

Jeremiah 32-35 • Prophecies During the Siege

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We're in Jeremiah chapter 32, and we have some really great chapters to go through tonight. Things are really heating up in our story because the Babylonians in the course of the timeline that we're dealing with have now come to Jerusalem and they've laid siege to the city. And these chapters, in fact, these first two chapters we're going to look at tonight, 32 and 33, actually take place while Jeremiah is incarcerated by the king.

He, they have this place called the court of the guard and they would lock people up there who had just kind of fallen into disfavor with the king for whatever reason. And because Jeremiah was telling people that the Babylonian invasion was going to be successful, and that Zedekiah was in fact going to be carried off, Zedekiah, of course, didn't like that. And so he figured, well, I'm just going to flex my kingly muscle and I'm going to lock up Jeremiah. And that'll show him, as if that's going to change anything. But that's what he did anyway.

And all this is happening while the Babylonian army is besieging the city. And I want to just remind you, that a siege is a military operation where an attacking army would surround a city virtually cutting off any of their supply lines. Cities were dependent upon people coming and going with food and resources and things like that. And because a siege would effectively lock everybody out and in, the city would only last so long before they would be kind of forced into a weakened position and then finally surrender. And sieges, we've said before, could last months or years. And so it was essentially a waiting game.

Anyway, this is what's going on. The siege is happening. The people are locked in the city. And Jeremiah is locked in the court of the guard because of King Zedekiah. And it says:

(The word of the Lord, or excuse me) "1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, (you'll remember he is the final King) which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar."

And by the way, that was the way they dated things in the Bible. You've probably seen those many times where a prophecy or a statement would be made. And it'll say "in the something year of King" so and so. Luke dates several things in his gospel account that way. And that's what they did instead of, we would say April 7th or whatever, 2021. But they dated things by the kings and what year of their reign it was. He says in verse two:

"2 At that time the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the guard that was in the palace of the king of Judah. (Notice he speaks of himself in the third person) 3 For Zedekiah king of Judah had imprisoned him saying, "Why do you prophesy and say, "Thus says the Lord: Behold, I am giving this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall capture it; (Why are you saying) 4 Zedekiah, king of Judah, shall not escape out of the hand(s) of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him face to face and see him eye to eye. 5 And (why do you say) he shall take Zedekiah to Babylon, and there he shall remain until I visit him, declares the Lord. Though you fight against the Chaldeans, you shall not succeed.'?" (Why do you say all those things, Jeremiah?)

6 Jeremiah said, "The word of the Lord came to me: 7 Behold, Hanamel the son of Shallum your uncle will come to you and say, 'Buy my field that is in (correction at) Anathoth, for the right of redemption by purchase is yours.'"

Now, I want you to stop for a moment. This is a really interesting sort of a scenario. They're under siege. And by all appearances, you know, it looks like the Babylonians are going to be able to wait them out. Jeremiah has been saying that the city is going to fall to the Babylonians all along. He knows what's going to happen.

And this is really confusing to Jeremiah, because the Lord speaks to him and says, hey, by the way Jerry, your uncle is going to pop in to visit you there in the jailhouse. And he's going to want to sell you a piece of land. And again, Jeremiah knows they're going to go into exile for 70 years. And yet the Lord tells him your uncle's going to pop in and want to sell you some land. So just buy it. Okay.

8 Then (Ham...) Hanamel my cousin (came in or) came to me in the court of the guard, in accordance with the word of the Lord, and said to me, 'Buy my field that is in (correction at) Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, for the right of possession and redemption is yours; buy it for yourself.' (And) Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord."

So you got to figure what's going on through Jeremiah's mind. He's kind of like, I thought I was crazy. Because why in the world would the Lord tell me my uncle was going to come, sell me some land, and I ought to buy it, when the land is about to go into exile for 70 years? That doesn't sound like a very bright thing. And so he's probably doubting that this was maybe a genuine word from the Lord.

Isn't that a fascinating thought that Jeremiah would have doubts. I wonder if I really heard from God on this one. Or maybe I'm just kind of, I don't know; maybe it was what I had to eat last night just causing some weird thoughts to enter my brain.

Notice he ends by saying, then I knew this was the word of the Lord. In other words, Jeremiah said, is saying here, then it was confirmed that what I sensed the Lord telling me was in fact so. Interesting, isn't it? So he says, verse nine, so, you know:

"9 "And I bought the field at Anathoth from Hanamel my cousin, and weighed out the money to him, seventeen shekels of silver. 10 I signed the deed, sealed it, got witnesses, and weighed the money on scales. 11 Then I took the sealed deed of purchase, containing the terms and conditions, and the open copy, and I gave the deed of purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah son of Mahseiah,..."

By the way, that is, Baruch is Jeremiah's scribe. He's the guy who wrote down Jeremiah's prophecies. And we're going to hear more about Baruch. In fact the Lord is even going to give a personal word of prophecy to Baruch a little bit later on in our study of Jeremiah. He was a good man. He was a good friend of Jeremiah as well. So he gives this thing to Baruch. Of course, he's behind bars. He, you know, he can't do much with it there. Except have it witnessed, and that's what he did. I'm in the middle of verse 12. He says:

"(and) in the presence of Hanamel my cousin, in the presence of the witnesses who signed the deed of purchase," (They didn't have a clerk of court back then, so you would have witnesses sign legal documents. Simply saying, I was there, I heard the terms of the agreement, and it's written here, and here's my name, showing that I was present when this agreement was made, all right. We still do that with weddings, interestingly enough, but largely for tradition and not much else.)

"and in the presence of all the Judeans who were sitting in the court of the guard." (And, I don't know how many people were just hanging out in the court

of the guard, but there were obviously some people there. And they would serve as witnesses as well.) Notice he goes on in verse 13 to say:

" 13 I charged Baruch in their presence, (in the presence of all those there) saying, 14 "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these deeds, both this sealed deed of purchase and this open deed, and put them in an earthen (correction earthenware) vessel, that they may last for a long time."

And that earthen vessels had a way of preserving documents, which is really cool. And we found that to be true when we uncovered the Dead Sea Scrolls by accident. And found all these scrolls of scripture that were a thousand years older than anything we had before that time. And they had been many of them beautifully preserved. Some were in tatters and fragments, but even the fragments were considered to be a great find related to just the evidence of the scriptural validity, what, that was found there. So He says put these in these, this earthen vessel so that they will be kept for a long time.

Verse 15:

"15 For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: (and here it is) Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land."

So, we know here, according to the word that God gave to Jeremiah, why He told him to buy this land. Because it was a sign. It was kind of like a portent, if you will, to the people saying, it's going to be okay.

This is something akin to the Apostle Paul taking food during the ship, right before the shipwreck that they had on their way to Rome. Kind of, he, he told everybody. He said, the Lord had told me that the ship is going to run aground. It's going to be destroyed, but not one life is going to be lost. And so I, you guys need to take courage. And he said, they hadn't eaten for days and days and days. Something like two weeks these guys hadn't eaten anything. And so he said, you need to eat and get your strength back and take courage.

And he ate right in front of all of them. And it said, they sat and watched him eat, which must've been a little weird. You know as he's sitting there munching on whatever he was eating. And they all kind of went, hey well, you know looks like he's positive about the whole thing. So they started eating and they were encouraged by that.

And this is kind of a similar picture that God is having Jeremiah walk out Related to the fact that even though this siege is going on right now God is

already speaking to the people of Judah saying there's going to be an end to this. There's light at the end of the tunnel.

In other words, like Sue likes to tell me when I'm going through a rough time, it's not always going to be like this. And I need to hear that, don't you? When you're going through kind of a rough time, you need to hear somebody say, it's not always going to be like this. Things are going to get better I promise you.

And that's what the Lord is kind of saying here. Now that doesn't mean Jeremiah understands just because we've kind of, you know, gotten this little piece of information. Look at what goes on in verse 16. Jeremiah is going to go to the Lord with this. He says:

"16 After I'd (correction I had) given the deed of purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed to the Lord, saying: 17 'Ah, Lord God! (and some of you are going to hear a song here) It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you. 18 You show steadfast love to thousands, but you repay the guilt of fathers to their children after them, O great and mighty God, whose name is (Yahweh) the Lord of hosts, 19 great in counsel and mighty in deed, whose eyes are open to all the ways of the children of man, rewarding each one according to his ways and according to the fruit of his deeds. (Boy, that's a big follow or lead in to what, he hasn't even gotten to his request yet. And he's, by the way, he's not done. He says,) 20 You have shown signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, and to this day in Israel and among all mankind, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day. 21 You brought your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a strong hand and outstretched arm, and with great terror. 22 And you gave them this land, which you swore to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey. 23 And they entered and took possession of it. But they did not obey your voice or walk in your law. They did nothing of all you commanded them to do. Therefore you have made all this disaster come upon them. (Right, you with me? So he's recounting, you know, the history of Israel and then look what he says in verse 24, he says,) 24 Behold, the siege mounds have come up to the city to take it, and because of the sword and famine and pestilence the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans who are fighting against it. What you spoke has come to pass, and behold, you see it. 25 Yet, you, O Lord God, have said to me, "Buy the field for money and get witnesses" -though the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans.'"

See, this is Jeremiah saying, I don't get this. You brought us into the land, you told us to obey the law, we didn't. You bore with us for a long time, you sent

your prophets, they warned us, we didn't listen. Finally, you brought judgment upon your people. And the land's about to go down for the count. And then you told me to go buy some land and bring it into my family heritage. I don't understand. Has the Lord ever told you to do something that you don't understand? If not, he will get used to it because the Lord doesn't always.

Now the Lord is going to give great explanation here to Jeremiah. He doesn't always. He doesn't always. He doesn't always give detailed explanation. Sometimes He will lay a particular directive upon our hearts so that we might walk in obedience without knowing exactly what the outcome is going to be.

He did it with Abraham. Take your son, your only son, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah, and there sacrifice him as a burnt offering to Me. That's it. That's it. That's the directive. How would you like to get that directive? Didn't tell him what was going to happen. Didn't tell him. Don't worry. At the last minute, I'll stay your hand. Don't worry. It's okay. It's all going to be fine.

He didn't tell him any of those things. He just said, go and do. And sometimes the Lord does that in our lives. And we have to be prepared to say, I'm either going to be obedient or not, you know.

"²⁶ The word of the Lord (verse 26) came to Jeremiah: ²⁷ "Behold, I am (Yahweh) the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me? (By the way, that's a great verse to put up on your fridge.) "Behold I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me?" Obviously, that's a rhetorical question, but it's a good one. To say, and to recite in our hearts.

"²⁸ Therefore, thus says the Lord: Behold, I am giving the (correction this) city into the hands of the Chaldeans and into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall capture it. ²⁹ The Chaldeans who are fighting against the (correction this) city shall come and set this city on fire and burn it, with the houses on whose roofs offerings have been made to Baal and drink offerings have been poured out to other gods, to provoke me to anger. ³⁰ For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have done nothing but evil in my sight from their youth. The children of Israel have done nothing but provoke me to anger by the work of their hands, declares the Lord. ³¹ This city has aroused my anger and wrath, from the day it was built to this day, so that I will remove it from my sight ³² because of all the evil of the children of Israel and the children of Judah that they did to provoke me to anger- their kings and their officials, their priests and their prophets, the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ³³ They have turned to me their back and not their face. And though I have taught them persistently, they have not listened to receive instruction. ³⁴ They

set up their abominations in the house that is called by my name, to defile it.
35 They built the high places of Baal in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to offer up their sons and daughters to Molech, though I did not command them, nor did it enter into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

36 "Now therefore thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning this city of which you say, 'It is given into the hand of the king of Babylon by sword, by famine, and by pestilence: (Look at this; look at this) 37 Behold, I will gather them from all the countries to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in great indignation. I will bring them back to this place, and I will make them dwell in safety. 38 And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. 39 I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them. 40 I will make with them an everlasting covenant, (He's kind of referring back to what we read in chapter 31) that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me. 41 I will rejoice in (doing good or good) doing them good, (rather) and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul. (Isn't that amazing?)

42 "For thus says the Lord: Just as I have brought all this great disaster upon this people, so I will bring upon them all the good that I promised them. 43 Fields shall be bought in this land of which you are saying, 'It is a desolation, without man or beast; it is given into the hands of the Chaldeans.' 44 Fields shall be bought for money, and deeds shall be signed and sealed and witnessed, in the land of Benjamin, in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, in the cities of the hill country, in the cities of the Shephelah, and in the cities of the Negeb; for I will restore their fortunes, declares the Lord."

Isn't this a crazy, the city hasn't even fallen yet. God's already talking about the restoration, the restoration of the land. So many people read through or make a cursory reading of the Old Testament and come away thinking that the Old Testament is full of nothing but judgment and wrath and anger. And I would submit to you that what you are seeing here is incredible mercy. Great mercy. God is merciful. He's already speaking words of restoration and comfort to the people who haven't even fully been spanked yet.

Chapter 33 continues on:

"1 The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah a second time, while he was still shut up in the court of the guard: (So obviously this is not a long time from the earlier events.) 2 "Thus says the Lord who made the earth, the Lord who formed

it to establish it- the Lord is his name: 3 Call to me and I will answer you, and (I) will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known."

Can we stop there for just a moment? These are another two really great verses to put on your fridge or mirror, dash of your car or something like that. Because it, they're just so powerful. The Lord is saying to Jeremiah that He's going to show him things that it would otherwise be impossible for man to know. And the reason we know that it would otherwise be impossible is because of that word hidden.

Did you catch that? In verse 2, excuse me, verse 3, "*Call to me and I will answer you, and (I) will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.*" That word hidden some Bible translations use the word unsearchable. It means something that is made inaccessible.

And it was actually used to describe certain cities that had a huge fortified walls around them. And you and I would prob..., perhaps use the word impregnable. That city is just, you know, there's no way. This, it's hidden. It's fortified. You can't get in. God is using that word to describe truths that he's going to give to Jeremiah, which tells you they're truths that he could never know. That no one could know apart from the Lord revealing them. All right?

Here's the question that you might kind of be wondering. Is this a promise that we can all lay hold of? Can we all say, hey, Jeremiah chapter 33:3, I claim that promise. Well, in a general sense, in a general sort of a sense, I believe that this is a promise that all believers can lay hold of. With this sort of an understanding, God is not promising that He's going to reveal everything to everyone who presses in.

There are things that He, there are mysteries that He maintains. And He's going to maintain them regardless, no matter how much you press in or ask or whatever. But, when we call out to the Lord, and that is that you'll notice the element here that we can't forget. He doesn't just give this thing saying, hey, just pop into my presence and I'll just share things with you that you could have never known.

You'll notice that verse three begins with "*Call to me...*" And the implication there is not just a casual sort of, hey God tell me what's going on. It's that pressing in on the Lord, that waiting on the Lord. That seeking until you find. Searching through the house. Oh, you know, turning over every piece of furniture to look for something that's lost. Or that couldn't otherwise be found.

It is that kind of calling upon the Lord. And God is saying, I will reveal things to you. I will uncover things to you that you couldn't know any other way. It's a wonderful promise.

Verse 4:

" 4 For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city and the houses of the kings of Judah that were torn down to make a defense against the siege mounds and against the sword: "

So, apparently some of the city or some of the houses that were probably even part of the city wall or very close to it, were torn down to create either scaffolding of some kind, or a higher barrier. We don't know exactly how they were being used. But they were being used some way to try to keep the Babylonians out. And of course it's going to be a vain effort. But here's what God is saying concerning those houses that were torn down or taken apart to use the lumber and so forth. He says in verse 5:

"5 They are coming (correction in) to fight against the Chaldeans and to fill them with the dead bodies of men whom I shall strike down in my anger and my wrath, for I've (correction I have) hidden my face from the city because of (their) all their evil. And so the Lord basically tells them all those houses that were taken apart are going to just be filled with dead bodies. In other words, it's not going to do you any good.

You're trying to stop or build a defense against the king of Babylon, but the part you're doing is, you're actually fighting against Me. Because I am with the king of Babylon and he will prevail. And the reason he'll prevail is because he is My spanking spoon against you at this time.

But you know, the Lord never brings anything like that into our lives without knowing that it's going to have an ultimate positive end. And look at what He goes on to say beginning in verse six. This is very important, He says:

"6 Behold, I will bring to it health and healing, and I will heal them and reveal to them abundance of prosperity and security. 7 I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel, and rebuild them as they were at first. 8 I will cleanse them from all the guilt of their sin against me, and I will forgive all the guilt of their sin and rebellion against me. 9 And this city shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and a glory (and note this next phrase) before (all of the) all the nations of the earth (Did you catch that?) who shall hear of all the good that I

do for them. They shall fear and tremble because of all the good and all the prosperity I provide for it."

Stop there. What's going on here? Once again, we've talked about this before. But the restoration of Judah, of the city of Jerusalem, after the 70-year Babylonian exile, is a type of the final restoration of Jerusalem which will occur during the millennial age. So the Lord is giving us a picture here. He's saying, I'm going to rebuild Jerusalem. But it's a picture of a future event that is going to be much bigger and actually going to have a global response.

And that's what's going to happen during the millennial kingdom. Jerusalem, God, you know, the people of the world at that time, and these are the people who essentially survived the great tribulation and are now living in the millennial age. They will see what God did to prosper Israel and the city of Jerusalem. And they will fear and tremble because of all that prosperity. In other words, they will know there is a God who supports Israel, and we know from other prophecies, they will stream to Israel.

Verse 10:

10 "Thus says the Lord: In this place of which you say, 'It is a waste without man or beast,' in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man or inhabitant or beast, there shall be heard again 11 the voice of mirth (which is joy) and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voices of those who sing, as they bring thank offerings to the house of the Lord:

"Give thanks to the Lord of hosts, for the Lord is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!" (They're going to sing that again) For I will restore the fortunes of the land as at first, says the Lord.

12 "Thus says the Lord of hosts: (In this place, excuse me, yes) In this place that is waste, without man or beast, and in all of its cities, there shall again be (a) habitations of shepherds resting their flocks. 13 In the cities of the hill country, in the cities of Shephelah, and in the cities of the Negeb, in the land of Benjamin, the places about Jerusalem, (correction and in) in the cities of Judah, flocks shall again pass under the hands of the one who counts them, says the Lord."

And that's what shepherds would do. They would count their sheep when they brought them in to make sure none were lost. And He says that will happen again even after 70 years of no shepherds and nothing going on in the land.

All right, now we're going to come to a direct Messianic prophecy. Pay attention here:

14 "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. 15 In those days, and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David,"

And that's talking about Messiah. That is directly speaking of the coming of Messiah, specifically during the millennial age. Now He came the first time but was rejected. But of course, He will return and what will He do then?

We're in the middle of verse 15:

"...and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. 16 In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely." (speaking of the salvation that will come to Israel at the coming of the Lord.) And this is the name by which it will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness."

Boy, that's going to be a completely different song that the Israelites are going to sing. Because, you know, when Jesus came, they weren't saying the Lord is our righteousness. What were they saying? Our obedience is our righteousness. Weren't they? The message of the Pharisees was clear. You want to be righteous before God, you got to do things our way. You got to do things our way. You got to keep the law.

And yet, during the millennial age, the Jews are going to cry out. And the whole area is going to be referred to as, "The Lord is our righteousness."

The Lord is our righteousness. That's what we say today, as Christians, don't we? The Lord is our righteousness. Am I, are you righteous before God by your works? No, neither am I. We are righteous before God because of Him who died for us on the cross. So in other words, the Lord is our righteousness. He is our righteous standing before God. And the Jews are going to say that too one day, during the millennial age. So, going to be pretty cool.

Verse 17:

17 "For thus says the Lord: David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, 18 and the Levitical priests shall never lack a man in my presence to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings, and to make sacrifices forever."

So, in verse 17, it's interesting, the Lord says David will never lack a man to sit on the throne. But remember, that hasn't happened since the Jews went into exile.

By the way, I had somebody write a note. I think it was, Sue told me there was a comment on her YouTube channel. Someone I had been making the point here on Wednesday night, that after the exile, there was never again a king sitting on the throne of Israel. And somebody said, well, what about Herod in the time of Jesus? But remember Herod wasn't a Jew. He was an Edomite, or Idumean as he was called. So, the Herodian line or lineage, they were put on the throne by Caesar, by Rome. And they were political kings and they were not Jews.

There has not been a Jewish king on the throne of Israel since Zedekiah. And there will not be another one until Jesus returns at the end of the great tribulation. And as a son of David sits on the throne over the world during the millennial kingdom. And like we said before, I believe David, it, as you know, will of course be resurrected. And I believe David will sit on the throne in Jerusalem again during the millennial age. So, anyway, this promise will come to pass during the millennium. And so... Yeah, there you go.

Verse 19:

"¹⁹The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: ²⁰"Thus says the Lord: If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that the day and night will not come at their appointed time, (and they always have) ²¹then also my covenant with David my servant may be broken,..."

What was God's covenant with David his servant? We just read it. He will always, never fail to have a man on the throne. That's what God told David. And remember David was blown away when he heard it. He said, Lord, who am I that You would make such a promise to me? (2 Samuel 7:18) And now here God is saying, if my covenant with the day and with the night can be altered or changed or rescinded, then David will fail to have a descendant on the throne. But obviously that's not going to happen, right, so He says.

Verse 21:

"...²¹ then also my covenant with David my servant may be broken, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and my covenant with the Levitical priests my ministers. ²² As the host of heaven cannot be numbered and the sands of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the offspring of David

my servant, and the Levitical priests who minister to me." (the flourishing of the righteous.)

Verse 23:

23 The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: (Here's yet another word finishing out this chapter.) 24 "Have you not observed that these people are saying, 'The Lord has rejected the two clans that he chose'? Thus, they have despised my people so that they are no longer a nation in their sight. (And by those, you're referring to Judah; they're saying the Lord has rejected Judah. He's saying,) 25 Thus says the Lord: If I have not established my covenant with day and night and the fixed order of heaven and earth, 26 then I will reject the offspring of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his offspring to rule over the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them."

So, again, he's basically kind of saying the same message. If my covenant with the day and the night can change, then I'll go back on my promise. But, has God's covenant with the day and the night changed that you're aware of? It is so exact, we can set our clocks. We know exactly when the sun is going to rise on June 22nd, 2052. We can compute that. We know exactly when, we know the minute it's going to crest the horizon. We know when it's going to go down that night, because of the consistency and the faithfulness of God. And God says, if that could ever change, then I'll go back. But obviously God has created an arrangement here that is consistent.

Chapter 34. I need a quick drink if I'm going to keep reading. Chapter 34 of Jeremiah is kind of a two-part message. The very first part is spoken directly to King Zedekiah, and the second part is a message to the people because of their unfaithfulness. We'll see what it's all about. But it says:

"1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army and all the kingdoms of the earth under the (correction his) dominion and all the peoples were fighting against Jerusalem and all its cities: 2 "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Go and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord: Behold, I am giving this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire. 3 You shall not escape from his hand but shall surely be captured and delivered into his hand. You shall see the king of Babylon eye to eye and speak with him face to face. And you shall go to Babylon.'"

Now, it's very possible, guys, that this chapter occurred before the previous two chapters, and this is the message that got him into trouble. It's very possible because you'll notice that this is essentially the message that Zedekiah recited in chapter 32, when he was saying, why do you say that to me all the time? So, remember that the chapters in Jeremiah are not in chronological order. In fact, the next chapter that we're going to look at goes back in time like 10 to 20 years, something like that, like 10 years. So anyway, just keep that in mind.

" 4 Yet hear the word of the Lord, (verse 4) O Zedekiah king of Judah! Thus says the Lord concerning you: You shall not die by the sword. 5 You shall die in peace. And as spices were burned for your fathers, the former kings who were before you, so people should (correction shall) burn spices for you and lament for you, saying, "Alas, lord!" For I have spoken the word, declares the Lord."

Now that is a profound message of mercy. Because Zedekiah deserved to die by the sword. And yet the Lord speaks to him and says you won't. That doesn't mean a lot of other nasty things aren't going to happen to him. (And)

"6 Then Jeremiah the prophet spoke all these words to Zedekiah king of Judah, in Jerusalem, 7 when the army of the king of Babylon was fighting against Jerusalem and against all the cities of Judah that were left, Lachish and Azekah, for these were the only fortified cities in Judah that remained.

8 The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people in Jerusalem to make a proclamation of liberty to them, 9 that everyone should set free his Hebrew slaves, male and female, so that no one should enslave a Jew, his brother. 10 And they obeyed, all the officials and all the people who had entered into the covenant that everyone would set free his slave, male or female, so that they would not be enslaved again. They obeyed and set them free. 11 But afterward they turned around and took back the male and female slaves they had set free, and brought them into subjection as slaves."

Now you'll remember guys, really, the only reason people could take a fellow Jew as a slave was a temporary payback for something owed. But even then, it could only be for a short time, and then, after seven years, they'd have to let him go. Well, the Jews didn't obey that. They just continued to oppress people and enslaved them. And they were enslaving their own people.

But Zedekiah made an agreement with the people and the officials. And in fact, he says they entered into a covenant. You guys remember how they entered into covenants back in those days? Remember how Abraham was told to enter into a

covenant with the Lord by cutting animals into halves and then walking between the halves and reciting the terms of the covenant?

Well, that was still going on. They don't mention it here. It's mentioned a little bit later. Well, so they all entered into this covenant. And the reason it was done that way was to kind of say, well, there were several things they were kind of saying. But essentially, if I go back on this, may I be like this animal torn in shreds and sort of a thing.

So, it says here that they all obeyed the king and they let all of their male and female slaves go free. But then, they took them back. Later on, they said, you know what, that was a bad idea. And they went and took them all back again. We don't know why yet. We're going to learn.

"¹² The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah from the Lord: ¹³ "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: I myself made a covenant with your fathers when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, saying, ¹⁴ 'At the end of seven years each of you must set free the fellow Hebrew has been sold to you and has served you six years; you must set him free from your service.' But your fathers did not listen to me or incline their ears to me. ¹⁵ You recently repented and did what was right in my eyes by proclaiming liberty, each to his neighbor, and you made a covenant before me in the house that is called by my name, ¹⁶ but then you turned around and profaned my name when each of you took back his male and female slaves, whom you had set free according to their desire, and you brought them into subjection to be your slaves. (In other words, you brought them back into subjection.)

¹⁷ "Therefore, thus says the Lord: You have not obeyed me by proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother and to his neighbor; behold, I proclaim to you liberty to the sword, to pestilence, and to famine, declares the Lord. I will make you a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth. (In other words, because you failed to give liberty to your slaves, I'm going to give freedom to the sword to pursue you. That's what God is saying.) ¹⁸ And the men who transgressed my covenant and did not keep the terms of the covenant that they made before me, I will make them like the calf that they cut in two and passed between its parts- (because that's basically why they did that.) ¹⁹ the officials of Judah, the officials of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, the priests, and all the people of the land who pass between the parts of the calf. ²⁰ And I will give them into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their lives. Their dead bodies shall be food for the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth."

You can see what's going on here. The people weren't taking seriously the Lord. Anything that concerning the Lord, they just weren't taking anything seriously. Anyway, we're going to learn here in the next verse, what happened. Verse 21:

"21 And Zedekiah, king of Judah and his officials I will give into the hand(s) of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their lives, into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon, which has withdrawn from you."

See what's happening here? What we know is that the Babylonian army actually broke off its siege for a short period of time, to essentially go and repel an attack by the Egyptians, who had come against them. And actually, Jeremiah is going to talk more about this when we get into chapter 37. So we'll learn more at that time.

But the people were obviously, you know, they wake up one morning, they find the Babylonian army is gone. The siege and everything that they'd been setting up and it's all just abandoned. Well, this was after they had made this covenant to let their male and female slaves go free. So now they're starting to talk among themselves and thinking, hey, they went to go fight against the Egyptians. Maybe the Egyptians are going to be strong enough to actually defeat the Babylonians, and we're going to be back into normal.

We're going to go back to life as normal. I need those slaves we just set free. Obviously, we don't need to please God anymore. I think we probably took care of Him. You know, they're thinking of God like a pagan deity. We're going to bring these slaves back into our house again and re-enslave them. You see what's going on? So check out what the Lord tells them through Jeremiah. Verse 22:

"22 Behold, I will command, declares the Lord, and will bring them back (meaning the Babylonians) to this city. And they will fight against it and take it and burn it with fire. (And) I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without inhabitant."

So God says, I'm going to bring them back. One more chapter. We'll do this quickly. This is a very interesting chapter because in it, the Lord calls attention to the commitment of a single clan within Israel and their devotion. So that they might be highlighted as a people.

"1 The word (of the Lord) came (correction that came) to Jeremiah from the Lord in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah: (Alright, we just went back 10 to 20 years. This is back during Jehoiakim, okay? We were in

Zedekiah's reign. In fact, 10 years into Zedekiah's reign. Now we've gone way back.) ² *"Go to the house of the Rechabites and speak with them and bring them to the house of the Lord, into one of the chambers; then offer them wine to drink."*

So here's, figure out what Jeremiah's doing. He gets this clan called the Rechabites, and he brings them into the area of the temple. And he sits them down, and of course, whenever Jeremiah does things, he's going to draw a crowd. And so there's a crowd of people going, okay, what's Jeremiah up to now? And he sits them down, and he pours big jugs of wine and sets them in front of these guys and says, drink up, boys. Why is that important? Verse 3:

³ *So I took Jaazaniah the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habazziniah and his brothers and all his sons and the whole house of the Rechabites. (And) ⁴ I brought them to the house of the Lord into the chamber of the sons of Hanan the sons of Igdaliah, the man of God, which was near the chamber of the officials, above the chamber of Masseiah the son of Shallum, keeper of the threshold. (Good grief. Alright) ⁵ Then I set before the Rechabites pitchers full of wine, and cups, and I said to them, "Drink wine." ⁶ But they answered, "We will drink no wine, for Jonadab the son of Rachab, our father, commanded us, 'You shall not drink wine neither you nor your sons forever. ⁷ You shall not build a house; you shall not sow seed; you shall not plant or have a vineyard; but you shall live in tents all your days, (so) that you may live many days in the land where you sojourn.' ⁸ We have obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rachab, our father, in all that he commanded us, to drink no wine all our days, ourselves, our wives, our sons, and our daughters, ⁹ and not to build houses to dwell in. We have no vineyard or field or seed, ¹⁰ but we have lived in tents, and have obeyed and done all that Jonadab our father commanded us. (Obviously, they were like, like wandering herdsmen, okay, living in tents.) ¹¹ But when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against the land, we said, 'Come, and let us go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the Chaldeans and the army of the Syrians.' So we are living in Jerusalem."*

¹² *Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: ¹³ "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Go and say to the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will you not receive instruction and listen to my words? declares the Lord. ¹⁴ The command that Jonadab the son of Rechab gave to his sons, to drink no wine, has been kept, and they drink none to this day, for they have obeyed their father's command. I have spoken to you persistently, but you have not listened to me. (You see what He's doing? This is a message by contrast. They obeyed their earthly father. You haven't obeyed your heavenly Father.) ¹⁵ I have sent to you all my servants, the prophets, sending them persistently, saying, 'Turn now every one of you from his evil way, and amend your ways,*

(correction deeds,) *and do not go after other gods to serve them, and then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to you and your fathers.' But you did not incline your ear or listen to me. 16 The sons of Jonadab the son(s) of Rechab have kept the command that their father gave them, but this people have (correction has) not obeyed me. 17 Therefore, thus says the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I am bringing upon Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the disaster that I have pronounced against them, because I have spoken to them and they have not listened, I have called to them and they have not answered."*

18 But to the house of the Rechabites Jeremiah said, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Because you have obeyed the command of Jonadab your father and kept all his precepts and done all that he commanded you, 19 therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Jonadab the son of Rechab shall never lack a man to stand before me.""

And that means his descendants will continue. And what is God doing? He's, well, he's honoring them for their obedience, it's simple. But He's trying to, by contrast, show the rest of the people that were listening, these people obeyed a man and you won't even obey God. So that's, it's something to show their shame. And we ought to be ashamed when we obey man and not God.

You remember what the disciples said when they got hauled in before the Sanhedrin? Do not, the Sanhedrin said, preach in this name. Stop telling people about Jesus Christ. Stop it! And they said, well, guys, judge for yourselves whether we should obey God or man, right? They learned the lesson. Hey, they said, we have to obey God.

These sorts of scriptures remind us that obedience is a good thing. But whenever we are called to an obedience that supersedes or tries to jump over the top of what God has given us in His word, we have no obligation to obey it. We are to obey God, right?

That means, you're in a job and your boss says, I want you to write a different number on the ledger because we're not going to pay that much taxes this year. I'm just, I'm tired of paying taxes. So you write this number and not the one that's...you are under no obligation.

Well, but Pastor Paul, I'll lose my job. You think God can't get you another job? You think God can't take care of you if you walk in obedience to Him? Absolutely. And He will honor those who honor His Word. And that's the important thing to remember. We are to obey God.

God gives you a command, you obey it. Man says, no, you can't keep that command. You politely say, I'm sorry, but my God kind of is a little bit more of an authority than you are in my life. In fact, in the universe, I must obey God.

Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank You so much for Your Word tonight. Thank You for these chapters in Jeremiah. We've learned a great deal from them, and they help us to affirm the things that we know all too well. And to remind us of things that we need to be reminded of. You are a God of mercy and grace, but You're also a God of justice, righteousness, purity, and holiness.

And You have called us to walk in obedience. Not for salvation, but because of salvation, that we might be a glory to Your name, pointing people to You as a wonderful Master and Lord. Father, I thank You so much.

And there's a lot of connections that we can make between what's going on in our country, and what was happening in the days of Jeremiah. Help us to learn from these things, Lord, and apply the things that are necessary. We pray that You would bring revelation to our hearts as we seek Your face in Jesus name, we pray, amen.