

Hard to believe

*Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.
Jeremiah 33:3*

This familiar passage is often quoted to encourage us to pray, especially in difficult circumstances. While this promise alone is certainly worthy to be cited for that purpose, its context accentuates the greatness, mightiness, and unfathomable things possible for the Lord to perform. This promise comes to Jeremiah while he is shut up in the prison in Jerusalem, during the time that the Babylonian armies of Nebuchadnezzar were holding the city under siege. Jeremiah had warned king Zedekiah of the coming destruction and had urged him by the word of the Lord to surrender to Nebuchadnezzar. On several occasions, one example of which is recorded in the next chapter, Jeremiah told him that the city would fall to the Chaldeans and that he would be taken captive. Yet, Zedekiah was more influenced by his ungodly counselors, false prophets, and unfounded expectation to be able to resist the Babylonian invasion. As a result, he had committed Jeremiah to the prison while Jerusalem continued to slowly fall to its enemies. It is in this setting, where Jeremiah is seemingly left in a helpless state, while his countrymen are on the verge of slaughter and captivity, which he has been assured of by the words from the Lord, that this promise is given.

Beyond this promise, the Lord continues with specifics that could have certainly seemed to Jeremiah in that setting to be hard to believe. Although God says that the city would be destroyed and filled with dead bodies, He also says that He will “bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth” (v. 6). He further promises cleansing and pardon from their iniquities. The balance of the chapter continues with predictions of restoration and return from captivity, not only of Judah, but also of Israel, who had been taken captive by the Assyrians years before this time. The farther-reaching promise of the ultimate fulfillment of the Davidic covenant in Christ is then proclaimed in verse 15: “In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.” By the end of this chapter, the promises are overwhelming for even those of us who now look for the second coming of Christ. Yet, Jeremiah received them in his prison court, and he faithfully proclaimed and recorded them in his book, for them and for us. May we be fully persuaded with him to continue to call unto the Lord, trusting in His greatness and might.