

Jeremiah 31:1-6ⁱⁱⁱ

At that time, says the LORD, will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be my people. Thus says the LORD: The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness; when Israel sought for rest, the LORD appeared to him from far away. I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you. Again I will build you, and you shall be built, O virgin Israel! Again you shall take your tambourines, and go forth in the dance of the merrymakers. Again you shall plant vineyards on the mountains of Samaria; the planters shall plant, and shall enjoy the fruit. For there shall be a day when sentinels will call in the hill country of Ephraim: "Come, let us go up to Zion, to the LORD our God."

ⁱⁱⁱ About the Alternate First Reading: Jeremiah 31:1-6

Jeremiah's prophetic ministry to Judah began in 627 BC and ended about 580 BC. He spans the period leading up to Judah's final defeat by the Babylonians (587 BC), the destruction of Jerusalem and the burning of the temple, and the exile of a good part of the population.

Today's reading comes from a section (chaps. 30-33) consisting of promises of restoration (30:1-4). In it are gathered Jeremiah's oracles of hope for an eventual renewal for Israel. Jeremiah envisions the restoration of Judah by imagining God's fashioning a new exodus through which God will once again deliver the covenant people.