

6/30/02

Jeremiah 34-35

The block of chapters from 34-39 are for the most part taken up with Jeremiah's experience during the siege. 588-586 B. C.

1. They are not in chronological order but certainly in the order God ascribed to them.
2. Chapters 34-38 are biographical in nature for the most part. dealing with Jeremiah's messages, the burning of God's word by the king and the imprisonment of Jeremiah for treason.
3. Chapter 39 deals with the fall of the city.
4. Chapters 40-44 with the events after the fall.
5. Chapters 45-51 deals with the prophecies upon the Gentile nations.
6. Chapter 52 records the fall of Jerusalem.

Chapter thirty-four gives us the unfaithful disobedience of God's people, while thirty-five gives us the faithfulness of those who were not God's people by birth.

34:1-22 The warning to Zedekiah by God and his disobedience.

34:1-7 *The message of Yahweh to Zedekiah.*

34:1 The time of the message.

- 1) The word again came to Jeremiah from the LORD, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and fought against Jerusalem and it's cities. Vs. 1
 - a) The occasion is not detailed enough, this only provides an approximate year, 588-586 B. C.
 - b) Verse seven helps us to place it in the early stages of the siege around 589-88 B. C. , indicated by the two cities that were still not conquered.
- 2) His armies comprised all the kingdoms that had subjugated themselves as vassals to him as God had prophesied and commanded to serve Nebuchadnezzar. 2Kings 24:2; Dan. 1-2

34:2-3 Jeremiah the prophet is sent to speak the message of judgment to king Zedekiah.

- 1) Jeremiah was to tell Zedekiah that Yahweh was going to give he city to Nebuchadnezzar and he would burn it with fire. Vs. 2
 - * The consistent message is evident. Jer. 21:1-10; 32:3-5; 37:8-10, 17; 38:17-23
 - a) The people had burned their children to Molech. Jer. 7:31; 19:5
 - b) Jehoiakim would burn the scroll. Jer. 36:32

- 2) Jeremiah was also to tell Zedekiah that he would not escape but taken to Babylon, in fact he would see with his own eyes Nebuchadnezzar. Vs. 3
- a) That Nebuchadnezzar would speak with Zedekiah face to face, indicated that he would have to give an account for his rebellion and opposition.
 - b) He would go to Babylon as a prisoner but not before the last thing he would witness would be the slaying of his sons and then his eyes would be put out. Jer. 52:8-11; 39:5-7; 2Kings 25:5-6; Ezk. 12:13

34:4-6 Jeremiah the prophet was to speak the message of mercy in the midst of judgment.

- 1) The mercy of Yahweh was to be an encouragement to Zedekiah for obedience, “Yet hear the word of the LORD, O Zedekiah king of Judah! Thus says the LORD concerning you: `You shall not die by the sword.” Vs. 4
* Despite the destruction of the city, Zedekiah would not be slain!
- 2) Zedekiah had Yahweh’s word that he would die in peace; as in the ceremonies of your fathers, the former kings before him, in lamentation and honor by the burning incense, “Alas, lord!” For I have

pronounced the word, says the LORD.”
Vs. 5

* 2Chron. 16:14; 21:19

- 3) These were the words Jeremiah spoke to Zedekiah king of Judah in Jerusalem and for which he was imprisoned. Vs. 6
* Once again we see the book is not in chronological order, for this chapter took place before chapter 32-33. Jer. 32:1-5
- 4) The two cities that had not been taken by the Babylonians were Lachish and Azekah, which were the only fortified cities of Judah that had not been conquered. Vs. 7
 - a) Lachish was twenty- three, thirty-five miles southwest of Jerusalem, the modern day Tell ed-Duweir.
 - b) Azekah was fifteen miles, also southwest, modern day Tell ez-Zakariyeh.
 - c) The Lachish letters discovered in 1935 and 38 were written on twenty-one ostraca, broken inscribed potter give a vivid detail of these events, an officer wrote, “We are watching for the smoke signals of Lachish...because we do not see Azekah.”, Azekah had fallen. 2Chron. 11:5-11

34:8-16 *The hypocritical covenant of Zedekiah with the slaves.*

34:8-11 The covenant made by Zedekiah

- 1) The word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah, after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people who were at Jerusalem to proclaim liberty to them, from the servanthood. Vs. 8
* As Josiah had done. 2Kings 23:1-3
- 2) Every Hebrew man or woman was set free so that no one should keep a Jewish brother in bondage. Vs. 9
- 3) The people agreed with the covenant and released their slaves. Vs. 10
- 4) But afterward the people changed their minds force their slaves under their domination as their slaves. Vs. 11
 - a) After what? After the Babylonian army withdrew from the siege to confront the Egyptian army that had appeared from the south but would return. Vs. 21-22; Jer. 37:4-5, 11
 - b) This revealed that the motive in releasing the slaves was not genuine compassion or out of true repentance but merely to bargain with God.
 - c) Perhaps seeing that the slaves could not work the fields, it would be more convenient for them to seek out their

own food and perhaps even help in defending the city.

- d) Seeing the withdrawal, they once again returned to their evil hearts.

34:12-16 The rebuke for breaking the covenant.

- 1) God who knows the heart of all men responded and spoke to Jeremiah again to confront their evil. Vs. 12
* The word ‘therefore’ marks a conclusion, in view of what they did!
- 2) Yahweh reminded the people of His covenant with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Vs. 13
 - a) The parallel is unmistakable, they should have been compassionate towards the slaves because they were once slaves.
 - b) God had freed them forever.
- 4) Yahweh had made provisions in the Law for those Hebrews who sold themselves into slavery to pay a debt by serving six years and then release on the seventh. Vs. 14
* But their fathers had not obey Yahweh nor incline their ear to this law. Ex. 21:2; Lev. 25:39-46; Deut. 15:2
- 5) Yahweh then said they recently turned and did what was right in His sight by every man proclaiming liberty to his

neighbor by making a covenant before Him in the house which was called by His name. Vs. 15

- a) They did this under an oath to God.
 - b) They did this in the temple.
 - c) Rather than turning with godly repentance, they turn and did what was wrong and evil.
- 6) Yahweh accused them of their crime, then they turned around and profaned His name by forcing their slave back under their subjugation. Vs. 16
- a) They broke their oath, taking Yahweh's name in vain in breaking the covenant.
 - * Profane "halal" means to pierce and can mean to pollute. Num. 18:32, Is. 53:5
 - b) They dishonored the temple, thinking it ordinary.
 - c) Their motives were wrong, their devotion was hypocritical and their heart was shallow and unrepentant!
 - * A similar situation appears in the book of Nehemiah. Neh. 5, 10

34:17-22 *The consequences for breaking the covenant.*

- 1) Yahweh would now due to their disobedience would bring judgment on them. Vs. 17

- a) There is a play on words in the Hebrew.
 - b) Because they did not release their slaves, Yahweh would release the sword, pestilence, and famine on them.
 - c) And deliver them to trouble among all the kingdoms of the earth.
- 2) Yahweh would hold every person and leaders responsible who had entered the covenant by walking between the sacrificed calf, making themselves responsible and accountable to God. Vs. 18-19
- a) Abraham witnessed God walk between the sacrifice in the covenant He made. Gen. 15:9-17
 - * The word covenant is literally "to cut".
 - b) The princes of Judah, the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, the priests, and all the people of the land were personally responsible.
- 3) Yahweh would hand them over to their enemies and those who would seek their life and their dead bodies would not be buried but desecrated being meat for the birds of the heaven and the beasts of the earth. Vs. 20
- 4) Yahweh would give Zedekiah king of Judah and his princes into the hand of

their enemies, into the hand of those who seek their life, to Babylon's army which has gone back from you. Vs. 21

- 5) Yahweh would bring the armies back to the city, take it and burn it, making it desolate without inhabitants. Vs. 22
 * The temporary lifting of the siege to meet Pharaoh Hophra would not last!

35:1-19 The commendation of the Rachabites for their obedience.

35:1-5 *Jeremiah the prophet is sent to the Rachabites.*

- 1) The date of the word that came to Jeremiah was in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, saying. Vs. 1
 a) Here again we see that the chronological order is not followed.
 b) The previous chapter was around 587 B. C. Jehoiakim reigned from 609-597 B.C., 598 B. C. is a good guess.
 c) But it is so evident that the arrangement is by God's design as this chapter stands in sharp contrasts to the preceding one, disobedience and disloyalty to obedience and loyalty!
- 2) Jeremiah is commanded by God to go and speak to the Rechabites, to bring them

into the house of the LORD, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink. Vs. 2

- a) The origin of the Rachabites was the Kenite descent, the father-in-law of Moses. 1Chron. 2:55; Judges 1:16
 b) The "house" refers to the tribe or clan of nomad Bedouins.
- 3) Jeremiah then took the leaders who are named. Vs. 3
 a) Jaazaniah the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habazziniah.
 b) His brothers and all his sons.
 c) The whole house of the Rechabites.
- 4) Jeremiah brought them into the house of the LORD. Vs. 4
 a) The particular place was into the chamber of the sons of Hanan the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which was by the chamber of the princes, above the chamber of Maaseiah the son of Shallum, the keeper of the door.
 * He is identified as the priest. Jer. 29:25
 b) Igdaliah is called a man of God. Duet. 33:1; 1Sam. 9:6; 2:27
 c) Maaseiah the son of Shallum was the door keeper, who protect the temple from anyone unclean coming in and in charge of funds for repairs,

probably the father of Zephaniah. Jer. 21:1; 37:3; 2Knigs 12:9-10

* He was also the priest. Jer. 29:25

- 5) Jeremiah then I set before the Rechabites bowls full of wine, and cups; and told them, “Drink wine.” Vs. 5

45:6-11 *The faithfulness of the Rachabites.*

- 1) The response of the Rachabites was immediate and without hesitation to their loyal dedication to Yahweh. Vs. 6-7
- a) They had been in the past and were committed in the present to continue to abstain from wine., “But they said, “We will drink no wine, for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, `You shall drink no wine, you nor your sons, forever.” Vs. 6
- * Jonadab is mentioned as one with Jehu to purge the house of Omri, about 840 B. C. 2Kings 10:15-28
- * About 250 years, kind of like the Nazarites. Num. 6:1-21
- b) They had been in the past and were committed in the present to continue to live a simple life, “You shall not build a house, sow seed, plant a vineyard, nor have any of these; but all your days you shall dwell in tents,

that you may live many days in the land where you are sojourners.” Vs. 7

- 2) The testimony of the Rachabites was to their complete obedience. Vs. 8-9
- a) They had obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, in all that he charged them, to drink no wine all their days, they, their wives, their sons and daughters. Vs. 8
- b) They had not been tempted to take advantage of the conveniences of their day, to build themselves houses to dwell in; nor did they have vineyard, field, or seed. Vs. 9
- * For two centuries they had obeyed!
- c) But they had dwelt in tents, and had obeyed and done according to all that Jonadab their father commanded them. Vs. 10
- 3) The explanation of the Rachabites for being in Jerusalem was the present war conditions that had forced them to seek refuge, “But it came to pass, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up into the land, that we said, `Come, let us go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the Chaldeans and for fear of the army of the Syrians.' So we dwell at Jerusalem.” Vs. 11

35:12-17 *The object lesson of the Rachabites.*

- 1) The word of the Lord at that time came to Jeremiah for Yahweh was about to use the example of the Rachabites to rebuke and teach Judah. Vs. 12
- 2) The prophet Jeremiah is told by Yahweh the Captain of the armies of heaven, to go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, “Will you not receive instruction to obey My words? says the LORD.” Vs. 13
- 3) Yahweh contrasts their obedience to their father Jonadab to the disobedience of Judah as Yahweh their had arisen early to speak to them. Vs. 14
- 4) Yahweh also sent His **servants the prophet**, rising up early saying, ‘Turn now everyone from his **evil way**, **amend your doings**, and do not go after other gods to serve them; then you will dwell in the land which I have given you and your fathers.’ But you have not inclined your ear, nor obeyed Me.” Vs. 15
* Jer. 7:25; 25:4; 26:5; 29:19; 44:4
- 5) Yahweh summarized the contrast as His final verdict, “Surely the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them, but this people has not obeyed Me.”” Vs. 16

- 6) The judgment of Judah is pronounced for their disobedience, it was sure and coming. Vs. 17
 - a) The word “Therefore” is a concluding word, in view of their disobedience, God would bring the previously declared doom on Judah and all Jerusalem.
 - b) The One fighting against them was the Captain of the armies of heaven, the God of Israel and bring all manner of evil.
 - c) The reason, “I have called to them but they have not answered.”
* Not that they were deaf but refused to answer in obedience to what Yahweh had clearly communicated!

35:18-19 *The reward of the Rachabites*

- 2) Jeremiah pronounced the blessing on the Rachabites. Vs. 18-19
 - a) Yahweh through Jeremiah, the Captain of the armies of heaven, the God of Israel would be for the Rachabites, due to their obedience. Vs. 18
 - b) The Captain of the armies of heaven, the God of Israel promised that Jonadab the son of Rechab would not

lack a man to stand before Him
forever. Vs. 19

- 1) This is not referring to the priestly or prophet office but to have a place of service before Yahweh.
- * The phrase is found over one-hundred times in the Old Testament and used for prophets, kings, priests, etc.
- 2) When Nehemiah returned to rebuilt the city and temple, approximately 150 years later, we find the Rachabites in this service but the interesting thing is that we find him working at the Dung Gate, where all the refuse and garbage was cared for! Neh. 3:14
- 3) What an amazing rebuke to all who think themselves above certain things in their service to God!
- 4) And what an amazing lesson on being a faithful servant, by the privilege and honor of the King!