

(Through the Bible) Jeremiah 36-40

by Chuck Smith

God's desire for forgiveness and repentance is contrasted with the consequences of disobedience and rebellion.

Duration: 54:19

Scripture: Jeremiah 36:2-32, Matthew 11:15

Topics: "Repentance", "Obedience To God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker expresses his concern for those who reject God's truth and continue in their sinful ways. He emphasizes the importance of listening to God's warnings and turning away from sin. The speaker references the story of Getoliah and Johanan to illustrate the consequences of not heeding God's voice. He concludes by urging the listeners to have ears to hear and a heart that responds to the Lord, and he prays for God's blessings and guidance in their lives.

Transcript

At this time, shall we turn to Jeremiah chapter 36, as we continue our journey through the Word of God towards heaven. Now, as we have pointed out, the prophecies of Jeremiah are not in chronological order, but they sort of skip around, and so it is important at the beginning of each chapter where Jeremiah locates for you the time and usually the place of the prophecy, so that you'll be able to fit it more into the historic events, because you just can't read Jeremiah in a chronological order. It isn't written that way.

So in chapter 36, we have the prophecy of Jeremiah that came to him in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, who was the son of Josiah, the king of Judah, that this is the word of the Lord which came to Jeremiah, saying, Now take thee a scroll of a book, and write therein all of the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel and against Judah and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah even until this day. Now, you remember he was called to prophesy in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah. He prophesied on through the death of Josiah about fifteen years later, and now four years later in the son of Jehoiakim, or the son of Josiah, Jehoiakim's reign, God commands him to write all of the prophecies on this scroll that I've given you up till now.

So it was no doubt quite a task to go back and to rehearse all of the word of the Lord that had come to Jeremiah during this approximately twenty year period. The Lord declares, It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purposed to do unto them, that they may return every man from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin. Now the purpose of giving to them the word of the Lord was to turn them from sin.

God is constantly giving to man the opportunity of repenting, of turning from his sin. God said through Ezekiel the prophet, Turn ye, turn ye, for why will you die, saith the Lord? Behold, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Now here God again is saying, Write it all down.

It may be that they will turn from their sins in order that I might forgive them their iniquities and their sins. God glories in forgiveness. God delights to forgive you all of your sins.

All he wants is just an excuse. And you provide him that excuse by asking him. God is really more desirous to forgive us of our sins than usually we are to be forgiven.

Quite often we with David, as he describes his experience in Psalm 32, seek to cover our sins. We seek to hide our sins from the Lord. We just seek not to mention it, you know, just sort of keep silent about it.

But as David said, when I sought to cover my sins, man, there was a constant roaring within. And I began to just dry up. I became just dried spiritually.

Then I said, I will confess my sin unto the Lord. And he said, And thou forgavest me all my iniquities. Now, in the Hebrew, as that reads.

The moment David in his heart said, I'm going to confess before he could ever get the words out of his lips. Just that change of the attitude in his heart. And thou forgavest me.

That's all God's looking for. Just the change in the attitude of your heart. Oh, God, I'm sorry.

I'm going to confess to you my sins. I'm going to get right with God. Well, before you can get out of your mouth, you're already right with God.

God is just looking for that change towards him. The moment in your heart you have that turn towards God. Oh, I'm going to just turn it over to God.

I'm just going to turn just in that moment. God begins his work of cleansing, forgiving, pardoning. God delights to forgive us our sins.

And so the purpose of the word of God to these people, write it all down, give it to them. That they might hear all of the evil indictments that I have against them. And the evil that I am purposing to do to them, maybe if they know the judgment that is coming, they will turn.

Then Jeremiah called Baruch, who was the son of Neriah. And Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord, which he had spoken unto him upon this scroll of a book. And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, Now I am shut up.

That is, he was in prison. I cannot go unto the house of the Lord. Therefore, go thou and read in the roll, which you have written from my mouth, the words of the Lord in the ears of the people in the Lord's house upon the fasting day, and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities.

Now they had proclaimed to fast. They invited the people to come for this time of fasting. And usually a time of fasting is associated with the time of seeking the Lord.

A very appropriate time for the word of God to come to the people. And so Jeremiah commanded Baruch, who was the scribe, to write all of the words in the book and then go and read them in the house of the

Lord when that day of fasting came and people were gathering from all over of Judah to worship the Lord. It may be they will present their supplication before the Lord and they will return every man from his evil way.

For great is the anger and the fury that the Lord hath pronounced against this people. So Baruch, the son of Neriah, did according to all that Jeremiah, the prophet, commanded him. And he read the book of the words of the Lord in the Lord's house.

And it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, the king of Judah, in the ninth month, that they proclaimed to fast before the Lord to all the people in Jerusalem and to all the people that came from the cities of Judah unto Jerusalem. Then Baruch read in the book, the words of Jeremiah in the house of the Lord in the chamber of Gamariah, the son of Shaphan, the scribe, and in the higher court at the entry of the new gate of the Lord's house in the ears of all the people. Now, when Micaiah, the son of Jemariah, the son of Shaphan, had heard out of the book all of the words of the Lord, then he went down into the king's house, into the scribe's chamber, and all of the princes were sitting there.

And it gives the names of these various princes. And Micaiah declared unto them all of the words that he had heard when Baruch read the book in the ears of the people. Therefore, all of the princes sent Jehudi, the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shalamiah, and all of these names are worthless to us, unto Baruch saying, take in thy hand the scroll wherein you have read in the ears of the people and come.

So Baruch was down there reading it. This young fellow heard him reading, ran and told the princes who were there in the house of the scribes what this guy was reading to the people. And they said, well, you better get him down here.

So he ran back and got Baruch and he said, come with me, you know, and read the scroll to these fellows down here. And so they said unto him, sit down now and read it in our ears. So Baruch read it in their ears.

Now it came to pass when they heard all of the words that they were both afraid, one and another, and said unto Baruch, we will surely tell the king all these words. And they asked Baruch saying, tell us now, how did you write all of these words at his mouth? And Baruch answered them. He said he pronounced all of the words unto me with his mouth and I wrote them with ink in the book.

How do you think? Then said the princes unto Baruch, go hide thee, you and Jeremiah, and don't let anybody know where you are. Now we're going to take this to the king and you guys better go hide. So they went to the king into the court, but they laid up the scroll in the chamber of Elishema, the scribe, and they told the words in the ears of the king.

So the king sent Jehudai to Elishema, the scribe's chamber, and Jehudai read it in the ears of the king and in the ears of the princes, which stood beside the king. Now the king was sitting in his winter quarters in the ninth month and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him. And it came to pass that when Jehudai had read three or four of the leaves, that he cut it with his pen knife and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth until the whole scroll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth.

And yet they were not afraid, nor did they tear their garments, neither the king nor any of his servants that heard all of these words. Rather than fearing the Lord, rather than repenting, rather than, as was the custom when they really were repenting before God, often they would rip their clothes as a sign of great repentance and sorrow. None of that.

Nevertheless, Elnathan and Delahiah and Jemariah had made intercession to the king that he would not burn the scroll, but he would not listen to them. But the king commanded Jeramiel, the son of Hamalek, and Zerariah, the son of Israel, and Shalamiah, the son of Abdeel, to take Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet. But the Lord hid them.

Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah. After that, the king had burned the scroll and the words which Baruch wrote at the mouth of Jeremiah. And the Lord said to him, take again another scroll and write in it all of the former words that were in the first scroll, which Jehoiakim the king of Judah hath burned.

And thou shalt say to Jehoiakim the king of Judah, Thus saith the Lord, You have burned this scroll, saying, Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast. Therefore, thus saith the Lord of Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, He shall have none to sit on the throne of David. His dead body shall be cast in the day to the heat and in the night to the frost.

And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity. And I will bring upon them and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem and upon the men of Judah all the evil that I have pronounced against them. But they hearkened not.

Then took Jeremiah another scroll, gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, had burned in the fire. And there were added besides to those many like words. And so more or less as a record of God's truth, these scrolls were written of that word of God in the warning of the people of the evil and the judgment that would come upon them if they would not forsake their sins and follow after the Lord.

But Jehoiakim, the king, showing his disdain for the word of God, took his penknife, cut it up and threw it in the fire. But prophets of God are not silenced that easy. So Jeremiah got another scroll, wrote the whole thing down again, adding other words to it.

And of course, these are the prophecies basically that we have been reading in the book of Jeremiah. These are the copies of these various scrolls, the pages that were written, the various words that God gave to Jeremiah concerning his judgment that was coming upon Judah using Babylon, the Babylonian army as God's instrument of judgment. Now, we come to the third part of the book of Jeremiah, and this covers the period of Zedekiah the king.

These particular prophecies, 37 through 39, cover from the time that Zedekiah ascended to the throne unto his captivity in Babylon. So he again gives us the time of the prophecy, and King Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, reigned instead of Coniah, the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had made a king in the land of Judah. So Zedekiah was king under the order of Nebuchadnezzar.

When Jehoiakim died, you remember Jeremiah said, there won't be any of your family sitting upon the throne. Well, one of his sons, Jehoiachim, sought for a time to sit upon the throne. He lasted for three months, and Nebuchadnezzar came back and deposed him, and Nebuchadnezzar set up Zedekiah as the king.

Over Judah, so that Jehoiakim was not succeeded by his own children, and the word of the Lord was fulfilled. Who Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, made king over the land of Judah, but neither he, nor

his servants, nor the people of the land would hearken unto the words of the Lord, which he spake by the prophet Jeremiah. People had closed their ears to the warning of God.

Zedekiah refused to listen. He would listen privately. He would call Jeremiah and talk to him privately, but then publicly he would denounce him.

Zedekiah the king sent Jehuchal, the son of Shalamiah and Zephaniah, the sons of Maseah, the priest of the prophet Jeremiah, saying, pray now unto the Lord, our God, for us. Now Jeremiah came in and went out among the people, for they had not yet put him into prison. Then Pharaoh's army had come forth out of Egypt, when the Chaldeans that besieged Jerusalem heard the tidings of them, they departed from Jerusalem.

Now the Babylonian army was there, but when they heard that the Egyptian army was coming, the Babylonian army withdrew. They withdrew their men from Jerusalem. Then came the word of the Lord to the prophet Jeremiah saying, thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, thus shall ye say to the king of Judah that sent you unto me to inquire of me.

Behold, Pharaoh's army, which has come forth to help you, will return to Egypt into their own land and the Chaldeans shall come again and fight against this city and take it and burn it with fire. Thus saith the Lord, don't deceive yourself, saying the Chaldeans shall surely depart from us, for they shall not depart. Now the people thought, oh, we're free, you know, from the Chaldeans.

The Egyptian army has frightened them off. They've gone. Now we can do our own thing.

Now we can be independent of Babylon. Now we won't have to pay tribute. And they rebelled against the Babylonian authority.

But Jeremiah warned them against this. He said, don't think that you're free of them. They're going to return again.

For though you had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans, even if you had wiped out the whole army and there were only a few wounded men left, God is determined to deliver you unto the Chaldeans. And just a few wounded men would be able to take you. And they'll burn this city with fire.

So it came to pass when the army of the Chaldeans was broken up from Jerusalem for the fear of the Pharaoh's army, then Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin to separate himself from the midst of the people. So Jeremiah started to take off and go up to Benjamin. But as he was at the gate of Benjamin, one of the gates of Jerusalem at that time, a captain of the ward was there whose name was Arijah.

And he took Jeremiah, the prophet, saying, you're going over to the Babylonians, to the Chaldeans. And Jeremiah said, that's not true. I am not going over to the Chaldeans.

But this captain would not listen to him. So Arijah took Jeremiah and brought him before the princes. And when the princes were angry with Jeremiah, they smote him and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan, the scribe, for they had made that a prison.

And when Jeremiah was entered into the dungeon and into the cabins, and Jeremiah had remained there for many days. So they imprisoned Jeremiah, thinking that he was going to go over to the Babylonians.

Jeremiah declared that wasn't his intention, but yet they made him a prisoner anyhow to keep him from that.

Then Zedekiah, the king, sent and took him out. And the king asked him secretly in the house and said, is there any word from the Lord? And Jeremiah said, there is. For he said, thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon.

Moreover, Jeremiah said unto king Zedekiah, what have I offended against thee or against thy servants or against this people that you've put me in prison? Where are now your prophets, which prophesied unto you, saying the king of Babylon will not come against you, nor against this land. There were prophets that said the Babylonians will never come into this land. He said, where are those prophets now that gave you that story? Therefore, here now, I pray thee, oh my Lord, the king, let my prayer, I pray thee, be accepted before thee that you cause me not to return to the house of Jonathan, the scribe, lest I did.

Please don't send me back to that prison. I'll die there if you do. He was put there in the prison of the house of Jonathan, the scribe.

Then Zedekiah, the king, commanded that they should commit Jeremiah into the court of the prison. That is not put him back in the dungeon and that they should give him daily a piece of bread out of the baker's street until all of the bread in the city was spent. Thus, Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

Then Shabbathiah, the son of Matan and Gadoliah, the son of Pasher and Jucal, the son of Shalemiah, and Pasher, the son of Malchiah, heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people saying, Jeremiah said to all the people, Thus saith the Lord, he that remains in this city shall die by the sword or the famine or the pestilence. But he that will surrender to the Chaldeans will live, for he shall have his life for a prey and shall live. Thus saith the Lord, this city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it.

Therefore, the princes said unto the king, We beseech thee, let's put this man to death, for he is weakening the hands of the men of war that remain in the city and the hands of all of the people and speaking these words unto them, for this man is seeking not the welfare of this people but the hurt. Then Zedekiah the king said, Behold, he's in your hand, for the king can do nothing against you. Then they took Jeremiah and cast him in the dungeon of Malchiah, the son of Hamilach, that was in the court of the prison.

And they let Jeremiah down with cords, and in the dungeon there was no water but mire. So Jeremiah sunk in the mire. Very graphic, sad picture of a man who is being punished for doing the will of God.

The Bible speaks about being punished for doing good. If you take it well, then surely God dwells in you. Many times we are punished for doing evil.

There's no credit or value of taking that well. But if when you are doing good, you suffer for it and you take it well, then that gives some real proof of the Christian experience. You see, it is possible to suffer according to the will of God or it is possible to suffer as the result of doing the will of God.

It is wrong to think that because you are a child of God that somehow God is going to miraculously spare you from trouble. That you won't have any problems because you've surrendered your life to the Lord. That is not true.

As a child of God, we are exposed to the wrath of this world that is stored up against God. Now they cannot strike God, so they strike God's representatives. The world does not want to hear the truth of God.

And if you dare to speak the truth of God, the world will hate you. Jesus said, if you were of the world, then the world would love you. But you are not of the world.

You're a threat to the world. They don't want to hear the truth of God's word. Especially do they not want to hear of the coming judgment of God against the wicked.

And that's the message that Jeremiah was declaring. God is going to judge you for your iniquities. The judgment of God is coming.

There's no sense trying to defend yourself against the Babylonians because God is already determined to give you into their hands. And if you try to defend yourself, you're only going to die. Either by the sword or the pestilence or the famine.

Now, if you'll surrender, you'll live. You'll be saved alive. But if you resist, they're going to kill you.

Now, these men said, hey, King, that's treasonous. You see, he is demoralizing all of the army. These guys aren't wanting to fight because he's demoralizing them, telling them they're going to get beat.

Now, we ought to kill him. And Zedekiah said, well, he's in your hands. I won't do anything against you.

And so they grabbed Jeremiah and let him down in this dungeon. And in the bottom of the dungeon, no water, just this mire. And Jeremiah began to sink in this mire.

Now, when Ebed-Millik, the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs, which was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon, the king was sitting in the gate of Benjamin. Ebed-Millik went forth out of the king's house and spoke to the king saying, my lord, the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet whom they have cast into the dungeon. And he is likely to die there for hunger where he is, for there's no more bread in the city.

Then the king commanded Ebed-Millik, the Ethiopian, saying, take with you 30 men and lift Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon before he dies. So Ebed-Millik took the men with him and they went into the house of the king under the treasury and they took from there these old cast clouts and old rotten rags. And they let them down by cords into the dungeon to Jeremiah.

And Ebed-Millik, the Ethiopian, said to Jeremiah, now put these old cast clouts and the rotten rags under your armpits there. And Jeremiah did so, so they drew Jeremiah up with the cords. He was no doubt stuck in the mud in the bottom.

And so they had to make sort of a sling and put it under his arms and all with the rotten rags so it wouldn't, you know, hurt him too bad. And then the cords underneath and they gently lifted him out of this mire into which he had sunk there in the bottom of the dungeon. And so they took him out of the dungeon and Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

Then Zedekiah, the king, sent and took Jeremiah the prophet unto him into the third entry that is in the house of the Lord. And the king said unto Jeremiah, I will ask you a thing. Now don't hide anything from me.

Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, if I declare it unto you, will you not surely put me to death? And if I give you counsel, you won't listen to me anyhow. Why do you want me to tell you anything? If I tell you the truth, you'll put me to death. If I tell you what's really happening, you're not going to listen anyhow.

So what's the use? So Zedekiah, the king, swore secretly unto Jeremiah saying, as the Lord liveth that made us this soul, I will not put thee to death. Neither will I give thee into the hand of these men that seek your life. So Zedekiah made a covenant with Jeremiah that he would neither kill him nor turn him over to the men who wanted to kill him.

Then said Jeremiah unto Zedekiah, thus saith the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel. If you will assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon's princes, then your soul shall live and this city shall not be burned with fire. And you shall live and your house.

You and your whole house will be able to live if you'll just go over and surrender. If you'll just go out and surrender to them, you'll be able to live and your whole family. But if you will not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans and they shall burn it with fire and you will not escape out of their hand.

And Zedekiah the king said unto Jeremiah, I'm afraid of the Jews that have fallen to the Chaldeans lest they deliver me into their hand and they mock me. But Jeremiah said, they shall not deliver thee. Obey, I beg thee the voice of the Lord, which I speak unto thee.

So it shall be well unto thee and thy soul shall live. So here's Jeremiah pleading with Zedekiah. Now look, they won't deliver you to the Jews.

I beg you, listen to what God has to say. Obey the Lord, it's for your own good. To me, it is always strange that people will reject God's truth.

So many times we find ourselves in the position of seeing what's happening. Seeing what's going to happen. Seeing the path that a person is on and knowing that it's a path of destruction.

And we beg them, look, don't do that. And you hear all of these lame excuses that they have for going on in their sin. And you can see how it's destroying them.

And you plead and you beg, but they won't hearken. Oh, how sad and tragic that is. When people turn a deaf ear to the voice of God.

When people refuse to hearken to the warnings that God sends. What's left? If you won't listen to God, if you won't listen to the warning of God, what's left? God has left no alternative. He must then bring his judgment against the wicked.

He gives men every opportunity to turn. He sends his servants to plead with men to turn. And if they refuse the voice of God, God has left no choice.

There comes then that certain judgment of God against the unrighteous and the ungodly. Jeremiah said, if you will go, it will be well with you and you will live. But if you refuse to go, this is the word that the Lord has shown me.

Behold, all of the women that are left in the King of Judah's house will be brought forth to the King of Babylon's princes. And those women shall say, thy friends have set thee on and have prevailed against

thee. Thy feet are sunk in the mire and they are turned away back.

So they shall bring out all thy wives and thy children to the Chaldeans. And thou shalt not escape out of their hand, but shall be taken by the hand of the King of Babylon. And thou shalt cause this city to be burned with fire.

Then said Zedekiah unto Jeremiah, don't let any man know these words and you will not die. But if the prince is here that I have talked with you and they come unto you and they say unto you, declare unto us now what you have said to the King. Don't hide it from us and we will not put you to death.

Also, what did the King say to you? Then you shall say unto them, I presented my supplication before the King that he would not cause me to return to Jonathan's house to die there. Just tell them that you asked me not to send you back to Jonathan's house, which Jeremiah did ask the King. He said, please don't send me back to Jonathan's house lest I die there.

So the King said, if they ask you what you said to me, just tell them that you asked me not to send you back to Jonathan's house, which thing Jeremiah did ask him. Then all of the princes came to Jeremiah and asked him and told him. And he told them according to all the words which the King had commanded.

So they left off speaking with him for the matter was not perceived. Jeremiah didn't tell them all the truth, but told them a truth, but not all of the truth. So Jeremiah remained there in the court of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken.

And he was there when Jerusalem was taken. God gave every opportunity unto Zedekiah to spare himself and the people if he would only listen and obey the voice of God. Now in the ninth year of Zedekiah, the King of Judah, in the 10th month of the ninth year, Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon and all of his army came against Jerusalem and began their siege.

And in the 11th year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month or 16 months later, in the ninth day of the month, the city was destroyed. They were under siege for 16 months. When the disease began to ravage the city, the pestilence, and many died from the disease.

Famine began to grip them, many died of starvation. It was 16 months of horror. And then the walls were broken down.

And the Babylonian army came in with the sword and began to slay the people. And all the princes of the King of Babylon came in and they sat in the middle gate, even Nergal Sherezer and the names of these princes of the King of Babylon. And it came to pass that when Zedekiah, the King of Judah, saw them and all of the men of war, then they fled and they went forth out of the city by night, by way of the King's garden, by the gate between the two walls.

And he went out the way of the plane. So Zedekiah tried to escape. Seeing that all was lost, he, with some of his men, sought to escape.

Now, there are some legends that he escaped through what is known as Solomon's quarries. And there are some stories, though unconfirmed, that Solomon's quarries go for several miles and have an exit out in the Judean wilderness. That has never been confirmed, but there are persisting stories that this indeed is so.

However it was, Zedekiah did try to escape, going down towards Jericho. But the Chaldean army pursued after them and they overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho, some 17, 18 miles from Jerusalem. And when they had taken him, they brought him to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he gave judgment upon him.

So they brought him to Nebuchadnezzar. Now, Nebuchadnezzar had set him up as the king. He was a vassal king under Nebuchadnezzar.

Now, of course, he had rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, so now Nebuchadnezzar pronounced his judgment. So the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah there in Riblah before his eyes. And also the king of Babylon slew all of the nobles of Judah.

Moreover, he put out Zedekiah's eyes and bound him with chains to carry him to Babylon. So the tragic end of Zedekiah. He watched his children being slain by the Babylonians.

Watched them slay his nobles. All of this could have been averted. Jeremiah said, if you'll just surrender, your family will be saved.

But the man would not hearken to the word of the Lord. He was rebelling against God's warnings, and thus what God declared did happen. Now, there was an interesting prophecy concerning Zedekiah that he would go to Babylon, but not see it.

Of course, it says thou shalt not see Babylon. That prophecy, interestingly enough, was fulfilled. People thought that they were saying, you know, you won't go to Babylon.

But the prophecy says you won't see Babylon. He went to Babylon, but Nebuchadnezzar had put out his eyes, so he never saw it. And the Chaldeans burned the king's house and the houses of the people with fire and broke down the walls of Jerusalem.

It is very interesting that at the present time, a archaeologist, Dr. Shiloh, is excavating now the ruins of Jerusalem at the time of Jeremiah when Zedekiah was the king. Those ruins that were destroyed by the Babylonian army, they are actually uncovering the very houses that were destroyed by this siege. And they find the houses, like the Scripture said, burned with fire.

They find the walls broken down and the rubble within. And when they came back from the 70 years of Babylonian exile, they did not rebuild the old houses, but just covered them over and built on top of them. So the old houses are still lying as they are digging now, lying in ruins, the walls broken in, signs of the fires and so forth.

And the archaeologist Spade, under the direction of Dr. Shiloh, is graphically proving the story that we're reading tonight here in Jeremiah. And maybe you read the little flap lately about the rabbis, the Orthodox rabbis in Israel who were objecting to the diggings that are going on, saying that they were digging in a graveyard. And on the news the other night, they showed the police chasing some of these guys with the curls, the Orthodox and radicals, from the site of the excavations where Dr. Shiloh is excavating.

This is the very spot. He is excavating now the very houses that were destroyed by the Babylonian army. The interesting thing that as they are uncovering these houses, they are finding in each of these houses multitudes of little gods.

Idols. The very thing for which God said his judgment was coming upon the people, because they had turned to him and were worshiping idols. And they are uncovering just troves of these idols in these little, in the houses that they are uncovering now there in Jerusalem.

I talked with Dr. Shiloh concerning these excavations, hope to visit the sites when I take the pastors over to Israel in December, and then again when we go in February with you that would like to go to Israel with us. So God's word came to pass. The Chaldeans burned the king's house.

Of course, they're looking for the palace now. They haven't found it yet. The houses of the people with fire.

They broke down the walls of Jerusalem. Then Nebuchadnezzar Adan, the captain of the guard, carried away the captives into Babylon, the remaining of the people that remained in the city, the remnant that remained, and those that had fallen away that fell to him and the rest of the people that remained. But Nebuchadnezzar Adan, the captain of the guard, left the poor of the people which had nothing in the land of Judah, and he gave them vineyards and fields at the same time.

Now, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuchadnezzar Adan, the captain of the guard, saying, take him and treat him well. Don't do him any harm, but do unto him whatever he asks you. Now, Nebuchadnezzar was aware that Jeremiah was telling these people to surrender.

He was aware that he was speaking God's truth to the people, so Nebuchadnezzar gave an order, he said, treat him well. Let him do whatever he wants. If he wants to come to Babylon, we'll set him up in a nice home.

We'll take care of him there. If he wants to stay in the land, let him remain in the land. Let him do whatever he wants, but treat him right.

So Nebuchadnezzar Adan, the captain of the guard, sent and Nebuchadnezzar Adan, Rabserus, and these other princes, they took Jeremiah out of the court of the prison and committed him unto Gedaliah, the son of Ahiakim, the son of Shaphan, that he would carry him home so he dwelled among the people. Actually, he had been taken already in chains, but they came and they got him and brought him back. Now, the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah while he was shut up in the court of the prison, saying, go and speak to Ebed-Melech, the Ethiopian.

Remember, this is the guy that lifted him out of the miry mud, the mire in the bottom of that dungeon. Go to Ebed-Melech, the Ethiopian, saying, thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel. Behold, I will bring my words upon this city for evil and not for good, and they shall be accomplished in that day before thee.

But I will deliver thee in that day, saith the Lord, and thou shalt not be given into the hand of the men of whom thou art afraid. For I will surely deliver thee, and thou shalt not fall by the sword, but thy life shall be for a prey unto thee, because thou hast put your trust in me, saith the Lord. So here was this Ethiopian eunuch who had helped Jeremiah out of that pit, dungeon.

Jeremiah went to him and said, look, the Lord says that you don't have to be afraid of the Babylonians. Your life is going to be spared because you put your trust in the Lord. So his life indeed was spared.

Now, as we come into the fourth part of the book of Jeremiah, these are the prophecies of Jeremiah to the people after Zedekiah was carried away and the remnant of the people who stayed here in the land. They

still did not take everybody. Remember, he left the poor people in the land to just have the land, take over the vineyards and everything else, and you can just have it.

So the poor of the people, the poor people were given the land. So this Jeremiah remained with him. And this is the word that the Lord that came to Jeremiah.

So the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord after that Nebuchadnezzar Adan, the captain of the guard, had let him go from Ramah. Now, Ramah is Ramallah, which is only about five miles from Jerusalem. So Jeremiah had been taken by the Babylonians and was being led.

And the message came from Nebuchadnezzar. Let him do whatever he wants. And so they released him and he was able to come back.

So they let him go from Ramah when he had taken him, being bound in chains among those that were carried away, captive of Jerusalem and Judah, which were carried away, captive to Babylon. So he was bound in chains with the rest of those that they were leading back to Babylon. Wouldn't that be a sad and terrible journey? Talk about some of these death marches and so forth.

To go to Babylon from Jerusalem, about 200 miles or so, and in chains. Oh, and here the prophet had said, Hey, look, just go over to them, surrender, go on out, sneak out, give yourself over to them and you'll be okay. And yet the people chose to rebel and against the word of the Lord and against the Babylonians and now the consequences.

The captain of the guard took Jeremiah and said unto him, The Lord thy God hath pronounced this evil upon this place. Now the Lord hath brought it and he has done according as he has said. Always true.

God will always keep his word. He has done as he said. Because you have sinned against the Lord and have not obeyed his voice, therefore, this thing has come upon you.

Now it is interesting that the enemies of Judah recognized the reason for their problems and difficulties. God has done this to you because you didn't obey him. And now, behold, I am loosing thee this day from the chains which are on your hands.

And if it seems good unto you to come with me to Babylon, come on, and I will look unto your well-being. But if it doesn't seem good to you to come with me into Babylon, then you don't have to. Behold, all of the land is before you and wherever it seems good and convenient for thee to go, there you can go.

So Jeremiah was given a totally free reign. Come on to Babylon. We'll treat you well.

Stay here if you want. Just wherever you want to go. The whole lands before you can go where you want.

Now, while he was not yet gone back, he said, Go back also to Gedaliah, the son of Ahichem, the son of Shapham, whom the king of Babylon has made a governor over the cities of Judah, and dwell with him among the people, or go wheresoever it seems convenient unto you to go. So the captain of the guard gave him food and a reward, and they let him go. Then Jeremiah went to Gedaliah unto Mishpah, and he dwelt with him among the people that were left in the land.

Now when the captains of all of the forces which were in the fields, even they and their men, they heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah the governor in the land and committed unto him men and women and children in the poor of the land of those that were not carried away captives to Babylon, then

they came to Gedaliah, to Mishpah, even Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan, and Jonathan, and these various captains, and they came with their men. And Gedaliah, the son of Shapham, swearing to them and to their men, saying, Fear not to serve the Chaldeans, dwell in the land, serve the king of Babylon, and it will be well with you. So Gedaliah was being faithful to the responsibilities given unto him by Nebuchadnezzar, encouraging the people, don't rebel anymore.

Just live and dwell in the land. It's going to be all right. As for me, behold, I'm going to dwell here at Mishpah and serve the Chaldeans, which will come unto us.

But you gather your wine and your summer fruits and your oil and put them in your vessels and dwell in your cities that you have taken. Now Jerusalem was left desolate. It had been so destroyed by the Babylonians, no sense of even trying to go back there with the poor people that he had.

So just dwelling in Mishpah instead, and you men dwell in the cities that you have. Likewise, when all of the Jews that were in Moab crossed the Jordan River from them, and among the Ammonites and those that were in Edom, south from Moab, and those that were in all the countries heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant of Judah and they had set Gedaliah, the son of Ahicham, over them. Even all of the Jews returned out of every place where they were driven, and they came to the land of Judah to Gedaliah, unto Mishpah, and they gathered wine and summer fruits very great.

Moreover, Johanan, the son of Korea, and all of the captains of the forces that were in the fields, came to Gedaliah, to Mishpah, and said unto him, Do you not certainly know that Baelus, the king of the Ammonites, has sent Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, to kill you? But Gedaliah, the son of Ahicham, did not believe them. Then Johanan, the son of Korea, spake unto Gedaliah in Mishpah, secretly saying, Let me go, I pray you, and I will kill Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, and no man will know it. For why should he slay you, that all of the Jews which are gathered unto thee should be scattered, and the remnant that are in Judah perish? But Gedaliah, the son of Ahicham, said unto Johanan, the son of Korea, You shall not do this thing, for you are speaking falsely of Ishmael.

May God help us to give heed to the word of God and to the warnings of God. Jesus said, He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the church. And may God give to us ears to hear and a heart that will respond unto the Lord.

May the Lord bless and keep you. May the Lord guide you in your activities this week. May the hand of the Lord be upon your life for good, that he might bless you in Jesus' name.

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