

God's Faithfulness to His People

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[0 : 00] Chapter 37. Now let's read the first five verses together.

And Zedekiah, son of Josiah, whom Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, made king in the land of Judah, reigned instead of Caniah, also called Jeconiah, and Jehoachim, son of Jehoachim. But neither he nor his servants nor the people of the land listened to and obeyed the words of the Lord, which he spoke through the prophet Jeremiah. Zedekiah, the king, sent Juchel, son of Shelemiah, with Zephaniah, son of Massai, the priest, to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, Pray now to the Lord God for us.

Now Jeremiah was coming in and going out among the people, for they had not yet put him in prison. And Pharaoh's army had come forth out of Egypt when the Chaldeans were besieging Jerusalem, heard the news about them.

They withdrew from Jerusalem and departed. Now take note, if you will, that really at this point Zedekiah is just kind of a puppet king of Nebuchadnezzar.

[1 : 18] The first elements of siege had taken place, and so, you know, that's kind of the situation that you find there. Jeremiah's ministry lasted about 40 years, a little over 40 years actually.

The first 18 years were under the rule of Josiah, who was a godly man. Things went well with Israel during Josiah's reign. He followed God's law and was obedient to what God had showed him.

But his grandsons, as we've seen before, were not quite so obedient to the Lord. Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah all did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to 2 Kings 23 and 24.

The same held true for Jehoiachin, which was Jehoiakim's son. So these were times of disobedience in the kingdom of Judah.

Not just on the king's part, but on the part of the people as well. Now, chapter 37, you note, record the events that came upon the third campaign of Nebuchadnezzar in his besieging of Jerusalem.

[2 : 33] Remember, we said there were three events. Separate events in the actual besieging of the city. And so this is the third one that we see pictured here in this time element of chapter 37.

As I said, Nebuchadnezzar had put Zedekiah in a puppet role. But Zedekiah got kind of testy here and tried out a little bit of rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar.

Of course, this was a time, remember, when, as it said, and we've seen before, that the Egyptians who were really made mention of the fact that they would come to help Judah fight against Nebuchadnezzar, were now coming close.

And so Nebuchadnezzar decided he would withdraw from Jerusalem and go deal with the Egyptians. And so, again, there's that idea of them pulling away from the city of Jerusalem.

Now, this third campaign, as we said, is what's taking place. Notice the first campaign found no opposition at all from the people of Judah. You know, the more I look at this, the more I wonder how much the people, actually the actual people of the city and of the kingdom, really believed what Jeremiah was saying.

[4 : 01] Now, we know the king didn't, the princes didn't, and some of the other leadership didn't. But notice this. When Nebuchadnezzar came in that first element of the siege, there was no resistance.

The people didn't fight at all against him. Then the second campaign was finalized by going through the temple, looting the temple, and then deporting thousands of Jews from the city of Jerusalem.

So, now Zedekiah has put up a bit of rebellion because he thinks Nebuchadnezzar has pulled away, which seemingly would have given some credence to the false prophets that said, that city's not going to fall.

Jerusalem will not be destroyed. And so, you know, as a result, they gave them a false sense of deliverance here from God, as their false prophets would say.

Now, verse 6, pick up there. Then came the word of the Lord to the prophet Jeremiah. Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel.

[5 : 17] Thus shall you say to the king of Judah, who sent you to me to inquire of me. By the way, let's back up there again. I thought it interesting. That Zedekiah, who, you know, felt offense from Jeremiah's message and despised what he had to say before, when he said the city's going to be captured and destroyed and you're going to be taken captive.

Now, all of a sudden, when it seems the false prophets were true, because Nebuchadnezzar has pulled away, what does he do? He sends for Jeremiah.

And he wants Jeremiah to pray for him. Nothing like getting spiritual when things really seem like they're getting better, right? That's what he does here.

So, he seeks for Jeremiah to bring a word from the Lord. Of course, there's an ulterior motive there. He's wanting, I think, I think he's really wanting Jeremiah to bend God's ear, to, you know, maybe come more in line to what Zedekiah really desired here.

So, verse 6, Then came the word of the Lord to the prophet Jeremiah. Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, Thus shall you say to the king of Judah, who sent you to me to inquire of me.

[6 : 46] Behold, Pharaoh's army, which has come forth to help you, will return to Egypt to their own land. So there's no help coming from Egypt. And the Chaldeans shall come again and fight against this city, and they shall take it and burn it with fire.

Thus says the Lord, Do not deceive yourselves, saying the Chaldeans will surely stay away from us, for they will not stay away. It's almost as if they were thinking for some magical power they left. You know, maybe God sent the Egyptians to harass them, so they would leave, and since they've left, they'll never come back. Jeremiah says that's not the case.

All right, don't deceive yourselves in thinking that. For though you should defeat the whole... Now, notice this. Amazing. Here's how strong the message of God is, and the promise of God concerning the invasion of the Chaldeans.

Though you should defeat the whole army of the Chaldeans who fight against you, even if you destroy all of them, and there remain only the wounded men and stricken through.

[7 : 57] In other words, those have been pierced through with the sword or the spear. Even if those are the only ones left, every mind confined to his tent, yet they would rise up and burn this city with fire.

That's how certain this is going to be. So there's no need to resist is the idea here. Now, so the Egyptians are going to bring them no help, according to what Jeremiah says here.

They've retreated without accomplishing the objective that they've set here to help them against the Chaldeans. And so the Chaldeans are going to come back. Now, there's no backing down from God's truth, and it's becoming evident here.

Jeremiah, again, would not succumb to the notion that God was wrong. All right? He's remaining faithful. He trusts the Lord in all that God had said and told him to say to the people of Judah.

So he knows that God is faithful, and this is really going to transpire. So his idea was, if God was faithful to the one whom he had called, then the one he called is going to be faithful to him.

[9 : 11] Tremendous picture there. Should we not have the same heart? Amen? God's called us that we must remain faithful to God. No compromise. And that was in the heart and mind of Jeremiah.

Now, verses 11 through 14 take note. When the army of the Chaldeans had departed from Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh's approaching army. Yeah, here's some interesting thing.

Before we get there, what we're beginning to see refers again back, remember, to chapter 32 that we looked at for a bit. Remember when Jeremiah's uncle sent word, or God said to him, God told Jeremiah, your uncle's going to come, and he's going to tell you to redeem his land.

All right? Exercise the right of the near kinsman, the nearest kinsman. He said, go ahead and do that. Buy that land.

And that's going to be based on the promise that God gave to Judah that the day is going to come when I'm going to bring you back into the land, back into your homes, and crops will be raised, houses will be built, prosperity will come.

[10:24] And so Jeremiah does that. Okay? That's in chapter 32 that we looked at before. And sure enough, his uncle comes. And in that scenario that God said would happen, takes place.

He tells Jeremiah, redeem my land. You're the nearest kinsman. And so do that. When that happened, Jeremiah, remembered, realized this was indeed from the Lord and of God. And so he proceeded to go through all of the necessary steps to redeem the land, have it all recorded, and put in its proper place.

Now, look what happens here. The Chaldeans, Nebuchadnezzar, has now withdrawn from Jerusalem to go deal with the Egyptians. And so, Jeremiah takes advantage of that here. Now take note with me. Again, verse 11. When the army of the Chaldeans had departed from Jerusalem for Pharaoh's approaching army, Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin.

[11:32] That's to slip away during that brief lull to receive the title to his portion of the land, which the Lord promised would be eventually valuable there among the people.

So he left Jerusalem, slipped out of the gates to go and get a hold of the deed to that land that is now to be his. But look what happens in verse 13.

When he was at the gate of Benjamin, a sentry was on guard there whose name was Arijah, son of Shalemiah, the son of Hananiah.

And he seized Jeremiah the prophet, saying, you are deserting to the Chaldeans. Your turncoat here. You know, why would he stop him anyway?

If he didn't like what they prophesied, what he prophesied, why not just let him go? But he didn't. He took him. He stopped him. You're deserting to the Chaldeans. Verse 14.

[12:32] Then said Jeremiah, it is false. I am not deserting to the Chaldeans, but the sentry would not listen to him. So Arijah took Jeremiah and brought him to the princes.

Look what else happens now. By the way, that taking of the land as being the near kinsman by Jeremiah, remember, was a token of his belief in the promises of God concerning the return to the land.

Remember that. All right. Now, it's reminiscent. Remember Jacob, when he finally, after his rebellion from the Lord and all the experience with God that he, you know, encounters that he had, finally ended up coming back to Bethel.

Remember that? And finally ended up back in his father's land. Remember what he did? He bought a parcel of land and called it El Elohí Israel.

God is the God of Israel. And he did that as a token of saying, I believe now that God is God because he's done everything he promised he would do.

[13:43] Remember, that's what Jeremiah said when God confronted him. God made all those promises to him. I'll be with you. I'll be wherever you go. I'll bring you back into the land and all of that.

Jacob said, if you indeed do all those things you said you would do, then you will be my God. That is to say, you will prove to me that you are God and I will claim you as such.

So then he went, bought that parcel of land and said, God, El, God is, the God of Israel is the God of Jacob or the God of Israel. Same thing that Jeremiah does here is in redeeming that land.

Same picture here. Now, verse 15 of Jeremiah 37, therefore, the princes were enraged with Jeremiah, that's because he slipped out, and beat him and put him in prison in the house of Jonathan the scribe, for they had made that the prison.

Now, verses 16 and 17, when Jeremiah had come into the cells in the dungeon and had remained there many days, Zedekiah the king sent and brought him out.

[14:52] And the king asked him secretly in the house, is there any word from the Lord? Interesting, no doubt. Here's that Jeremiah has been arrested because he's been fleeing the city.

Bring him in, put him in prison. The king has him brought out to him secretly. Notice that. He brought it to him secretly. He doesn't want anybody to know that he's talking to Jeremiah and asking Jeremiah something here.

And here's what he asked. Zedekiah the king sent and brought him out and the king asked him secretly in his house, is there any word from Jehovah? I asked you to pray for me to him on our behalf.

Is there any word that's come from him? Jeremiah said, yes, sir, there is. And he said also, here's what it is.

You shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon. I love Jeremiah. Amen. I really do. I mean, not hesitating, stead forth, brazen, bold.

[16:02] Yeah, I did get a word from the Lord. You're going to be taken captive. Yeah.

Na-na-na-na-boo-boo. Yeah. I don't think he's that. That's lion's translation there.

Okay. No. No. So he's put in the, put in the prisons, believed to be subterranean prisons and vaults into which the prisoners were placed. So, Jeremiah was in confinement here.

Much more severe and dangerous to his life than he's ever been and was there a long, long time.

So Zedekiah wants to know what the answer was and he gave him the answer.

You shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon. Now, verses 18 through 20. Moreover, Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah, In what have I sinned against you or against your servants or against this people that you have put me in prison?

Where now are your prophets who prophesied to you, saying, The king of Babylon shall not come against you or against this land? Therefore, here now I pray you, O my, O Lord, my Lord, the king, let my supplication, I pray you, come before you and be acceptable that you do not cause me to return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, which of course was the prison, lest I die, lest I die there.

[17:26] So he appeals to his innocence and upon the confirmation of what his message had been in comparison to what's taking place now with the Chaldeans.

So, the interview, again, took place while the Chaldeans were gone, dealing with the Egyptians who were giving them problems.

But look, if you will, for the provisions here that God gives to his prophet and the honor that is bestowed upon him. Verse 21, Then Zedekiah, the king, commanded, And they committed Jeremiah to the court of the guard.

And a round loaf of bread from the baker's street was given to him daily until all the bread of the city was gone. So Jeremiah remained in prison in the court of the guard.

So, wasn't full liberty, but it's sure better than what he had. But also, he's treating him like he's part of the king's guard. He's going to, you know, make sure he gets one loaf of bread a day, fresh bread, from the king's, you know, the street where the king's bakery was.

[18:36] So, God helps and deals with him here. Now, takes us to chapter 38. You know, it's amazing. God always takes care of his people.

Now, in chapter 38, two events take place in particular. Taking place again in the last period of the siege against Jerusalem.

First of all, the number of fighting men had greatly declined. and the number of deserters to the Chaldeans became large. Famine had already begun to prevail.

So, the first event that takes place here is the imprisonment of Jeremiah due to his continued preaching. Now, in verses 1 through 13, let's look, we'll look at there as we go.

He's confined again, remember, into the court of the garden, the royal palace, and as a result, in that little bit of freedom he's got, he's had the opportunity, no doubt took it, to talk with the guards and anybody else that came through there, just to visit with them, speak to them, and I would almost imagine he spoke to them concerning the message that God had given to him about what's going to take place in Jerusalem.

[19:57] So, as a result, the princes heard about that idea and were outraged that Jeremiah had that freedom to be able to talk to the guards because he was weakening the resistance if there was going to be any.

So they resolved to put Jeremiah to death. In verse 4 of chapter 38, here's what it says, Therefore the princes said to the king, We beseech you, let this man Jeremiah be put to death for talking.

Thus he weakens the hands of the soldiers who remain in the city and the hands of all the people by speaking such words to them. For this man is not seeking the welfare of these people, but to do them harm.

All right? I mean, after all, look at the guards here and these people that would be, you know, any resistance if there was such a thing. The more Jeremiah speaks, the more they're seeing the reality of what's happening here with the Chaldeans, he continues to share with them the reality this is what God is saying is going to happen.

So if it's a fruitless, useless deal, why even bother risking your life to defend the city? And that's what was taking place here.

[21 : 19] And the princes knew it and sought to put him to death. So they obtained permission from the king and they end up casting him into a very deep pit in verses 5 and 6.

Look what it says here. Then Zedekiah the king said, Behold, he's in your hands, for the king is in no position to do anything against you. Isn't that an amazing thing to say?

Zedekiah, again, just a puppet king in reality and his princes, you know, are so strong that he has no real influence over them. So he throws up his hand and he said, I'm in no position to do anything against you so do as you want to with him.

So they took Jeremiah and cast him into the dungeon or cistern pit in the charge of Malachi the king's son, which was in the court of the guard and they let Jeremiah down into the pit with ropes. And in the dungeon or cistern pit, there was no water but only mire. And Jeremiah sank in the mire. Wow.

[22 : 30] Tremendous, is it not? This king that brought Jeremiah in secret to his chambers to find out if there's any word from God now is willing to let these guys put him not just in prison but in the cistern pits, sink down in the muck and the mire that the princes thought would surely end up in his death.

They didn't want to slay him because they didn't want that on their conscience that they shed his blood. So they just threw him in the pit to sink down in that mucky mire to let him die.

Now, but again, he's God's man. He's God's prophet. God knows him. God knows the circumstance.

He knows where he's at. And so what does God do? Look at verse 7. Tremendous. When Ebed Melech, the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs who was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon or cistern pit, and while the king was then sitting in the gate of Benjamin, Ebed Melech went 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 or cistern pit, and he is liable to die of hunger and is as good as dead in the place where he is, for there is no more bread left in the city.

Then the king commanded Ebed Melech, the Ethiopian, saying, Take from here 30 men with you and raise Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon before he dies.

[24 : 27] Now, tremendous picture here of how God deals with his people and how he comes to their aid when they are in need.

No matter where the people of God are, no matter what their circumstances, what their situation, God knows that they're there and helps them.

To me, there's a great picture here, how God uses unexpected resources as his instruments to help his people.

Amen? Who would have ever thought that an Ethiopian eunuch in Zedekiah's palace or court would ever be the one that would come to the rescue of Jeremiah?

Unexpected resources. And how much God does that, he had no power. But God did. And God let him go.

[25 : 27] Hebrews 13, verses 5 and 6 remember says, let your conversation be without covetousness. Be content with such things as you have, for he has said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, so that we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Let me read that as they amplified. I don't know if I put that in there for you or not. I will not in any way fail you nor give you up, nor leave you without support.

And here's the emphasis of it. I will not, I will not, I will not in any degree leave you helpless, nor forsake, nor let you down, relax my hold on you, assuredly not.

That's the strength of that passage. You know, I will not, I will not, I will not forsake you. Yeah, verses 11 through 13.

Of course, Psalm 139 verses 1 through 18, you know, the psalmist talks about how thoroughly God knows him and knew him even while he was in his mother's womb and those things.

[26 : 39] You can reread that if you want to on your own. It's a tremendous blessing here. We would do it tonight, but we need to get through this portion, so we finish up on schedule.

So, verses 11 through 13, so Ebed-Melech took the men with him and went into the house of the king to a room under the treasury and took along from their old rags and worn out garments and let them down by ropes into the dungeon or a cistern pit to Jeremiah.

He was also a resourceful guy, this eunuch, notice that. And Ebed-Melech, the Ethiopian, said to Jeremiah, put now these old rags and worn out garments under your armpits, under the ropes. And Jeremiah did so. So they drew up Jeremiah with the ropes and took him up out of the dungeon or cistern pit, and Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard.

Now, again, Zedekiah is just amazing. Verse 14 through 16, Then Zedekiah the king sent and brought Jeremiah the prophet to him in the third entrance that is in the house of the Lord.

[27 : 48] And the king said to Jeremiah, I'm going to ask you something. I'm going to ask you something. Hide nothing from me. All of a sudden, want to be honest here.

Want to be transparent. Don't hide anything from me. Again, here's what Jeremiah says to Zedekiah. If I tell you, will you not surely put me to death?

And even if I did give you counsel, you wouldn't listen to me. Anyway, you're not going to do what I say. Now, Zedekiah wanted a message from God regarding that final issue of the siege.

Jeremiah, of course, knowing how fickle King Zedekiah is, asked him again the question, will you not surely put me to death? And so Zedekiah's promise in verse 16 says, So Zedekiah the king swore secretly to Jeremiah, as the Lord lives, who made our lives, swears by the Lord, Jehovah, all right, as the Lord lives, who made our lives, I will not put you to death or give you into the hands of these men who seek your life.

So Jeremiah says, okay, verses 17 and 18, then said Jeremiah to Zedekiah, thus says the Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel, if you will go forth and surrender to the princes of the king of Babylon, then you will live and this city will not be burned with fire and you will live you and your house.

[29 : 26] But if you will not go forth and surrender to the princes of the king of Babylon, then this city will be given into the hands of the Chaldeans and they will burn it with fire and you will not escape out of their hands.

Now, so, verse 28, Jeremiah remained in the court of the guard until the day that Jerusalem was taken by the Chaldeans.

Now, go to chapter 39, we see that things are just like God said it would be. Verse 1, In the ninth year of Zedekiah, king of Judah, in the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and all his army came against Jerusalem and besieged it.

And in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, now notice, he took it, besieged the city in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, three years or two years later, in the fourth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign, on the ninth day of the month, they broke into the city.

When Jerusalem was taken and all the king, all the princesses of the king of Babylon came in and sat in the middle gate. Now, I'm not going to take time to try to read the names of these guys.

[30 : 56] All right? Verse 4, when Zedekiah, king of Judah, and all the men of war saw them, what happened? They fled and went forth out of the city at night, by way of the king's garden, through the gate between the two walls, and the king went out toward the Arba, the Jordan Valley.

But the Chaldean army pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. And when they had taken him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, at Ribla, in the Syrian land of Hemath, where he pronounced sentence upon him.

Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah at Ribla before his eyes. Also, the king of Babylon slew all the nobles of Judah. Can you imagine when all this was taking place and Zedekiah was just watching all of this?

what rang in his mind, the words of Jeremiah through the years had to have. Now, moreover, verse 7, he put out Zedekiah's eyes.

Now, that no doubt is after he let him watch all that other stuff that happened. Put out Zedekiah's eyes and bound him with shackles to take him to Babylon. And the Chaldeans burned the king's house and the houses of the people broke down the walls of Jerusalem.

[32 : 24] Then Nebuchadnezzar the chief executioner and captain of the guard carried away captive to Babylon the rest of the people who remained in the city along with those who deserted to him and the remainder of the so-called better class of people who were left.

But Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian captain of the guard left in the land of Judah some of the poor of the people who had nothing giving them then vineyards and fields at the same time.

So there was a little bit of compassion there. Now think of the carnage and destruction that the people of Judah experienced right there just like God said it would happen.

No resistance complete total surrender except of course for Zerokiah. so the message that they despised that came from the lips of Jeremiah had now become a reality and there had to be so much great sorrow and lamenting there on behalf of the people.

So realize something here our message that we have to preach has to be equally strong.

[33 : 43] I mean no compromise there. People got to know. They've got to know that sin is sin righteousness is righteousness that Jesus is coming again.

Because there is a day that is coming that's even more devastating than what Jerusalem went through in the days of Zedekiah. Look at Revelation 14 excuse me Revelation 6 verses 14 through 17 The heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together.

Every mountain and island were moved out of their places and the kings of the earth and the great men and the rich men and the chief captains and the mighty men and every bondman and every free man hid themselves in the dens in the rocks of the mountains and said to the mountains and the rocks fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the lamb for the great day of his wrath has come who shall be able to stand.

that's amazing to me just like Zedekiah and I think even the princes of Zedekiah really in the back of their mind had to know the reality of what Jeremiah was prophesying here that it was indeed from God in the revelation we see during the tribulation the carnage that takes place in that last three and a half years people running to the caves and the mountains and begging the mountains to fall on them to hide them to get them out of experiencing what they knew to be the wrath of God it's just hard for me to conceive how people even in this generation can live a life so contrary to what God has designed and in essence put their fist in his face and say I dare you to do anything about it knowing when the time comes we'll know that this is indeed the wrath of God wow tremendous now finish up with verse 11-18 of chapter 39 great picture here of the faithfulness of God in honoring faithful people Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon verse 11 gave command concerning Jeremiah to Nebuchadnezzar the captain of the guard saying take him and look after him well and do no harm but deal with him as he may ask of you so Nebuchadnezzar the captain of the guard Nebuchadnezzar a chief of the eunuchs

[36 : 57] Nergal Sherezer a chief of the magicians and all the chief officers of king of Babylon sent and took Jeremiah out of the court of the guard and entrusted him to Jedaliah a prominent man whose father once saved the prophet's life by the way he's the son of Ahicham the son of Shaphan that he should take him home with him to Mizpah so Jeremiah was released and dwelt among the people now the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah while he was still shut up in the court of the guard saying go and say to Ebed Melech the Ethiopian thus says the Lord of hosts the God of Israel behold I will bring to pass my words against the city for evil and not good and they will accomplish before you on that day but I will deliver you Ebed Melech on that day says the

Lord and you will not be given into the hands of men of whom you are afraid for I will surely deliver you and you will not fall by the sword but your life will be as your only booty and as a reward of battle to you because you have put your trust in me says the Lord amen what a picture here God promises him life and he says the reason for that is because you had put your trust in me amen because you see when he went to Zedekiah and said hey they put Jeremiah in the pit he'll die there you need to get him out Zedekiah could have taken his life but he trusted God in that because God no doubt impressed him because he wanted to use him to free his prophet!

Amen! All right let's pray together Father again thank you for your loving kindness to us and again Father thank you for the precious time to feast in your word and on your word with these precious folks and I again thank you for the love that they have for your word and for you and for developing that within their lives and in their heart and mind so I ask that you bless them for that and give us continued insight into what you've shown us today about your faithfulness to your people no matter what the circumstances are I'm grateful Father that you know us that thoroughly and that you as the Lord of hosts have everything at your disposal to see us through the circumstances of our lives so enable us to trust you in that day by day and we'll thank you for what you do in Jesus name Amen Thank you.