

JEREMIAH

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Jeremiah chapter 31 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Last week we began a section of Jeremiah that deals with the restoration of the nation of Israel, their return from captivity. Thus, Jeremiah chapters 30-33, these four chapters have been called “The Book of Consolation.”

And as we will see in our study this evening, God is going to establish a New Covenant with the nation of Israel, not a covenant written on tablets of stone, but upon their hearts. And as we concluded our study last time we were told, “**... In the latter days you will consider it.**” Jeremiah 30:24. I think we are talking about a future time, a time that extends into the Tribulation Period and into the Second Coming of Jesus as the nation of Israel will turn to Him and receive Him as their Lord and Savior. So with that as our background, let’s begin reading in Jeremiah chapter 31 starting in verse 1 and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word this evening.

JEREMIAH 31**VERSE 1**

1. God will restore all of Israel to a place of Divine love. His restoration will be complete. But please keep in mind that this has not taken place yet, like I have said. They have not received the forgiveness of their sins through Jesus but the Orthodox Jews are preparing for the restoration of the animal and grain sacrifices, the rebuilding of the Temple to cleanse them from their sins.

But, as Paul said in Hebrews, **“For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.”** Hebrews 10:1-4.

There is the problem, these animal sacrifices could never take away your sins, it is impossible because if they did then the sacrifices would have ended, but they continued on day in and day out! Then what is the answer, what can we do? The answer is Jesus and you need to repent of your sins and ask Him to be Lord and Savior of your life.

Paul made this point again in Hebrews chapter 9 and spoke of the perfect sacrifice, Jesus. Paul wrote, **“But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”** Hebrews 9:11-15.

That is the only way that the Jewish people and Gentiles can be God’s people, by coming to the Savior, by coming to Jesus! And yes Jewish people are saved today but not on a national scale, but that day is coming, and it will happen during the Tribulation Period!

VERSES 2-6

1. Yes there was coming a day when they would be set free from their bondage in Babylon, but again, this is looking into the future and the restoration of the nation! God is saying that their long years of turmoil are over, that He is going to give them rest. All the sadness of captivity will be replaced with joy, dancing, fruitful lands and notice that this is also speaking of the Northern Kingdom of Israel!

What did they do to obtain this? They did nothing. As you read this you will see that this is all built upon the grace of God, they did not deserve this but God freely gave this rest to them and He will ultimately give them rest in the Kingdom Age. And His love for them is everlasting and I think this love is related to the everlasting covenant that God has made with them. In fact, the word “**lovingkindness**” (Hebrew: *chesed*) emphasizes a love based on a covenant.

Now some like to say that this everlasting covenant is not everlasting but that is just foolish. Look up the word “everlasting” in the dictionary and you will see that it means, “enduring forever, eternal.”

But when it comes to the Jews, because they forsook their Messiah, many believe that God has now forsaken her. And you have to love what some in the church have done. They believe that all of the Old Testament promises have now been given to the Church instead. They believe that the Church has become spiritual Israel. Not true. And they love to take the blessings of Israel but not the cursing’s for disobedience! Interesting and it is not scriptural!

God has not forsaken His people; He loves them with an everlasting love! It is an everlasting covenant based upon what God has done. And for people who still struggle with this, I am not sure what they do, especially when you see what Paul said regarding Israel in Romans 11:25-27. As you listen to this please understand that Paul wants us to be very clear on this issue of Israel and their salvation and yet this is an area where the Church is very confused.

He said, **“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.’”** I think that is very clear! God can only take away their sins through the shed blood of Jesus and that means that the Jewish people will come to Christ as their Savior!

VERSES 7-9

1. Like I have said, this is not just a reference to their return from Babylon or their return to the land since 1948, but in the Kingdom Age when God brings His people home. We read of this in Matthew 24:31 which says, **“And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”**

2. Now if God is bringing them back into the land once again, why are they weeping? I believe this weeping was due to their realization of how far they had transgressed the Words of God and what it took God to do to awaken them out of their spiritual sleep. I think they were broken over that, especially as they came home and saw the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple and I think this will be played out again when they return to Jerusalem after the Lord returns to set up His Kingdom on this earth at the end of the Tribulation Period!

3. As you read verse 9 it is a little confusing because it says “**And Ephraim is My firstborn.**”

As we look at the Scriptures we can clearly see that Ephraim was not the firstborn of Joseph, Manasseh was. So what is going on here?

You may remember the story of how Jacob was reunited with his son Joseph down in Egypt. And Jacob, being well advanced in the years wanted to give his blessings to the children. So as he came to Joseph, Joseph had Manasseh on Jacob's right side, and Ephraim on Jacob's left side. But as Jacob reached out to bless them he crossed his hands, and Joseph thought he was making a mistake. But Jacob reassures Joseph that he knows what he is doing and the younger one, Ephraim, will be more blessed than the older, Manasseh. Ephraim will have more of a heart for God. So the firstborn does not necessarily mean first in chronology, but the more prominent one as we see here.

VERSES 10-14

1. While the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy won't take place until Jesus rules and reigns during the Millennium Kingdom we do see the joy they have when they come back into the land. And in the Kingdom Age there will be tremendous gladness, joy, comfort and people will be dancing because of all that God has done!

2. Now I like what verse 14 says, **“I will satiate [fill to the full] the soul of the priests with abundance, And My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, says the LORD.”** I think many times we don’t expect much from God but God’s desire is to satiate or fill us to the full! The more you spend time with Him, the more He will satiate you with His goodness. Be filled with Him to overflowing! Remember what Paul said in Ephesians 3:20-21, **“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”** May we not forget that!

VERSE 15

1. Ramah was located about 5 miles north of Jerusalem. It was the place where Rachel was buried. And if you remember, Rachel bore two sons, Joseph and Benjamin. And the two sons of Joseph were the major tribes in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, Ephraim and Manasseh. Benjamin was a small tribe in the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Thus, both the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah are represented here.

And the Lord speaks of Rachel weeping, why? First of all we see as we go through the Scriptures that her children were taken into captivity. The Northern Kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity in 722 B. C. The Southern Kingdom of Judah was taken into captivity in 586 B. C.

And secondly, Ramah was the staging area for the captives going to Babylon in 586 B. C. We see that in Jeremiah 40:1 where we are told, **“The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord after Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he had taken him bound in chains among all who were carried away captive from Jerusalem and Judah, who were carried away captive to Babylon.”**

So for the captives it was a place of utter despair – mothers lamenting the loss of their children, children that had survived crying in their mother’s arms, most people gaunt from near starvation as a result of the siege.

2. Now we also see this spoken of in Matthew 2:16-18. Matthew uses this same verse and relates it to another slaughter. Remember when Herod the Great, upon hearing of a King being born and knowing from the Jewish religious leaders he was somewhere in Bethlehem, he tries to trick the wise men into finding out and telling him the exact location. But they were told not to tell the King anything, and they went their way, leaving the King in the dark. So to be on the safe side, he has all the male children from 2 years old and under, put to death. And Rachel is once again weeping as she sees, in a sense, her children being put to death.

3. And I also see this played out during the Tribulation Period where the Antichrist murders 2/3 of the Jewish people! We see this spoken of in Zechariah 13:8-9, **“And it shall come to pass in all the land,’ Says the Lord, ‘That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But one-third shall be left in it: I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, “This is My people”; And each one will say, “The Lord is my God.””**

Right now it has been estimated that there are about 15 million Jews living in the world. Think about this for a minute. That would mean 10 million will be destroyed by the Antichrist! And the pain will be like a woman in labor. It is out of all that we see God birthing the Kingdom Age. But before that comes they will have to go through a time called Jacob’s Trouble!

Now as you read this you may wonder how they can be dancing and joyful with all that is coming? Let’s read on and you will see why!

VERSES 16-17

1. This weeping is only temporary. God is going to bring them back, He will restore them. There will be joy in the land once again. But what needs to happen for this to take place? Let's read on and you will see what they will do.

VERSES 18-21

1. Here we see the chastisement of Ephraim and how it brought them to repentance, they returned to the Lord. You see, the light finally went on and the Northern Kingdom of Israel finally saw their sin. They couldn't believe how far they had transgressed! And the Lord was listening; He was waiting for them to return!

2. Think about the wickedness they had done against the Lord, and God says He still loves them! The Lord calls Ephraim His "**dear son.**" The same is true for each of us. It is amazing the love, the grace, the mercy, the compassion, the longsuffering and I can go on-and-on but that is our God and how He cares for us. It is as Paul said, "**But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**" Romans 5:8.

3. Now verse 21 is interesting because God is telling them that even though they were going into captivity, God was going to bring them home again. He tells them to leave a trail because they would return this way one day.

VERSES 22-25

1. First of all listen again to the last half of verse 22. It says, **“For the LORD has created a new thing in the earth – A woman shall encompass a man.”** This is a difficult passage to translate and I will give you two possibilities of what is being spoken of here. First of all let me tell you what this is not. This is not a reference to the Messiah, the Incarnation as some like to say it is. William Kelly put it like this,

It has been common among the Fathers as well as the divines . . . to apply this passage to the birth of the Lord of the Virgin Mary, but the prophecy has not the smallest reference to it. A woman compassing a man is not at all the same thing as the Virgin compassing and bearing a Son. Compassing a man has no reference whatever to the birth of a child.

- William Kelly, Jeremiah, The Tender-Hearted Prophet of the Nations, p. 77

Some also say that this is related to when the Lord returns and sets up His Kingdom on this earth and women will be strong like men. I think that is stretching it. What have we been talking about in Jeremiah? Backsliding Israel and Judah and the idea here is of their return to the Lord! This new thing speaks of Israel, being the woman and encompassing a man or clinging to a man is speaking of the Lord! I hope that makes sense and it fits in with what we have been talking about here in Jeremiah!

2. Now verse 23 is speaking of a language or speech and I believe it is speaking of the Hebrew language. You see, the Hebrew language was basically a dead language. Only the scholars used it. The language during the time of Jesus was primarily Greek and Aramaic. That is why the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, we call it the Septuagint, because they could not even read their own Scriptures because they couldn't read or speak Hebrew any longer.

But God brought about a miracle. A people who had no homeland for almost 2,000 years, whose language was lost, came back into the land in 1948 and they once again began speaking the Hebrew language. I think that is what the Lord is saying here, and Zephaniah 3:9 seems to make that point very clear. It says, **“For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the LORD, to serve Him with one accord.”**

And if you go to Israel today guess what language they speak? It is Hebrew! Can this be the language we will speak in the Kingdom Age? It is possible!

3. Not only will they speak the Hebrew language but they will be farmers and we see that even today. Let me give you an idea of how productive they are.

In 2012, Israel's food exports totaled \$2 billion, a growth of 2.5 percent over 2011. Processed food exports totaled \$952 million, largely the same as 2011. Exports of fresh fruit and vegetables reached more than \$1 billion, a growth of 5.2 percent over 2011. Processed foods segments that most influenced the growth were edible oils and margarine, with a growth of 54 percent (\$44.2 million).

Grain mill products exports grew by 21 percent to \$87.5 million, and prepared food grew by 8 percent to \$6.7 million. Dairy products and ice cream product exports grew by 14 percent to \$30 million, while processed meat, poultry and fish products exports dropped by 5 percent to \$71.5 million; wine exports grew by 12 percent to \$30 million and soft drinks grew by 2 percent to \$5 million.

(http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&trct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=16&ved=0CEQQFjAFOAo&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.export.gov.il%2Fuploadfiles%2F05_2013%2Ffoodindustry_2013.pdf&ei=_3DzU_XsEMzooATdyICABA&usg=AFQjCNHS40QX8KDxqxMp857isbuxRPZ5Qw&sig2=mx12kk8s85s-tap2f7h-vw)

Israel is the third or fourth leading exporter of fruits in the world! In fact, Israel could make more money by becoming an industrial nation, but they are so in love with this land that God has given them many just want to work the land as farmers.

VERSES 26-30

1. Jeremiah seems to be dreaming these things, and after all the words of death and destruction, this dream was sweet, it was comforting to him. And as he woke up the Lord showed him the destruction that would come upon the land by the hands of the Babylonians!

You see, both these nations had deteriorated so much that before God could build and plant, He had to throw down, destroy, and afflict them. If you remember, when Jeremiah was called by God into the ministry he had the same message regarding what he was to do. In Jeremiah 1:10, we were told, **“See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant.”** The Lord is showing Jeremiah that is exactly what He was going to do and out of the ashes will rise a nation once again!

2. Now verses 29 and 30 are a perfect fit for the days we are living in. Let me explain. This phrase had become a proverb. What does it mean? These words were speaking of them not being responsible for their actions, it was an excuse for their behavior.

And this is the part that I see today. The children were saying that the reason they acted the way they did was because their fathers ate sour grapes. The thought is this. Their actions were not their fault. It is their parents fault! But God hates that. He says that everyone is responsible for their own actions, their own sin before God. You can't use that as an excuse for your behavior.

3. But that hasn't changed the behavior of man. We have people blaming everyone else for their actions. Remember President Clinton and the several affairs he has had with women. His wife Hillary was saying that it isn't his fault; his mother is responsible for his actions. I'm sorry but he is a grown man, and like it or not, God says not only is President Clinton responsible for his actions, but so are we. We can't say, "The devil made me do it!" You did it yourself!

And the latest is that we want to blame it on our genes, not our pants but our genetic make-up. We are not responsible for being an adulterer because it is in our DNA. No, you are a sinner and you are responsible! But that is how crazy it is getting.

Let me just share with you a few quotes on this idea of blame. The first one is from Yogi Berra who said, "I never blame myself when I'm not hitting. I just blame the bat and if it keeps up, I change bats. After all, if I know it isn't my fault that I'm not hitting, how can I get mad at myself?"

I like that and the reality is, it is never our fault, there is always someone or something that caused us to do it. The reality is, it is our fault!

Listen to this quote from Katharine Hepburn. She said, “We are taught you must blame your father, your sisters, your brothers, the school, the teachers - but never blame yourself. It’s never your fault. But it’s always your fault, because if you wanted to change you’re the one who has got to change.” I agree!

And lastly, I think Dan Quayle hit the nail on the head in regards to who is to be blamed. He said, “When I have been asked during these last weeks who caused the riots and the killing in L.A., my answer has been direct and simple: Who is to blame for the riots? The rioters are to blame. Who is to blame for the killings? The killers are to blame.”

You see, we are a society that wants to blame others. We have seen this even in Missouri with the shooting of the 18 year old who just robbed a store. And as he came across a police officer he tried to take his gun and tragically the 18 year old was shot and killed by the police officer. The public, the news media want to blame the police officer but no one wants to point the finger back at the young man who just robbed the store!

But the Lord said, “**But everyone shall die for his own iniquity . . .**” You are responsible before God!

VERSES 31-34

1. The Mosaic Covenant was doomed for failure because it was based on the faithfulness of man. Even as Moses was up on the mountain receiving the Law, the people were breaking it. We must understand that the Law was never meant to make people righteous but to show that he was a sinner in need of a Savior.

Thus, God sent Jesus with a New Covenant that was based upon His blood, Matthew 26:28 tells us. And this New Covenant is not based upon man's faithfulness but upon God's. Thus, all man must do is receive that free gift of life by faith. As Paul said in Galatians 3:23-25, **“But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”**

In the previous verse Paul said, **“Scripture has confined all under sin”** or has confined us in prison. But here the idea is protective custody as Paul says the Law has us **“under guard.”** Yes, sin imprisons us under the Law but also the Law protects us if we walk in the ways of God.

Of this John MacArthur makes these interesting comments,

A paidagoegos (tutor) was not a teacher or schoolmaster proper (KJV) but rather a slave employed by Greek or Roman families, whose duty was to supervise young boys in behalf of their parents. They took their young charges to and from school, made sure they studied their lessons, and trained them in obedience. They were strict disciplinarians, scolding and whipping as they felt it necessary. Paul told the Corinthian believers – who often behaved like spoiled children – that, even if they “were to have countless tutors [paidagoegos] in Christ,” he would be their only “father through the gospel” (1 Cor 4:15). Continuing the contrast of paidagoegos and father, he later asks, “Shall I come to you with a rod or with love and a spirit of gentleness?” (v. 21).

The role of the paidagoegos was never permanent, and it was a great day of deliverance when a boy finally gained freedom from his paidagoegos. His purpose was to take care of the child only until he grew into adulthood. At that time the relationship was changed. Though the two of them might remain close and friendly, the paidagoegos, having completed his assignment, had no more authority or control over the child, now a young man, and the young man had no more responsibility to be directly under the paidagoegos. The sole purpose of the Law, God's divinely appointed paidagoegos, was to lead men to Christ, that they might be justified.

After a person comes to Him, there is no longer need for the external ceremonies and rituals to act as guides and disciplinarians, because the new inner principles operate through the indwelling Christ, in whom is "hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:3). The law in the ceremonial sense is done away with, though in the moral sense it remains always an intimate friend that one seeks to love and favor.

Before Christ came, the law of external ritual and ceremony, especially the sacrificial system, pictured the once-for-all, perfect, and effective sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the world. When the perfect Christ comes into the believer's heart, those imperfect pictures of Him have no more purpose or significance.

- John MacArthur

How does the Law drive us to Christ? By showing us that we are sinners separated from God. In Isaiah 59:1-2 we are told, **“Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.”** Just as Moses the Lawgiver couldn't take the children of Israel into the Promise Land, neither can the Law lead us into the Spirit filled life – it can't save us. Who brought the children of Israel into the Promise Land? Joshua or Jesus and Jesus lead's us into the new life by faith! The Law could only take us so far; it is Jesus who brings us in!

And the key is that sin will be taken away, God will remember it no more and the sacrifice of bulls and goats could never do that. Only the shed blood of Jesus could cleanse us from our sins and not just cleanse us but remove all the stain of sin in our life!

So this New Covenant is not written on tablets of stone but upon our heart. It is not outward but inward. The Old Covenant sought to control conduct while the New Covenant changes character! You see, when we receive Christ into our lives He gives us a new nature, a new heart, and His desire for us is to do His will, not out of the Law, but out of love. As Paul said in II Corinthians 5:17, **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”**

2. Now the Lord is going to answer the question about Israel, can they cease from being a nation, is God going to cast them off forever? We have talked about this but you would be surprised at the number of churches that feel that God is done with Israel. Listen carefully to what the Lord has to say and not what man has to say!

VERSES 35-37

1. God is saying that if you ever see the sun stop shining, the stars fade away, if you can measure the universe, then Israel will be cast off by God. Now some say we have measured the universe. That is not true.

This blew me away because we hear of the universe being some 15 billion light years in diameter but we are now being told, “Recent measurements reveal that the Universe is at least 150 billion light-years in diameter.” (<http://www.universetoday.com/37409/how-big-is-the-universe/>) And yet we still don’t know, so we have not been able to measure the universe!

And the reality is that you will not see that happen because God has not and will not forsake Israel. The reason is simple, back in chapter 15 of Genesis God made an unconditional covenant with Abraham. This covenant was unilateral and not based upon the faithfulness of man, but of God. And you can take that to the bank, Israel will not be forsaken by God! This is an everlasting covenant that He made with them and as you can see here, God will not have them cease from being a nation and He will not forsake them!

VERSES 38-40

1. The boundaries given here show us that when Jerusalem is rebuilt in the Kingdom Age it will be significantly larger than it originally was. Not only that, but it will stand forever. Thus, this is a prophecy concerning the Kingdom yet to come during the Millennium.

2. Not only that but the Lord is also saying that one day all the places they used for their idolatry, their sacrificing of their children to the god Molech, all those places of defilement, will be holy to God. No longer will they be an abomination to God, for God will transform those wicked places to bring Him glory.

I like that because the Lord has done that very thing with each of us. He has cleansed us as white as snow and as the Father looks at us He sees us as perfect even though we deal with sin on a daily basis. The payment was made in full for our sins by Jesus, never forget that!

JEREMIAH 32

VERSES 1-5

1. Jeremiah tells us when the Lord gave to him these words, which I believe is very important. The tenth year of Zedekiah's reign in the Southern Kingdom of Judah means we are only a year away from the completion of the third and final assault by the Babylonians. The first invasion by the Babylonians occurred in 606 B. C. when they took the best of the best captive with them.

The second invasion occurred in 597 B. C. And then, we see the third and final invasion occurred in 586 B. C. Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon finally had enough with these puppet Kings he put in place in Judah. They kept rebelling against him, and when Zedekiah came against him, he decided to put an end to this and he destroyed the city and took the remainder of the people with him as captives to Babylon. Remember, Zedekiah only reigned for 11 years, so we are only 1 year away from the completion of this third and final assault by Babylon. Thus, this siege lasted about 1 year!

2. Now as the Babylonians surrounded Jerusalem they cut the Jews off from the outside world. And it is during this time that Jeremiah is locked up in prison by Zedekiah. Why did Zedekiah do this? Because the King did not like what Jeremiah was saying.

Now please understand that Jeremiah's message hasn't changed over the years. Only now things were getting very tough, the people were down and now this prophet was only making things worse. He was telling the King and the people not to fight but to surrender to the Babylonians. Zedekiah saw this as treason and locked him in prison. Things don't always go like you plan them when you stand up for the Word of God. Jeremiah is an example of that.

3. Jeremiah also told the King that he shall see the King of Babylon face-to-face. Not only that, but Zedekiah was to be taken away captive to Babylon. But Ezekiel, who was a prophet who had already been taken away captive to Babylon, seemed to be saying something different.

In Ezekiel 12:13 we read of what is going to happen to Zedekiah, the King of Judah, as God says, "**I will also spread My net over him, and he shall be caught in My snare. I will bring him to Babylon, to the land of the Chaldeans; yet he shall not see it, though he shall die there.**" Who is right? They both were!

You see, as the Babylonians broke through the walls of Jerusalem, Zedekiah and his family escaped, but only for a short time. They were quickly captured and brought before Nebuchadnezzar. And as Zedekiah watched, his sons were killed before his eyes, and then the King of Babylon had Zedekiah's eyes put out, he blinded him.

Think about that. The last thing that Zedekiah saw before he was blinded was the murder of his sons, and then he was taken away captive to Babylon. But he never saw it, because he was blinded by Nebuchadnezzar just as God's Word said!

VERSES 6-15

1. God once again speaks to Jeremiah. This time the Lord tells him that his cousin Hanameel was going to come and visit him and he will ask Jeremiah if he would like to purchase some land in Anathoth. They were going into captivity, it was not time to purchase land but that is what the Lord is telling Jeremiah.

Now it is possible that Jeremiah's cousin, Hanameel, may have fallen on some hard times. And so he must have had to sell off his land to pay off some of his debts. Remember, when the children of Israel entered the land, Joshua divided it up between the 12 tribes and then it was divided even further, to individual families. And that was your land to pass on to future generations.

Now if you got into financial trouble you could sell the property with the intention of buying it back or a family member of yours could buy it back. We can read of this in Leviticus 25:23-28, which says, **“The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me. And in all the land of your possession you shall grant redemption of the land. If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold some of his possession, and if his redeeming relative comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold. Or if the man has no one to redeem it, but he himself becomes able to redeem it, then let him count the years since its sale, and restore the remainder to the man to whom he sold it, that he may return to his possession. But if he is not able to have it restored to himself, then what was sold shall remain in the hand of him who bought it until the Year of Jubilee; and in the Jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his possession.”**

Here in Jeremiah, that is what is going on. Jeremiah had the right of redemption to buy the land back for his cousin Hanameel. And understand that it went first to the immediate family, brothers, and then it would move to cousins and-so-on. And from this passage it would seem like Jeremiah was the only one who had the resources or the desire to buy this property.

2. Now as I have said, this was not the best time to purchase property. The Babylonians had surrounded the city of Jerusalem and it was only a matter of time till they broke through the walls. Anathoth was located outside the walls of the city, it had already been taken by the Babylonians, and yet Jeremiah is going to purchase the land. That seems very foolish.

3. How in the world did Jeremiah know this was of God? When his cousin Hanameel came in and expressed the same desire for Jeremiah that the Lord had said, to buy this land. When Hanameel offered this property to Jeremiah, the Scriptures tell us, “**... then I knew that this was the word of the LORD.**”

4. Keep in mind that this is taking place while Jeremiah is in prison. That is when he is purchasing this land. And there were two scrolls. One copy was sealed and bound with a piece of string or cord, and then sealed with an official seal that was stamped onto the cord or string with clay. Baruch was acting as the recorder of deeds, so it may be his seal that was used. The other copy remained unsealed. Thus, when they returned to the land, these documents would show who owned the land.

The clay jar was used to protect these documents from falling apart. They were just going into captivity and thus, they would not be returning home for over 50 years. But when they do return, this record of who owns that parcel of land will be there. This was to be an encouragement for the people, as we are going to see.

VERSES 16-25

1. I think Jeremiah is just bringing this before God because from a human perspective it was a foolish thing to do. But God has a plan and He has a purpose. The Harvard paleontologist George Gaylord Simpson sees things differently. He wrote, “Man is the result of a purposeless and natural process that did not have him in mind.”

If you believe that then you have no hope. Jeremiah saw the hand of God in the life of his people and he was able to rest in that. As I have said before, perspective is everything. And as you look at some of the great prayers of the Bible, they begin with a proper perspective of the situation. They don't look at the situation, but at the greatness of God. Starting from that vantage point, everything else seems small, manageable, attainable, in control.

The problem comes when we start from the wrong vantage point. We place our problems in front of God instead of God in front of our problems! And that is a big mistake, as I am sure we can all attest to. Our sun has a diameter of some 865,000 miles, it's huge! But I can block the sun completely out of view by placing my fist in front of my eyes. My fist is not very big, and yet if I got it close enough, it can block out huge objects from view, like the sun!

We can do the very same thing with our problems. We can bring them so close that we can block out the *SON OF GOD!* Perspective is everything. If God is for us, then who can be against us? Think about that. The reality is we are the only ones that can get in the way. Keep focused on the Lord. Keep a proper perspective of any situation by starting with the greatness of God.

2. In his prayer Jeremiah is focusing on all that God has done. How He brought them out of Egypt and gave them a land flowing with milk and honey. But, because of their idolatry, God has brought judgment upon them. At this point the Babylonians were making siege mounds to enter the walls of the city of Jerusalem, captivity was that close! And Jeremiah is confused here. He sees all this happening, and wonders why in the world he purchased this land. They were going into captivity very soon.

The reason God told Jeremiah to do this was to give people hope. Things did not look good, the people were now painfully aware of that. Jeremiah has been speaking of this judgment for years and now it was coming to pass. But also remember that God told Jeremiah that one day they would return home, the captivity was to last only 70 years in total.

Here is the lesson folk's, here is what this is all about and we don't always like it. You see, it is one thing to preach the Word of God, which Jeremiah was doing, but it is quite another thing to live it, and that is what God wanted Jeremiah to do. It is easy to talk the talk; God wanted him to walk the walk. To put his money where his mouth was, you might say.

I'm sure that Jeremiah's actions, purchasing this land, quickly spread throughout Jerusalem. It was a witness to them that yes, one day they would return home again. The captivity would not last forever. It gave them hope for the future. And how important that was and is today!

3. I think God wants us to do that today, give people hope. And the only real hope is in the Lord and the promises He has given to us in His Word. If we don't point people to Jesus, if we don't give them the Word of God, then we end up giving them a false hope!

VERSES 26-35

1. That is something we have to come to grips with, especially when things get tough. Is there anything too hard for the Lord and the reality is, no there is not. He is God, He has created the heavens and the earth and all life and thus, He can work in me and through me just as easily as creating the heavens and the earth!

After the Lord gives Jeremiah a proper perspective of things, that nothing is too hard for Him, He speaks of the judgment that is coming upon them for their idolatry, for turning away from the Lord. As I have said before, as they dug down to this period of time they found hundreds of idols in the homes of God's people. And not only that, God says they placed these abominations in the Temple of God!

And make no mistake about it; sin is a progression downward, away from God. And they had gotten so bad that they were sacrificing their children to the god Molech, the god of pleasure, success, and prosperity! Now these children were the result of the sexual freedom they had. You see, the god's they worshiped, the way they worshiped these gods, would degenerate into sexual orgies. And the product of sex is children. The problem was all the unwanted children. What could they do with them?

Their solution was to burn them in the fire to the god Molech. Not only did they get rid of all those unwanted children, but they also were ensured prosperity, success, or so they thought. So in their minds it was a double blessing! But God did not see it that way and He calls it an abomination!

And God feels the same way about abortion today. It is still murder. But most feel it is a double blessing. It gets rid of unwanted children and it gives them the freedom for success. We have come a long way, right? Not at all! It is still an abomination to the Lord! And God judged the Southern Kingdom of Judah for it and I wonder how long His patience and longsuffering will continue for this nation?

VERSES 36-44

1. God is not finished with His people. Yes they were going into captivity because of their idolatry, but God was going to bring them home again. They would learn their lessons from this chastening of God upon them. They went in as idolaters and came out men and women of faith! And we see here that God wants them to have hope for the future, that He does not have evil planned for them but they needed to learn these lessons!

2. I like verse 40 because it speaks of this everlasting covenant that God has made with them. And keep in mind that this New Covenant is based upon the faithfulness of God and not upon their or our own faithfulness. This covenant was spoken of during the last supper, and it is seen in the finished work of Christ on the cross of Calvary. As Peter said, **“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.”**

3. Judgment is never easy nor is it meant to be. But God tried to warn His people by sending the prophets. He warned them to repent, to return to Him. But they refused. So God brought this judgment upon them by the hands of the Babylonians, taking them into captivity for 70 years.

And that may seem harsh, but God had to do it. He wanted to bring about good and to allow His people to continue down that path would have only brought about destruction. It would have shown that God really didn't love them, that He didn't care for them. But He does love them, and that is why He couldn't let them move in that destructive direction.

4. As we close this evening keep in mind that God's promise of blessing is as sure to be fulfilled as His promise of chastening. God's Word is sure and may we heed what He has to say to us. May we learn the lessons of faith that He is showing us! Also, remember what the Lord said in Jeremiah 32:27, **“Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for me?”** May we never forget that no matter what we are going through!