and we may have times a wandering heart we may turn to the right hand or to the left but the word of the lord is this is a way to walk you in it when you turn to the right hand and when you turn to the left straight way yes it is the way of truth and those who are called to walk in this way will be taught yes taught of god made wise unto salvation and at times yes made thankful that it is a straight way and that it is the way of truth although maybe often you feel to need the law to confirm you that the way in which you go is the right way how good it is when you are helped to realise that the way in which you go is the right way that it is this straight way but then our text reminds us that it is indeed a way of blessing for this way is described this straight way wherein the

Lord does cause his dear people as pilgrims to walk in it it is by the rivers of waters and notice the text tells us this god says i will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way you see god as a gracious god is the cause he causes these people to walk in this way it is not of their own free will as it were but the Lord does make them will know i thought of that word a little just recently in the psalm thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power and good it is when there is grace given yes to walk to walk willingly in this way although it is a straight way and this straight way reminding us it is a way of tribulation sometimes a way of discipline yet to be made willing and this is something quite different to man's will you see our will by nature so depraved but there is one greater than man's will thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power and there is much in this text that reminds us of the power of

God I mean his gracious power in bringing his people forth as it were from afar and bring them into some knowledge of his truth and bring them into the way of salvation and cause them to be through mourners to bring them to supplicate his throne it all points to his gracious power power belongeth unto God we see the power of God demonstrated in so many ways don't we yes as we hear of the wintry weather farther north in this country a reminder of the almighty power of God even in the elements but then that same almighty God is all powerful in his way of grace toward his dear people and although in this straight way there are difficulties there are trials temptation there is the enemy ever opposing these pilgrims and they themselves often feeling to be weak in the way yet they are sustained and supported by the almighty power and omnipotent

[14 : 11] God it is by his gracious power that he will cause them to walk in this straight way and this way of blessing by the rivers of waters in a straight way and what teaching there is in this isn't there those who are taught by his grace to walk in this way will sooner or later find that it is by these rivers of waters waters and what do we understand by this you remember God gave to Ezekiel a wonderful vision of the waters as they flowed from heaven didn't they and he saw the blessing of those waters they flowed into the desert and the fruitfulness that it caused where those waters flowed and again how Ezekiel was led into those waters by degrees and at length to prove that it was as a river to swim in it could not be measured as it were now this sets forth the communications of the love and mercy and grace of

God the source in heaven itself and these rivers are rivers of his love we were reminded this morning weren't we of the beginning part of this chapter of the everlasting love of God and there's the source and now that love flows down and those who are caused to walk in this straight way will sooner or later realise that it is the way of blessing and there are times when the Lord is pleased to favour his dear people and cause them to realise that there are these rivers of waters and I feel especially so in that it is the gospel way and while the gospel way is indeed a straight way there's no room for man's devices in that but it is a way of blessing and it is in this way the Lord is pleased particularly so to communicate to his dear people and like as it were these waters flowing and what a wonderful mercy if the

Lord should be pleased at times to cause these rivers of waters as it were to flow into your heart or as the text reminds us your cause to walk in this straight way yes by the side of these rivers of waters it's such a beautiful illustration it's such a beautiful picture before our minds really of the everlasting love of God and how it flows and you see the Lord in his mercy and wisdom has made a way whereby these waters of his love shall flow down to this poor simple earth and into the hearts of poor sinners those to whom he shows his wondrous favour and that shall the Lord Jesus try to himself you see he who is the way or how the truths of the gospel all as it were radiate from one point that is the

Lord Jesus Christ and good it is if we are helped to meditate upon these things that they should be a means of directing us to the source which is in the Lord Jesus Christ himself it is by virtue of these rivers that the souls of these pilgrims at times feel to be refreshed the picture is very beautiful isn't it these rivers of waters in this straight way maybe perhaps you've admired a river sometimes back in the countryside years ago after journey westward and sometimes along the Thames and when you get right into the country how beautiful the scene is how peaceful now the love of God is set before us in this way these rivers of waters and as

Ezekiel in his vision found it to be such a wondrous deep river and he was brought into it by degrees rather suggesting how the Lord does lead us to your people into his truth by degrees here a little and there a little and then at length to find there are waters that cannot be measured there are waters to swim in there's something else worthy of notice in that vision and how Ezekiel speaks of it first how he was led to the rivers the waters and then it says how he was caused to return to the brink and it is well sometimes to ponder that isn't it because you may feel tried sometimes because you feel so dried up well the Lord does like it was with

[20 : 08] Ezekiel and the vision cause his people to return to the brink sometimes you see to know these rivers of water in the full blessing of them surely points to that happiness and peace that is to be known in heaven but here below there will be those seasons sometimes perhaps brief seasons when the Lord is pleased to let his love flow down into your heart whereby you are humbled and softened and melted and feel to be blessed but then like Ezekiel he has to return to the brink like Abraham as he he went he returned to his own place but you see these things are very real though there may be brief seasons of blessing they are very real because rightly considered and earnest of that blessing which is yet to come in the fullness of it and I will cause them to walk by the rivers of water in a straight way and so these rivers flow yet demonstrating

God's sovereign mercy and power these are not man made channels or canals as it were but they're rivers yes and we read do we not the river of God which is full of water there's a river the streams are of shall make glad the city of God thus we read in Psalm 46 it is God's power you see his gracious power in blessing his people and conveying the blessings of his grace into their hearts I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way or they flow from a wondrous source it pleased the father we read that in him in Jesus should all fullness dwell these rivers can never dry up many have tasted of these waters many have been made glad by the streams but still the rivers flow there can be no drought you see with regard to these rivers though thousands have been blessed by the virtue of these rivers and the love of

God shed abroad in their hearts the Lord Jesus Christ made precious to them was full of grace and truth and you see it is in this straight way that these pilgrims are brought into the as it were to be near as it were to these rivers of waters in this straight way there'll be no blessings in wandering paths or in bypass meadow no but it is in the way of truth and here are the blessings now this reminds us of the manner in which the Lord is pleased to convey his word and the blessings of the gospel to his dear people yes you know the gospel is like a flowing river isn't it the river of God's love and the proclamation of it and as the

Lord is pleased to apply gospel blessings to the hearts of his people first of all he gives them to thirst for these waters dear friends do you know what it is to thirst for these waters you've tried earthly streams you've proved how vain they are they cannot satisfy the need the dear psalmist could say my soul thirsteth for God for the living God he felt to need that thirst to be quenched you see and he's directed that one source the living God surely this reminds us of the Lord Jesus Christ yes the living redeemer and by virtue his coming down to this world his suffering life his holy life and his sufferings and death upon the cross the shedding of his blood finishing that work of redemption paying the price experiencing death and coming forth triumphant from the grave and risen and exalted on high you see here's the channel of blessing these rivers of water they flow down to poor sinners good it is if sometimes you feel a thirst better still when sometimes you have a sip of these waters says Peter so be you've tasted that the

Lord is gracious and to have a sip of these waters you taste of the graciousness of the Lord it is mercy to you poor sinner and so the psalmist was led out in those words oh taste and see he says oh taste and see that the Lord is good oh the streams of these rivers do make glad the city of God and how so refreshing how so reviving sometimes these pilgrims journeying in this straight way become very weak and feeble faint hearted yes sometimes feel so dried up how precious then are these waters these waters of life these waters that so refresh the soul so that sometimes a poor sinner can enter a little into what the psalmist expresses in one little psalm he says my springs are in thee my springs are in thee and remember what the

[26 : 43] Lord Jesus Christ said to the woman to Jacob's well concerning the gift of his water he says it should be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life springing up within and that indicates does it not the conveying of the blessed spirit of God and the influence of his spirit into the heart yes like living water and just those waters are so precious and so necessary to quench a thirst literally where is this spiritual thirst nothing but these rivers of waters can quench such a thirst as that and then how it reminds us of the blessings of God's pardoning mercy rivers of water in a straight place in a straight way that forgiveness that flows through the shed blood of the dear redeemer did we not read this morning in the latter part of our reading for they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them saith the lord for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more his reference to

God's pardoning mercy and you see there's pardon that flows as it were in the streams of this river and what a blessing indeed to be sought after isn't it to realise the blessing of sins forgiven yes sins washed away and as water is such a cleansing element isn't it so how needful is this water of life and that water to cleanse defiled sinners and how this was beautifully and wonderfully set forth and I feel I'm treading on holy ground here when the dear Lord Jesus Christ was fixed upon the cross and his side was pierced the scripture tells us that came forth water and blood oh what a wonderful provision made in the sufferings of the Lord

Jesus Christ for the pardon and cleansing of the souls of his dear people it ought to do with this these rivers of water what the Lord Jesus Christ is there's a beautiful word isn't there in the in the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the dear Lord Jesus Christ in that way might help us just to turn to it for a moment and I'll read it to you and a man and this means no less than the God man Jesus Christ he was the way to God he was the sinner's only hope and a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind and a cover from the tempest as rivers of water in a dry place think of the mercy of it there's a shadow of great rock in a weary land but think of this as rivers of water in a dry place how this was signified wasn't it to Israel of old really in there as they began their journey in the wilderness toward the promised

Canaan or they thirsted in the wilderness it was a dry and thirsty land but how they were led to that rock weren't they and as Moses commanded to destroy that rock there came forth that water yes that run in dry places like a river and what a wonderful type that is of the Lord Jesus Christ and the communication of his blessings to his dear people in this wilderness and you see it was such a demonstration wasn't it a miracle wrought really indeed it was and they drank of the rock that followed them and now these pilgrims they journey on they drink of these waters and they are taught where to go to obtain this drink alone in the Lord Jesus Christ and sometimes communicated through the means of grace under the gospel and I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way it may well be as we come to this sentence it does produce some searching of heart doesn't it because we often feel to be at least

I do a poor stumbling one does it mean then it excludes us from this word when they shall not stumble may the Lord go on to the right understanding of what is before us in this clause of the text when they shall not stumble well while it is sadly true that we often walk very feebly and we may easily stumble in some ways but there is a sense in which those who are taught by the Spirit of God such as the teaching they receive that they will never stumble at the truth these things pertain to the straight way no they won't stumble at these things because they are taught by the Holy Spirit they are taught what poor guilty helpless needy sinners they are and they won't stumble at the truth revealed in

[32 : 51] God's word concerning their description of sinners have to say like the woman did before the Lord Jesus Christ it is truth and in that aspect they shall not stumble great mercy dear friends if we're not left to stumble at God's word and the truths of God's word especially those truths that reveal to us our sad state by nature the sinfulness of sin man's depraved condition many of the others stumble at these things or they suggest they can't be so bad as that but you know a poor sinner taught by the spirit of God he has to humble himself and realise it is truth because he has the solemn witness of it in his heart so then there's no stumbling in that and then indeed it can be said very certainly that they do not stumble at

God's way of salvation and the things concerning the dear Lord Jesus Christ himself no sinners taught of God sinners convinced of their sin are brought into such an experience as they are made to see that their only hope is in the Lord Jesus Christ alone and therefore in this straight way by these rivers of water and as the things of Jesus are revealed and as they may be led a little by the Holy Spirit to consider him they won't stumble at this no but to rather wonder at the mercy and the provision that the Lord has made for poor sinners such as they feel to be wherein they shall not stumble there are some solemn scriptures in the word concerning those who do stumble in the true sense of the word what

I mean is this I want to be clear there were those and there are those who do stumble at the word you read of this in the epistles of Peter of Peter those who stumble at the word being disobedient and what a solemn case to be in you remember too in the gospels we read how that there were those who did stumble they went back and walked no more with the Lord Jesus Christ they stumbled at the words which proceeded from his lips they went back and walked no more with him now in the text we have the opposite you see wherein they shall not stumble you see now Peter and we have a good example with Peter really and it's helpful to consider it because in himself you see he sometimes he was overzealous and he did stumble rather in a sense but not in the way in our text he had to learn his weakness he had some solemn humbling lessons to learn but the root of the matter was there and when he was faced with this question with the other disciples when

Jesus said to them will you also go away Peter being the seen to be the first one to speak as it were for the others he said Lord whom can we go that's the words of eternal life we believe and assure that the Christ the son of the living God you see he didn't stumble deep with regard to the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ there was something wrought in his heart he felt a cleaving and in the face of the fact that there were many who had gone back and walked no more with Jesus it seemed to tend rather to cause him to cleave closer well now in this word I feel there's something of that in it to be considered when they shall not stumble no they won't stumble they won't stumble at the truth of man's fall and his sad state by nature his utter helplessness they won't stumble at the

Lord Jesus Christ himself who is the way the truth and the life rather they would they would follow follow on to know more of him they desire to to know him and to realise their interest in what he is as that saviour and a great one when they shall not stumble you know when the Lord Jesus Christ was here upon earth and this is to be observed as you read the gospels many of the professing people like the scribes and the pharisees they were religious people they were so stumbled at the Lord Jesus Christ weren't they and to such an extent that they were they were offended at him their hearts rose up in rebellion as it were and animosity at times concerning the Lord Jesus Christ they stumbled yes they were well satisfied with their religious ways and rested upon the fact they were Abraham's children but had their their mind was so blinded their text tells us here that these poor sinners were humbled yes true mourners have to walk this path of prayer dependence upon him led along step by step as it were brought into the vicinity of these rivers of waters this straight way they won't stumble in it and it bears out this truth also and that is the final preservation and final perseverance of all God's dear people in other words they'll be brought safely to the end that they can't lose the way because the Lord watches over them he guides and directs them he keeps them and should they stray he he brings them back he restores them and their souls are secure yes when they shall not stumble they'll be led safely on there's another word it is well to consider in the prophecy of Isaiah again and it sets before us the same truth really if I could turn to it just for a moment in chapter 35

[40 : 16] Isaiah and a highway shall be there and a way and shall be called the way of holiness the unclean shall not pass over it you see it is a separate way it is a distinguishing way but it should be for those yes the redeemed redeemed with the precious blood of Christ it should be for those and they are described as wayfaring men but it should be for those the wayfaring men though fools that is not wising themselves needing to be taught shall not err therein they shall not stumble and they'll be brought safely on yes safely to the end yes and brought into that heavenly city of which the psalmist speaks on he led them forth by the right way that they might go to a city of habitation and then the pilgrimage has ended but meanwhile we have this word to consider for that you and I may indeed be found within the compass of this word to be as these humble mourning ones these suppliants yes not left to go our own way but led yes and to know something of these gospel blessings and to receive something from the fullness of the Lord Jesus Christ into their hearts into our hearts though it is a straight way yet not to stumble and then the Lord says this concerning these and it reminds us of the wonderful relationship that exists between the Lord and his dear people from a father to Israel and Ephraim is my firstborn from a father to Israel here's the relationship you see and what an honour the Lord has conferred upon his people isn't he they shall be called the sons and daughters of the Lord almighty sons of God what a privilege what an honour oh may the Lord grant us that witness of his spirit yea to know that spirit of adoption whereby we may cry

Abba Father behold I will bring them they shall come with weeping and with supplications when I lead them I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way when they shall not stumble from a father to Israel and Ephraim is my firstborn Amen shall we close by singing hymn number 139 the tune is Heap 156 hymn number 139 my shepherd will supply my need

Jehovah pastures fresh he makes me feed beside the living stream he brings my wandering spirit back when I forsake his ways and leads me for his mercy's sake in paths of truth and grace one hundred and thirty-nine Jordan song some Irene song In Christ's scribblings, he makes me bay with his life, or living strength.

He brings my wandering spirit back When I must say his ways And let his love His mercy say In all the souls of love and grace When I walk through the streets of death

My presence is my sin The way of the way Supporting breath And so my fears of grace I have been sight of whom I could The day of my table's bread

[47 : 36] My God The day of my table's bread And so my fears of grace I have been sight of whom I could To see my fears of grace Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[50 : 30] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.