

# A Brother Is A Brother

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're in Jeremiah 34 this evening.

Some interesting things in chapter 34.! I think on your notes I kind of put a heading of a brother is a brother.! And you can quote me on that if you want to.

You can even put it on the board if you want to. I don't care. But we'll see what that pertains to here in just a moment. So in Jeremiah chapter 34, let's read the first seven verses.

That will kind of kick us off. And then we'll get to the rest of it as we go along. So in verse 1, The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord with Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and all his army and all the kingdoms of the earth under his domain, and all the people were fighting against Jerusalem and all of its cities.

Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, Go and speak to Zedekiah, king of Judah, and tell 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.

[ 1 : 14 ] And you will not escape out of his hand, but will surely be taken and delivered into his hand. 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.

And yet, hear the word of the Lord, O Zedekiah, king of Judah. Thus says the Lord concerning you, You shall not die by the sword, but you shall die in peace.

And as with the burnings of spices and perfumes on wood that were granted as suitable for and in honor of your fathers, the former kings who are before you, so shall a burning be made for you, And people shall lament for you, saying, Alas, Lord, for I have spoken the word, says the Lord.

Then Jeremiah the prophet spoke all these words to Zedekiah, king of Judah, in Jerusalem. When the army of the king of Babylon was fighting against Jerusalem and against all the cities of Judah that were left against Lashas and Azekah, for these were the only fortified cities remaining of the cities of Jerusalem.

Now, again, a couple of things to remember. We've said before that at this point in the book of Jeremiah, these chapters are not necessarily in chronological order as to the events that they contain.

[ 2 : 36 ] So keep that in mind. What was the second one? I don't remember what the second point was going to be. But nonetheless, oh yes, I do.

The city of Jerusalem now is under siege, realized, at this point. And so Nebuchadnezzar, once again, has already come against the city. So in this particular chapter, two prophecies come at the time of the siege of Jerusalem at Zedekiah.

This is the first, by the way, the first of three events, three periods of besieging, besieging the city of Jerusalem.

And the third time, of course, is the time when it's completely overwhelmed. So there's two prophecies, really, that take place in this particular chapter.

The first seven verses, as we just read just a moment ago, really speaks of the fruitlessness of the king to fight against the idea that the Chaldeans will come and destroy the city.

[ 3 : 36 ] God continues to remind him and say that it is a fruitless thing to resist that idea because it is going to happen. And then in verses 8 through 22, something interesting takes place here.

It pertains to a covenant that had been made with the people of Israel. Covenant that was really broken, then restored, but then broken again.

And so God deals with that and deals with the punishment of that as well. And that's the part that we get the idea of a brother being a brother. So, at the time, Zedekiah still had hope of being able to defeat and driving off the Chaldeans.

And that, at this point, would be with the help of the Egyptians. If you recognize the Egyptians throughout Scripture, you find that they're not very trustworthy people.

They make promises to you, but when push comes to shove and it's time to fight, they usually cower down and run home. And so that was going to be the case here.

[ 4 : 42 ] God was telling the king of Judah, Egypt is not going to be of help to you. So, as a result, as we read in the first seven verses, Zedekiah is going to fall into the hands of the king of Babylon.

I like that part that says you're going to see him eye to eye. Amen? I mean, eye to eye, face to face. And that's going to be the reality of this.

He said, you will not die in that. You will be taken captive, but you will be honored. You will die in captivity. But in your death, even, you will be honored as a ruler in the proper state, in the proper form that rulers should be honored in death.

But even at that, even though that's going to take place, the idea is he is going to die in captivity. He will not be free when he dies. He'll be in captivity.

Now, to verse number 8. Go there with me. In Jeremiah 34, verse 8, deals with the re-enslavement of liberated Hebrew men and women that are slaves or maidservants to the people of Israel.

[ 6 : 02 ] So, look what he says here in verse 8. This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people who were at Jerusalem to proclaim liberty to them.

Every man should let his Hebrew slaves, male and female, go free so that no one should make a slave of a Jew, his brother. And all the princes and all the people obeyed who had entered into the covenant that everyone would let his manservants and his maidservants go free so that none should make bondmen of them anymore.

They obeyed and let them go. But afterward, they turned around and caused the servants and the handmaids whom they had let go free to return to their former masters and brought them into subjection for servants and for handmaids.

Now, the covenant that Zedekiah had made with the people, all the people of Jerusalem, consisted, as most of them do, with a solemn vow before the Lord that this particular thing is going to take place.

That solemn vow was always made before the Lord in the temple and usually, and probably at this point too, confirmed with the offering of sacrifices. So it's a very solemn thing.

[ 7 : 26 ] And it's one that not only is between people, but it's confirmed before the Lord. So God's involved in the midst of all of this. Now, this particular covenant was to set free the male and female slaves of Hebrew descent that he calls their brother that was in conformity to the law that God had given to Moses.

Look at Exodus chapter 21. I may have printed that off for you there. Exodus 21, verses 1 through 4. The words say, Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them.

If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve, and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing. If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself.

If he were married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master have given him a wife, and she have borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her masters, and he shall go out by himself.

So that's the covenant, or the law that stipulated how that was to be handled. You know, in reality, usually the case was, a man got into such financial straits for whatever reason that he needed to pay back the debt somehow so he became a slave to a master, a Hebrew master.

[ 8 : 59 ] But the law stipulated he'll serve six years, and then the seventh year he'll be set free. That was the law that he gave.

Zedekiah, when he made that covenant with them, was that covenant that came under that law. Now, but what do you think happened here?

It's quite evident that in all of the life of Judah, people weren't keeping any of the law. Amen? They had rejected the Lord, they had rebelled against him, so henceforth, no doubt, they were not keeping the law of God.

So, that included this idea of the solemn covenant that was made. They were neglecting it, just like they neglected the rest of the law. And so, as a result, these men and women that were to serve for six years have been serving a lot longer, many of them, than that six-year period without being set free.

And so, Zedekiah finds himself ready to reconfirm that covenant. We'll see more about that here in just a minute. Now, Leviticus chapter 25, verse 39 says, that no one should labor, though a Jew, who is his brother, a fellow countryman.

[10:24] He is to be set free. Verse 29 through 42 of Leviticus 25 says, If thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee, thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant.

Now, realize there's a difference between a bondservant and a slave. A bondservant, that's usually for a lifetime. Okay? Different than a slave.

All right? In particular in this case. So, he, so the Jewish brother is, if he's sold unto this guy, is not to be sold as a bondservant, but as an hired servant, and as a sojourner.

He shall be with thee, and shall serve thee until the year of Jubilee. And then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possessions of his father shall he return.

For they are my servants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt. They shall not be sold as bondmen. All right? Now, to enter into a covenant is to assume an obligation.

[11:40] Both sides of the party have an obligation under that covenant, that they, by confirming that covenant, say, we will be sure we fulfill our part of that obligation.

All right? So, it then is different from slavery. With Israel, emancipation took place during the siege of Jerusalem. All right? When Nebuchadnezzar was coming up against Jerusalem, Zedekiah decided, I'm going to go ahead and free these guys like I'm supposed to.

And so, he frees those slaves. He's fearful. It's kind of the hint here, all right, I'm going to try my best to be a nice guy enough that God would see this and maybe help us out here.

And so, that's what he did. But, in the middle of that attempt to besiege Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar has to stop and go back home because the Egyptians are knocking on his door. So, he's got to go fight the Egyptians. Okay? Now, keep in mind in the midst of all of this are these false prophets that have been saying, oh, this captivity is only going to last a couple of years and we're going to be set free and go back home.

[13:01] So, what happens? Nebuchadnezzar hightails it out of there. Just like the false prophets had predicted. So, what does Zedekiah do?

He changes his mind about that covenant he's made with the slaves and the maidservants. He revokes that covenant and makes them return back to their masters to continue serving them as a slave or a maidservant.

That's what he does there. Now, verse 13 of Jeremiah 34. God here sets forth before the people and their rulers the offense now that they've committed and then as a result he announces to them the punishment that's theirs because of this new disobedience in breaking that covenant.

Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, I made a covenant with your fathers in that day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt out of the house of bondage saying at the end of seven years you shall let every man his brother he was a Hebrew go free who has sold himself or has been sold to you and has served you six years but your fathers did not listen to and obey so see that again we saw that in Exodus that takes place that is established right after God brings Israel out of Egyptian bondage so it's really a part of God's work of redemption there and so he establishes that law that they'll serve only six years and then be freed but he said but your fathers did not listen to and obey me or incline their ears submitting and consenting to me and you recently turned around and repented doing what was right in my sight by proclaiming liberty each one to his neighbor who is his bondservant and you made a covenant or pledge before me in the house which is called by my name now notice the seriousness of this

God's calling him out on this thing said you not only did this but you confirmed it before me in that place which is called by my name in other words the temple but then you turned around and defiled my name each of you caused to return to you your servants male and female whom you had set free as they might desire and you brought them into subjection again to be your slave so God puts it all in perspective here now because Israel was a servant in Egypt and the Lord redeemed them out of that house of bondage they therefore as a result must not treat their brothers who had fallen into poverty as slaves but set them free after six years of service it's all related to God's blessing of redemption for Israel from Egyptian bondage you see their fathers transgressed the covenant and now just for a little while they had turned away from the sins of the fathers repented of that sin and did what was right until things got a little better on the forefront here they immediately then as a

result of that

[ 16 : 35 ] God said profaned the name of the Lord by revoking that decree and breaking the covenant that God made they made before God according to their own pleasure verses 17 and 18 take notice God announces the punishment for that particular sin therefore thus says the Lord you have not listened to me and obeyed me in proclaiming liberty each one to his brother and neighbor behold I proclaim to you liberty to the sword to pestilence and to famine says the Lord I will make you to be tossed to and fro and to be a horror among all the kingdoms of the earth and the men who have transgressed my covenant who have not kept the terms of the covenant or solemn pledge which they had made before me I will make them notice this I will make them like the sacrificial calf which they cut into and then pass between its separated parts solemnizing their pledge to me

I will make those men the calf you remember you remember what the idea of that was go over to Genesis chapter 15 and remember something here this this is a great picture of what he's talking about here something that transpired between God and Abram when God was making that covenant with Abram look in verse 1 this is after this is after God enabled Abram to rescue his nephew Lot from the kings and then he then on the way back meets Melchizedek and all of those things transpire so this is after that in verse 1 of chapter 15 of Genesis after these things the word of the Lord or the word of Jehovah came unto Abram in a vision saying fear not Abram I love this I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward

Abram said Lord God notice that God said to Abram I am your shield I'm your protector and I'm your exceeding great reward as if to say you don't need anything else amen now notice Abram said then Lord God what wilt thou give me seeing I go childless and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus now Abram knows that if God's making a covenant with him and the character of that covenant determines that he's going to have to have a son for that covenant really to be fulfilled but he's getting old and he doesn't have one and so now he says this servant of mine Eliezer of Damascus this is the only one in my house Abram said behold to me thou hast given no seed and lo one born in my house is mine heir and behold the word of the

Lord came unto him saying this shall not be thine heir but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir and he brought him forth abroad and said look now toward heaven and tell the stars if thou be able to number them and he said unto him so shall thy seed be and he believed in the Lord here's the key verse he believed in the Lord he believed in Jehovah and he counted it to him for righteousness and he said unto him I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur the Chaldees to give thee this land to inherit it and he said Lord God whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it now at that point Abram's not questioning the Lord you know by saying give me proof here but he would like some confirmation!

here so what is that would confirm to me that I will have confidence in knowing that I'll inherit it and he said unto him take me a heifer of three years old and a she goat of three years old and a ram of three years old and a turtle dove and a young pigeon and he took unto him all these and divided them in the midst and laid each piece one against another but the birds divided he not and when the fowls came down upon the carcasses Abram drove them away and when the sun was going down a deep sleep fell upon Abram and lo and horror of great darkness fell upon him now get the picture here he tells him you get a heifer get a goat!

[ 21 : 32 ] turtle dove the heifer and the goat I want you to know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs and shall serve them and they shall afflict them four hundred years so there's the Egyptian bondage also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge and afterward they shall come out with great substance and thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace and thou shalt be buried in the good old age but in the fourth generation there shall come hither again and the iniquity of the

Amorites is not yet full now look at verse 17 came to pass that when the sun went down and it was dark behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces in the same day Jehovah made a covenant with Abram saying unto thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt under the great river the river Euphrates and then goes and lists the people that that includes that that that that darkness a smoking furnace and a burning lamp passed through the middle of those pieces that path that was between the two sides and the picture there was this that it was God passing through those pieces those pieces represented the making of that covenant between God and Abram take notice with me if you will Abram did not pass between those pieces only

God did thus God saying to Abram here's the covenant I make with you and by he and he alone passing through those pieces God was saying to Abram I am the one that's going to be sure that all of this takes place you're not going to have anything to do with it Abram it's me my sovereign grace and will will make it happen all right there's a solemnity of that covenant relationship and the idea of those animal pieces being cut apart separated and the two parties of that covenant passing between those only this time it was just God that did that now when Zedekiah made that covenant with the people of Israel he did that before the Lord and that's the same thing that transpired here to some extent here's a picture of it what happens here in the making of the covenant first of all a calf as a sacrifice was offered to

God to secure his official approval and support of the covenant thus he's saying you've made that covenant before me to get my approval and my consent about that then the victim the animal was exactly divided from nose to the rump the spinal marrow being divided lengthwise in the most careful manner that the half of it might remain on each side see how precise it had to be would you love to have been the one that had to cut that apart amen yeah these divided parts were laid opposite to each other a passage being left between them the contracting parties entered this passage at each end met in the middle and there took the covenant oath that judging themselves to death should they break this covenant then they both feasted on the victim in other words on the animal that was sacrificed that's the picture there that's what they had done with Israel with each other Zedekiah and the people in this covenant concerning the slaves being released after six years of service so that's why God took this so seriously that you have broken that you have reneged against that and so I am going to have to judge you as in what you have done in doing that so because you've not hearkened and not proclaimed liberty to everybody he said I'm proclaiming liberty for you because remember he said I made that covenant with Abraham your father if you will so I'm going to discharge you from that relationship get the picture we've got a covenant relationship here you being the people of Judah so now because you've broken that covenant relationship

[ 26 : 57 ] I'm going to break it with you I'm going to set you free all right just like under the terms of the slave I'm going to set you free but your freedom is going to be this I set you free so that you could fall under the sword and under the judgment that I proclaim against you the sword the famine the pestilence so all of that may have power over you now look at verses 19 through 22 the princes of Judah the princes of Jerusalem the eunuchs the priests and all the people of the land who passed between the parts of the calf I will give them into the hands of their enemies and into the hands of those who seek their life their dead bodies will be food for the birds of heaven and the beasts of the earth and Zedekiah king of Judah and his princes will I give into the hands of their enemies and into the hands of those who seek their life and into the hand of the king of

Babylon says the Lord and cause them the Chaldeans that is to return to this city and they shall fight against it and take it and burn it with fire I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without inhabitant and we find of course that that did transpire Nebuchadnezzar wasn't gone very long he comes back knocking on the door quickly so you see a brother is a brother all right yeah these were their brothers that had fallen into hard times and thus became slaves maidservants but they're still brothers and they were to be released and freed so what's our relationship as brothers in Christ what what is our responsibility here John 13 verses 34 through 35 a new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as

I have loved you that you also love one another now of course remember that's agape love there all right it's that love that is only produced in the life of the yielded believer by the spirit of God all right by even the people of Israel in the day of Jesus before he came how did they operate how did they operate I'm not talking with sutures and no under the law they operated under the law reality the law had nothing to do with love right agape love was something entirely foreign to them oh they had brotherly love and all those type of things but agape love why do you think well be careful of that why did the gospel at the very early days of the early church right after Pentecost why was it so successful don't tell me because of the power of the spirit of God I know that but I'm looking for something else to go along with that why is it what did they say happened what the scriptures say took place they sold they sold all that they had and put it in a common pot why did they do that because there are people that had come from the regions around to observe Pentecost and usually just took provisions enough to get them there for however long they're going stay there and to get back home so many things were happening here when the spirit of God came

and dwelt within those believers on Pentecost the preaching of the gospel took place thousands of souls were being saved people didn't want to leave they wanted to see what's happening next so in order to support them they put everything in the common pot so that every man had what he needed every day to be able to stay yeah unheard of under the law under the way the people of the Jews normally operated they saw that it was different so many things like that continued and continued and thus

Jesus said that's the way people are going to know and see that you are indeed my disciples that you have that agape love that selfless love that self sacrificial love for me then in John 15 verses 12 and 13 this is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you same thing agape love greater love hath no man than this than a man lay down his life for his friends self sacrificial love Romans 12 10 love one another with brotherly affection as members of one family giving precedence and showing honor to one another Ephesians 4 32 and how do we do that showing love one for another and precedence showing honor to one another yeah gentlemen I'm going to get on to you here gentlemen how do you show honor to your wife this is the way we show honor but how many of you when you leave this place tonight you go wherever you're going to go will very kindly out of the love of your heart for your wife walk around and open the door for her that's the idea of showing honor one to another not just our wives you can open the door for another man too but you get the idea there!

[ 33 : 44 ] alright! Ephesians 4 32! become useful and helpful and kind to one another tender hearted that's compassionate understanding loving hearted forgiving one another readily and freely as God in Christ forgave you then 1st John 4 21 this commandment we have from him that he who loveth God loveth his brother also how can we say we love God and not love our brother amen and again that is with agape love that's why that's why it's imperative folks that we learn to practice submission to the spirit of God every moment of our life because it's only the spirit of God that can produce that agape love within us father again thank you for your love and grace and your goodness in the night tonight thank you father for your word lord we can see some devastating things in your word but it also enables us to see how serious we must be in our relationship to you in our service to you in our walk with you and staying away from sin and ungodliness that that hinders that walk and so father thank you for loving us thank you for showing us your word and thank you for giving us the spirit of

God which inclines our heart to holiness and gives conviction of sin when that becomes a part of our living so father just keep us aware keep us sensitive! to you enable us to keep ourselves yielded to your spirit and we thank you for it in Jesus name amen