

- Chapters 1-23 Review:
 - The LORD called Jeremiah as a prophet to the nations during the last five kings of Judah.
 - The LORD's warning to His people is to stop worshipping false gods or He will judge them by destruction and exile using a nation from the North, Babylon.
 - The judgment will include the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem.
 - The people are to repent from their evil ways; the leaders are specifically called out for their rejection of the LORD's covenant and the shedding of innocent blood; the false prophets are called out for misleading the people to believe the LORD would not bring judgment on them.
 - Jeremiah is reviled by the leaders and the people of Judah, but the LORD will protect him.
 - The LORD promises there will not be a complete destruction of His people, as He will provide a Messiah and will bring His people back into the Promised Land in a future time, never to be removed.
 - The words of the LORD are always fulfilled as He is sovereign over His creation.
- Chapters 24-29 Review:
 - Good figs are used to represent the Jews who go into exile and will ultimately be those who become the Jews brought back into the land at a future time. The bad figs represent those who rebel against the judgment the LORD has brought on them through Nebuchadnezzar to last for seventy years.
 - Hypocrisy and false teaching and prophecy plague the LORD's people justifying the LORD's judgment on them.
 - Jeremiah continues to experience persecution for bringing the LORD's truth to His people (like planning to stay for a long time in Babylon) and calling out false prophets. Some of the false prophets are dealt with immediately.
- Chapters 30-33 Review:
 - These chapters are often referred to as the Book of Consolation as they are filled with promises for the LORD's people.
 - Promises of the LORD's people being regathered and brought back to a specific land as a nation to live in safety with hearts of flesh and not stone, served by priests, ruled by a king and living in prosperity. All of this is possible because Jesus their Messiah has redeemed them and will be their king.

Jer. 34:1 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army, with all the kingdoms of the earth that were under his dominion and all the peoples, were fighting against Jerusalem and against all its cities, saying,

Jer. 34:2 "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Go and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah and say to him: "Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I am giving this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he will burn it with fire.

Jer. 34:3 ‘You will not escape from his hand, for you will surely be captured and delivered into his hand; and you will see the king of Babylon eye to eye, and he will speak with you face to face, and you will go to Babylon.’”

Jer. 34:4 “Yet hear the word of the LORD, O Zedekiah king of Judah! Thus says the LORD concerning you, ‘You will not die by the sword.

Jer. 34:5 ‘You will die in peace; and as spices were burned for your fathers, the former kings who were before you, so they will burn spices for you; and they will lament for you, “Alas, lord!”’ For I have spoken the word,” declares the LORD.

- Verse 1 The chapter begins by establishing it is the word of the LORD coming to Jeremiah.
 - The time period is described as a time when the full weight of the power of Nebuchadnezzar is on Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah.
 - All the Babylonian army, with all the kingdoms of the earth were a part of this battle.
 - The extent of power Nebuchadnezzar obtained is also recorded in Dan. 4:20-22.

Dan. 4:20 ‘The tree that you saw, which became large and grew strong, whose height reached to the sky and was visible to all the earth

Dan. 4:21 and whose foliage was beautiful and its fruit abundant, and in which was food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt and in whose branches the birds of the sky lodged —

Dan. 4:22 it is you, O king; for you have become great and grown strong, and your majesty has become great and reached to the sky and your dominion to the end of the earth.

- Jer. 34:2 The LORD tells Jeremiah he is to speak with Zedekiah king of Judah.
 - The king is to be told the LORD is giving the city over to the king of Babylon.
 - He will burn the city with fire.
- Verse 3 The message to Zedekiah was that he would be handed over to the king of Babylon.
 - This is a consistent message from the LORD to Zedekiah.
 - This was covered in Jer. 32:4-5 but the LORD repeated His message to Zedekiah so it seems appropriate to repeat what the scriptures reveal happened to Zedekiah.
 - The fulfillment of the LORD’s word to Jeremiah regarding Zedekiah speaking with the king of Babylon face-to-face and eye-to-eye is given in 2Kings 25:4-7.

2Kings 25:4 Then the city was broken into, and all the men of war fled by night by way of the gate between the two walls beside the king’s garden, though the Chaldeans were all around the city. And they went by way of the Arabah.

2Kings 25:5 But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook him in the plains of Jericho and all his army was scattered from him.

2Kings 25:6 Then they captured the king and brought him to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and he passed sentence on him.

2Kings 25:7 They slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, then put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him with bronze fetters and brought him to Babylon.

- Zedekiah was brought to the king of Babylon at Riblah to receive his sentence.
 - The last thing Zedekiah saw with his eyes was the slaughter of his sons before his eyes were put out.
 - The LORD knew the future for Zedekiah and spoke His words deliberately and prophetically.
- Jer 34:4 The LORD tells Zedekiah he would not die by the sword.
 - Considering what the scriptures record happened to Zedekiah at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar it is interesting the LORD promises Zedekiah he won't die by the sword.
- Verse 5 The LORD tells Zedekiah he will die in peace.
 - Zedekiah is assured he will be removed from Jerusalem and not die by the sword; however, he will live out his days in Babylon.
 - A reference to spices being burned for previous kings was also going to be done for Zedekiah.
 - This would be related to the way a king was honored for burial. 2 Chr. 16:13-14.

2Chr. 16:13 So Asa slept with his fathers, having died in the forty-first year of his reign.

2Chr. 16:14 They buried him in his own tomb which he had cut out for himself in the city of David, and they laid him in the resting place which he had filled with spices of various kinds blended by the perfumers' art; and they made a very great fire for him.

- Zedekiah is going to receive the same honor other kings had received for his burial.
 - A leader often struggles with what kind of legacy they will leave behind and how they will be remembered by their subjects.
- Jer. 34:5 The LORD lets Zedekiah know the people will also lament for him, saying, "Alas, lord!"
 - The people will acknowledge his position as their last king.
 - Honor at death was not done for Jehoiakim Jer. 22:18-19.

Jer. 22:18 Therefore thus says the LORD in regard to Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah,

“They will not lament for him:

‘Alas, my brother!’ or, ‘Alas, sister!’

They will not lament for him:

‘Alas for the master!’ or, ‘Alas for his splendor!’

Jer. 22:19 “He will be buried with a donkey’s burial,

Dragged off and thrown out beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

- The ‘Alas’ is to show that a remembrance for Jehoiakim will not be given from a brother or sister, and he would not be held in honor as a good master or royal leader.
 - Zedekiah is told these things will come to pass because the LORD has spoken the word.
 - Everything the LORD speaks comes to pass.
 - Considering what Zedekiah is going to suffer at the fall of Jerusalem these promises would have provided him comfort during some very difficult times, though these words may not have been accepted well at this moment coming from the LORD through Jeremiah.

Jer. 34:6 Then Jeremiah the prophet spoke all these words to Zedekiah king of Judah in Jerusalem

Jer. 34:7 when the army of the king of Babylon was fighting against Jerusalem and against all the remaining cities of Judah, that is, Lachish and Azekah, for they alone remained as fortified cities among the cities of Judah.

Jer. 34:8 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people who were in Jerusalem to proclaim release to them:

Jer. 34:9 that each man should set free his male servant and each man his female servant, a Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman; so that no one should keep them, a Jew his brother, in bondage.

Jer. 34:10 And all the officials and all the people obeyed who had entered into the covenant that each man should set free his male servant and each man his female servant, so that no one should keep them any longer in bondage; they obeyed, and set them free.

Jer. 34:11 But afterward they turned around and took back the male servants and the female servants whom they had set free, and brought them into subjection for male servants and for female servants.

- Verse 6 Jeremiah speaks to Zedekiah in Jerusalem.
- Verse 7 There is a specific time when this message is brought to the king and it is when the King of Babylon was fighting against Jerusalem, Lachish and Azekah.

- These are the last cities standing against Babylon in Judah, so this helps to establish that the time period is close to the end for Jerusalem.
- Verse 8 The LORD speaks to Jeremiah after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people who were in Jerusalem.
 - The covenant was to proclaim a release to them.
- Verse 9 Every Hebrew who had been a servant was to be released.
 - Verse 10 Everyone in this moment did as the covenant proclaimed and they freed their fellow Jewish brethren.
 - Verse 11 Then at a later time, that is not specified in the length of time or the reason, those who had released their servants turn back on their word and bring their former servants back into bondage.
 - This highlights a fickle people with shifting loyalties.
 - Their words can't be trusted.

Jer. 34:12 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

Jer. 34:13 “Thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘I made a covenant with your forefathers in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, saying,

Jer. 34:14 “At the end of seven years each of you shall set free his Hebrew brother who has been sold to you and has served you six years, you shall send him out free from you; but your forefathers did not obey Me or incline their ear to Me.

Jer. 34:15 “Although recently you had turned and done what is right in My sight, each man proclaiming release to his neighbor, and you had made a covenant before Me in the house which is called by My name.

Jer. 34:16 “Yet you turned and profaned My name, and each man took back his male servant and each man his female servant whom you had set free according to their desire, and you brought them into subjection to be your male servants and female servants.””

- Verse 12 The LORD speaks to Jeremiah again.
- Verse 13 The LORD identifies Himself as the LORD God of Israel.
 - The LORD refers to a covenant He made with Israel's forefathers.
 - This was a covenant established when He brought them out of the land of Egypt.
 - Egypt is referred to as the house of bondage.
- Verse 14 The covenant that was made included a stipulation that at the end of seven years any Hebrew that had been given to slavery of another Hebrew would be set free.
 - The only stipulation was they were to have served six years of servitude.
 - The LORD says the forefathers did not obey Him or incline their ear to Him.

- This is what is found in the Law.

Ex. 21:2 “If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment.

Ex. 21:3 “If he comes alone, he shall go out alone; if he is the husband of a wife, then his wife shall go out with him.

- Verse 2 Buying a Hebrew as a slave was to come with a six-year cap for service to be rendered.
- Verse 3 If he is married when he comes he is to take his wife with him when he leaves.
 - The six years of service are the payment back for any debt incurred; no additional payment or leaving of a wife would be required. There were other guidelines when the servant is set free.

Deut. 15:12 “If your kinsman, a Hebrew man or woman, is sold to you, then he shall serve you six years, but in the seventh year you shall set him free.

Deut. 15:13 “When you set him free, you shall not send him away empty-handed.

Deut. 15:14 “You shall furnish him liberally from your flock and from your threshing floor and from your wine vat; you shall give to him as the LORD your God has blessed you.

Deut. 15:15 “You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this today.

- Verse 12 The purchase of a Hebrew slave came with a maximum of six years for service.
- Verses 13-14 When a Hebrew slave is released he is not to go out empty-handed.
 - The master shall give him flocks and food and wine.
 - All of the same provision the slave would have obtained in serving the master.
- Verse 15 The reason for this generosity is because the Hebrews should always remember how they were redeemed out of bondage by the LORD from Egypt.
 - Everyone was in servitude until the LORD redeemed them and they should offer up grace and mercy to their fellow Hebrew citizens.
 - Jer. 34:14 According to the LORD the forefathers did not obey Me or incline their ear to Me, meaning they did not practice this as designated by the Law.
- Verse 15 Begins by referencing something the people had done recently.
 - It appears the Jews had made a covenant before the LORD in the temple saying they would abide by the law and release their neighbors, fellow citizens, held in servitude.
- Verse 16 After making this covenant the LORD’s people turned away from the covenant they had made before the LORD.
 - The LORD says the people in this reversal profaned His name.

- The male and female servants had been set free according to their desire.
- There may be some servants who chose to stay and serve a master.
- These servants chose to be free when asked; they were not forced out of servitude.
- Then after giving the servants freedom, the masters brought them back into subjection again.
- Whatever the people saw in freeing their servants to bring advantage to themselves has disappeared.
- The truth is they did not act out of obedience to the LORD.
 - They did not act out of care or compassion for their fellow citizens.
 - They did not act out of a regard for justice.
- The leaders gave lip service to obedience to the law; they participated in an external show of obedience to the law.
 - This may have been a form of adherence to the law to gain favor with the LORD.
 - The masters entered a covenant before the LORD where they swore to give their servants freedom and then they broke that covenant when they brought them back into subjection.
- The LORD's conclusion is that the people profaned His name when they disavowed the covenant.
- Making a covenant before the LORD is a serious obligation.
 - The LORD sees it as profaning His name when a covenant taken before Him is broken.

Jer. 34:17 “Therefore thus says the LORD, ‘You have not obeyed Me in proclaiming release each man to his brother and each man to his neighbor. Behold, I am proclaiming a release to you,’ declares the LORD, ‘to the sword, to the pestilence and to the famine; and I will make you a terror to all the kingdoms of the earth.

Jer. 34:18 ‘I will give the men who have transgressed My covenant, who have not fulfilled the words of the covenant which they made before Me, when they cut the calf in two and passed between its parts —

Jer. 34:19 the officials of Judah and the officials of Jerusalem, the court officers and the priests and all the people of the land who passed between the parts of the calf —

Jer. 34:20 I will give them into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their life. And their dead bodies will be food for the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth.

Jer. 34:21 ‘Zedekiah king of Judah and his officials I will give into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their life, and into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon which has gone away from you.

Jer. 34:22 ‘Behold, I am going to command,’ declares the LORD, ‘and I will bring them back to this city; and they will fight against it and take it and burn it with fire; and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without inhabitant.’”

- Verse 17 The LORD declared to His people they have not obeyed Him.
 - The LORD was the one proclaiming there will be a release of Hebrews after seven years of service.
 - Each to a brother or to his neighbor.
 - These people knew each other; they were not strangers made up of foreigners or people from another country.
 - They were all the LORD’s people.
 - Because the LORD’s people did this thing and did not obey the LORD in proclaiming the proper release of the Hebrew slaves the LORD says He is going to proclaim a release to them.
 - The Hebrew word “*derore*” can be translated as release or liberty.
 - The LORD is going to release His people to the sword, pestilence and famine.
 - This seems to be a play on words.
 - You didn’t release my people but I will release you.
 - You did not protect and now I will not protect.
 - He will make them a terror to all the kingdoms of the earth.
- Verse 18 The LORD gets specific as to what had taken place.
 - There were men who took part in a covenant ceremony at the temple, before the LORD.
 - They had cut a calf in two and then they had walked between the two sections of the calf.
- Verse 19 The LORD calls out the officials of Judah and Jerusalem with the court officers the priests and then all the people of the land who had passed between the parts of the calf.
 - The presentation of a sacrificed animal during a covenant ceremony was to be a picture of what was to happen to either party if they did not keep the covenant.
- Verse 20 These men are told the LORD is going to give them over to the hand of their enemy.
 - The enemy that has let it be known they seek to kill them.
 - Their dead bodies will become food for the birds and beasts, like the two halves of the calf.
 - There will be no one to protect their dead bodies in keeping away the predators.
- Verse 21 The LORD declares Zedekiah and his officials will be given over to the enemies who seek their lives.

- The enemy is described as the army of the king of Babylon.
- An army that is described as having gone away.
- Verse 22 The LORD says, “I am going to command they come back to Jerusalem and fight against it.”
 - They are going to burn it with fire.
 - They will also make the cities of Judah a desolation without inhabitant.
 - These two verses give a clue to what event was tied to the rejection of the covenant to release the Hebrew servants.
 - The Babylonian army had left the city of Jerusalem as the LORD says, “I will bring them back to this city”.
 - This will be covered in Jer. 37:4-8.

Jer. 37:4 Now Jeremiah was still coming in and going out among the people, for they had not yet put him in the prison.

Jer. 37:5 Meanwhile, Pharaoh’s army had set out from Egypt; and when the Chaldeans who had been besieging Jerusalem heard the report about them, they lifted the siege from Jerusalem.

Jer. 37:6 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, saying,

Jer. 37:7 “Thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘Thus you are to say to the king of Judah, who sent you to Me to inquire of Me: “Behold, Pharaoh’s army which has come out for your assistance is going to return to its own land of Egypt.

Jer. 37:8 “The Chaldeans will also return and fight against this city, and they will capture it and burn it with fire.””

- Verse 5 Pharaoh’s army left Egypt.
 - The Chaldeans involved in the siege on Jerusalem left the siege to deal with the Egyptian army.
- Verse 7 The King of Judah was requesting Jeremiah to bring him an answer from the LORD for the outcome of the Egyptian army’s efforts to rescue Jerusalem.
 - The answer from the LORD was that Pharaoh’s army that was at first coming to assist Jerusalem would end up returning to Egypt and not coming to Jerusalem’s defense.
- Verse 8 The result was going to be after the Chaldeans left for a short time they would return to Jerusalem and succeed in fighting against it, capturing it and burning it with fire.
 - Jer. 34:22 The LORD connects the calling back of the Chaldean army to destroy Jerusalem to the violation of the men who made and then broke a covenant before the LORD.
 - It appears Zedekiah and the leaders of Jerusalem participated in a public display of entering into a covenant to release the Hebrew slaves to freedom when they were in fear of the Babylonian army overtaking Jerusalem.

- Keep in mind this was always something commanded by the Law for the LORD's people.
- The LORD said the forefathers had never honored this even though it was in the Law.
- When the nation was facing a horrible disaster they chose that moment to make a public display of the law and a theatrical display of honoring this.
- When it appeared there was going to be a rescue provided by the Egyptian army, the leaders then reneged on the covenant they made before the LORD.
 - The LORD will not be mocked and He says the people were profaning His name by to reversing course on the covenant.
 - The LORD never looks kindly on those who bear His name breaking covenants they make.
- Zedekiah was also called out by Ezekiel for breaking a covenant with Nebuchadnezzar.

Ezek. 17:11 Moreover, the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

Ezek. 17:12 “Say now to the rebellious house, ‘Do you not know what these things mean?’ Say, ‘Behold, the king of Babylon came to Jerusalem, took its king and princes and brought them to him in Babylon.

Ezek. 17:13 ‘He took one of the royal family and made a covenant with him, putting him under oath. He also took away the mighty of the land,

Ezek. 17:14 that the kingdom might be in subjection, not exalting itself, but keeping his covenant that it might continue.

Ezek. 17:15 ‘But he rebelled against him by sending his envoys to Egypt that they might give him horses and many troops. Will he succeed? Will he who does such things escape? Can he indeed break the covenant and escape?

Ezek. 17:16 ‘As I live,’ declares the Lord GOD, ‘Surely in the country of the king who put him on the throne, whose oath he despised and whose covenant he broke, in Babylon he shall die.

Ezek. 17:17 ‘Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company will not help him in the war, when they cast up ramps and build siege walls to cut off many lives.

Ezek. 17:18 ‘Now he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, and behold, he pledged his allegiance, yet did all these things; he shall not escape.’”

Ezek. 17:19 Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, “As I live, surely My oath which he despised and My covenant which he broke, I will inflict on his head.

Ezek. 17:20 “I will spread My net over him, and he will be caught in My snare. Then I will bring him to Babylon and enter into judgment with him there regarding the unfaithful act which he has committed against Me.

- Verse 13 Nebuchadnezzar made a covenant with Zedekiah, one of the royal family.
 - Zedekiah took an oath to this covenant.

- Verse 14 The covenant was for Judah was to stay in subjection to Nebuchadnezzar.
 - Judah was not to try and remove itself from the rule of Nebuchadnezzar this was the condition of the covenant.
- Verse 15 Zedekiah rebelled from this covenant when he sent representatives to Egypt seeking horses and troops to fight against Nebuchadnezzar.
 - The LORD saw this as a violation of the king's word and covenant.
- Verse 16 The LORD says there will be justice in that the country Zedekiah broke covenant with will be the country he ultimately will die in.
- Verse 18 Zedekiah despised the oath by breaking the covenant.
 - Zedekiah pledged allegiance yet broke his word.
 - Zedekiah will not escape retribution for this act.
- Verse 19 The LORD now declares that Zedekiah in a similar manner despised his oath to the LORD.
 - Zedekiah despised his covenant with the LORD and broke that covenant
 - The LORD will inflict the consequences of this violation on the head of Zedekiah.
- Verse 20 The LORD says He will bring Zedekiah to Babylon and the judgment for the violation of the covenant and oath with the LORD will be carried out in Babylon.
 - Jer. 34:22 The LORD tells Jeremiah he is to let Zedekiah know there will be no escape from Nebuchadnezzar.
 - In a twist of circumstances, the Jews thought they were going to experience freedom from the Chaldean army but that was short-lived freedom, just as they had done to the Hebrew slaves in granting them freedom only to take it away again.
 - When the King breaks a covenant the example is set for the people to do the same.
 - Leaders are expected to set a higher example of excellence; when they fail the implications are significant.
 - The LORD speaks against men who would twist His righteous standards.

**Is. 5:20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;
Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness;
Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!**

- The LORD does not change His standards and He alone determines good and evil.
 - A warning of woe is issued for those who would twist God's truth, calling evil good and good evil.
 - This is a condition of a sinful and broken person and culture.
 - Paul draws on this by saying God will not be mocked.

Gal. 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he

will also reap.

Gal. 6:8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Gal. 6:9 Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

Gal. 6:10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

- Verse 7 The actions men commit will be what men receive.
- Verse 8 There are two ways a man can work, in the flesh or in the Spirit.
 - What a person does in the flesh will come back in the flesh; but what one does according to the Spirit will be rewarded with eternal life.
- Verse 9 This focus of eternal life should motivate a believer to continue to do good and not grow weary of doing the good work.
- Verse 10 This encouragement is to focus believers to use their time wisely and do good to all people with an emphasis on giving to the needs of believers first.