



Jeremiah 33-34

Tape #7298
Jeremiah 33-34
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn now in our Bibles now to the thirty third chapter of Jeremiah, as we continue journeying through the word.

Now, Jeremiah had been shut up in the prison, because of his prophecy to Zedekiah. The prophecy of the fall of Jerusalem, and the captivity of the king himself. While he was in prison, the word of the Lord came to him to buy the field of his cousin Hanameel. The right of redemption was his. The property was being foreclosed on, he being a near relative had an opportunity to redeem it so it would remain in the family. Jeremiah redeemed the field, but then he thought that that's so foolish, in as much as the Babylonian army has already encircled the city of Jerusalem, and has the city under siege. They're going to fall to Babylon, they're going to be in captivity for seventy years. I don't need that field. Why would I buy that field? So, he prayed to the Lord.

The prayer was mainly occupied with worship, but then he finally got to the point and he said, "Lord why would you want me to buy that field?" The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah and gave to him the reason he was to buy the field was to give a sign to the people of his confidence in the word of God, that God would return them from their captivity. They would again dwell in the land, and property would be bought and sold and occupied in the land again. So it was a witness to the people. That was the first response to the Lord.

In the prayer of Jeremiah to the Lord, he describes the awesome power of the Lord. He said, "Lord there is nothing too hard for you", and so as the Lord answered Jeremiah's prayer, He responded by declaring, "There is nothing too hard for me."

Now, the word of the Lord came [really] the second time, while he was still in prison there in the court of the king (33:1).

This time the Lord introduces Himself as the maker, that is of heaven and earth. Now when Jeremiah prayed, in his prayer he said, "You have made the heaven and the earth by your great power."

So the Lord said, The maker thereof, the Lord that formed it to establish it, Jehovah is His name. Call unto me, [the Lord said] And I will answer you and show you great and mighty things which thou knowest not (33:2-3).

So, God's invitation to Jeremiah to just call upon Him. That the Lord would answer him and show him great and mighty things that he did not know.

So the Lord began to reveal then, through prophecy, the things that were going to happen to Jerusalem and to the people of Israel, and Judah. First of all their future was to be very dark and bleak, because Babylon was to utterly destroy the city of Jerusalem.

For thus saith the Lord, Jehovah the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city, and concerning the houses of the kings of Judah, which are thrown down by the mounts, and the sword (33:4);

The mounts were the ramps that the Babylonians built to get a high position to fire down on those that were defending the city on the walls. So it's a description of the destruction that's going to come, the houses, of the kings, and of the people will be destroyed.

The people come out to fight with the Babylonians, the Chaldeans, but it is only to fill them with the dead bodies of men, whom I have slain in my anger and in my fury, and for all whose wickedness I have hid my face from this city (33:5).

So, God had turned His back upon Judah, because Judah had turned their backs upon God.

Earlier in their history, when they were faced with a tremendous army from Ethiopia that was invading the land, Asa was the king at the time, he had not been reigning very long; and, when he saw this huge army of over a million men invading, he went to the Lord and he said, "Lord, it is nothing for you to help. For those who are weak and those who are strong." In other words, "It doesn't make any difference to you Lord if we are weak or strong. Help us, O Lord. For in your name, we're going to go out against this enemy. And

don't let man prevail against you. But Lord we're putting ourselves on your side, we're gonna go out in your name, we're gonna fight. We're out numbered, we don't have the strength. But that doesn't matter to you, and in your name we're gonna go out. Don't let men prevail against you."

He went out, the Lord was with him and the Lord defeated the Ethiopians, and he was victorious. As he was coming back from the war, victorious with the armies, a prophet of God came out to meet him. He gave him a prophecy, he said, "The Lord is with you, while you are with Him. And if you seek Him, He will be found of you. But if you forsake Him, He will forsake you." Now that's just a principle. The Lord will be with you, if you'll be with Him. If you seek the Lord, you will find Him, but if you forsake Him, the Lord will forsake you.

Now Jerusalem, the people of Jerusalem and Judah had come to the place where they had forsaken God, and now God has forsaken them. Again, they are facing a powerful army, the Babylonian army. They're gonna go out against the Babylonian army, but not under the protection of God. They're gonna go out in their own strength, in their own energies, in their own zeal and they're just going to be slain by the Babylonians. For the Lord has turned His back on them, even as they have turned their back upon the Lord, and the city is to be destroyed.

But, that's not the end of the story, and for those who are the people of God, darkness is never the end of the story. The end of the story is always, "And they lived happily ever, after in the kingdom of God, in the glories of His kingdom eternally, with our Lord, eternal bliss and glory of the kingdom of God."

So, Jeremiah began to prophecy of that glorious day of the Lord. When the Lord Himself would come and reign over the earth, from Jerusalem. So the Lord promises healing and joy.

I will cure them and reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth (33:6).

Sin is like a sickness. A person who is living in sin is sick. He is doing those things that are destroying him, but he doesn't have the power to quit. He's bound by his sinful activity. Worse than that, sin is progressive. It seems that there is no real static place in life. Life goes on, and if you're living a life of sin, it's progressing deeper into sin. You get worse and worse. You just don't stay at a static position.

The same is true of righteousness, there is no static position in righteousness. We are becoming more like Him, more righteous each day, as we walk with Him, or less righteous. But you just don't stand still. You're moving one direction or another. By the grace of God, we're moving towards the prize for the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus. More and more into the image of Jesus Christ. "We with open faces, or unveiled faces, before the Lord are being changed from glory to glory." There's a progression into that same image that we're beholding. By the power of God's Spirit that's working in us. So it's important that in our Christian walk, there is that progression, there is that growth. Because if we are not growing, then we are regressing.

But sin is like a sickness and the nation was sick. In fact the Lord described them, "They are sick from the top of their head to their toes." They are sick. But God is promising here to cure them and heal them from that malady that is destroying them and to give them an abundance of peace and truth.

For the Lord said, I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and I will build them, as at the first, [God is going to draw them back into the land. Establish them there in the land.] And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity. [The washing and the cleansing as the scripture so often refers to. That washing and cleansing from the defilement of sin, and from the defilement of the world. Sin is like grimy dirt that clings to you. You just can't wash it off. What can wash away my sin? Nothing, but the blood of Jesus. So God said, "I will cleanse them of all their iniquity], where they have sinned against me; and I will pardon their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. And it shall be to me a name of joy, [Jerusalem will be a name of joy] and praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear of the good that I shall do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it (33:7-9).

So, the city which had become just a derisive kind of a word for the people. They would say "Jerusalem" with sort of a sneer. It had developed a bad reputation. Things are gonna change. In the future when they talk about Jerusalem, it will be a praise, you'll be, the thought will be that of joy, and honor for what God has done for Jerusalem again.

And thus saith the Lord; Again there shall be heard in this place, which you say will be desolate without

man and without beast, even in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, that are desolate, without man, and without inhabitant, and without beast, There will be the voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, [When the city of Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians, the destruction was so complete that there were no inhabitants left within the city. It was just rubble. The streets that were once filled with children playing. The shouts of the children as they called to each other. The streets that were filled with people as they were engaged in commerce. Are now strangely silent. It's an eerie silence that shrouded the rubble of the once great city of Jerusalem. The people who saw it in that condition felt it could never be rebuilt or inhabited again. But the Lord promises that in this place that is lying desolate, the place that is lying in the silence of death that he will cause the voice of joy, the voice of gladness] the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, Praise the Lord of hosts: [Within this city and from this city there will rise praises once again unto Jehovah.] For Jehovah is good, and His mercy endures forever. And of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord (33:10-11).

In the New Testament the sacrifice of praise is referred to as the fruit of our lips. In other words, it is your offering praise unto God. In the old testament there were many sacrifices that they would offer to the Lord. They would offer the different animals for the various sacrifices, the peace offering, the burnt offering, and the sin offerings. They would also offer what they called the meal sacrifices, the flour, the fine flour mixed with oil, and that's sacrificed to the Lord.

Now the Bible refers to another sacrifice and that's the praises of the people. You see the sacrifices, the idea was the smoke of the sacrifice, you know and it smells great, it smells better than a barbecue. The smoke of the steaks, or the smoke of the lamb chops, or whatever. It's just a pleasant odor. It's a glorious, glorious aroma. My neighbor does a lot of barbecuing and I often feel like inviting myself over. It smells so good, you know I come home and it just a great aroma just sort of fills the neighborhood, and I enjoy that aroma. Come in the house and the wife's fixing a roast, and it smells great! So, it's the sacrifice, the idea is this aroma arising unto God. A pleasant unto God. Bread baking, ooh it smells good! Again they would bake the bread, on the altar as a sacrifice, and the aroma rising to God. Now, the sacrifice of the fruit of our lips is our praises to God, and our praises arise like a sweet smelling incense. Our prayers are like sweet smelling incense unto God. In fact, the whole sacrifice, the idea, was that the smoke rising, would rise like incense unto God.

So, our prayers and so our praises. So, tonight as we were worshiping the Lord, as we were singing, this is the sacrifice of praise. It's another sacrifice that's an offering, I mean in the bible, that's an offering to God. So we offer Him our praises, as we worship Him.

In Jerusalem, the voices of the people as again they are praising Him, Jehovah of hosts, for His goodness and mercy, His everlasting goodness and mercy. And they will bring to Him the sacrifices of praise. The streets will be filled with people praising the Lord.

For I will cause to return the captivity of the land, as at the first, saith the Lord. [I'm gonna bring them back, as I did in the beginning.] Thus saith Jehovah of hosts; Again in this place, which is desolate without a man and without an animal, and in all the cities there, it will be an habitation of shepherds causing their flocks to lie down. [The hillsides which are now barren and empty, again will be covered with the flocks.] In the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the valley, and in the cities of the south, the land of Benjamin, in the places around Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, shall the flocks pass again under the hands of him that telethon them, saith the Lord (33:11-12).

When the shepherd would bring his flock into the fold at night, he would stand there in the gate, and the sheep would pass under, and he would count them and of course he would examine them for any cuts that they might have incurred during the day, that might need attention. Oil, for the healing and so forth. So they referred to that as totaling them, the counting of them, make sure all the sheep are in. Remember Jesus gave us the story of the parable of the ninety nine sheep, and the one missing. They count them as they come in. So, again, a place for the flocks, a place for the activity. Again, people occupying the area. "Behold the days come", these prophecies were not fulfilled when they returned from their Babylonian captivity. These prophecies have not yet been fulfilled. These prophecies are yet future. We have not yet seen these prophecies fulfilled.

For in those days, the days that are coming, saith the Lord, I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and the house of Judah. For in those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgement and righteousness in the land (33:14-15).

This is the prophecy of the Messiah, the descendant of David, that will reign. He will execute judgement and righteousness in the land. So it is a prophecy that deals with the second coming of Jesus Christ. When He shall establish God's kingdom upon the earth. The old testament scriptures are filled with the prophecy, the glorious eternal reign of the Messiah.

Now this is what created the difficulty for the Jews, with Jesus Christ. Because the Jewish concept of the Messiah, was based upon the prophecies that dealt with the reign of the Messiah, in power and glory over the earth. Of the prophecies that talked about a renewed earth. When Jesus was crucified it was in total opposition to what they thought and were thinking concerning the Messiah. Thus the cross was a stumbling block for the Jews, that the Messiah was crucified. Not that there weren't prophecies concerning the crucifixion.

There were many prophecies concerning His death. You have some twenty two. A very vivid description of crucifixion by death. You have Isaiah fifty two and fifty three, where he talks about the suffering of the Messiah. He's being despised and rejected. A man of sorrows acquainted with grief. You have a little further on in Jeremiah, His betrayal for thirty pieces of silver. Many many prophecies concerning the death of Jesus Christ. So how do you reconcile the seemingly, diametrically opposed prophecies. One of His reigning forever. Of the increase in His govern and peace, there'll be no end. On the throne of David, ordering and establish it, and so forth. And the other prophecies of His being despised and rejected, numbered with His transgressors in His death.

The way the Jews reconciled these different prophecies, is that they spiritualized the prophecies of His suffering and death. They did not take that literally, and only took literally, those prophecies of His glorious reign.

How do we reconcile them? In the two comings of Jesus. In His first coming, He fulfilled all those prophecies concerning His suffering and His death. In His second coming He will fulfill all of the prophecies of the glorious reign of the Messiah, over the earth. So in the first coming, He came to redeem the earth back to God, and that was His purpose. The Son of Man has come to seek and save, that which was lost. He had come to redeem the earth back to God. He has paid the price of redemption on the cross. He has not yet taken His purchased possession, but He is coming again to do just that. Thus the glorious branch of righteousness from David will come and will reign in judgement and in righteousness.

And in those days [when the Lord shall come and establish God's kingdom] Judah will be saved, [In Romans, chapter eleven, Paul speaks about the blindness of the Jews in part, until the fulness of the Gentiles is come in.] But then Paul said, "All Israel shall be saved, as saith the scripture, for there shall come a redeemer out of the parts of Zion, to turn the hearts of the children unto their fathers." So, a similar prophecy here. Judah will be saved in those days.] and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, [Now in chapter twenty three, the name of the Lord, when He comes again shall be, Jehovah our Righteousness". That's the name of Jesus in the kingdom age. But here] the name of Jerusalem will also be called after the Lord, and Jerusalem will be known as Jehovah our Righteousness. For thus saith the Lord; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer the burnt offering, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually (33:16-18)).

God established the priesthood of the Levites, the house of Aaron. God established a covenant with David, that there would never cease from David's seed, one to sit upon the throne. Now, that was a conditional promise, if they followed after the Lord, they didn't, and so the dynasty of David was cut off with Zedekiah. However, the promise will be fulfilled through Jesus Christ. He being a descendant of David, will reign over the throne of David forever. His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, and of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, to order and establish it, in righteousness and judgement from henceforth,

even forever, for the zeal of the Lord of Hosts, shall perform this. So that will be fulfilled through Jesus Christ and David recognized when the Lord made that covenant with him, that it was a covenant whereby God declared that the Messiah would come from David's seed or from one of his descendants. So, Jesus the descendant of David after the flesh, born after the Spirit will fulfill this qualification, the branch of righteousness from David, who will reign forever. And God's promise to David will be kept. That's yet future.

Also there will be the Levites offering the burnt offerings and the meal offerings and doing sacrifice continually. Now the question is often asked, "Why when Jesus returns will they often have sacrifices?" Ezekiel, who was prophesying at the same time as Jeremiah, only Ezekiel was in Babylon prophesying there. Ezekiel prophesied of the new temple that he saw, the measurements of the temple, and then he described the priest as they were offering daily, their offerings, the sin offering, and the burnt offerings, and the peace offerings, so that offerings will be reinstituted. But the question, why? Now, first of all, the offerings served for different purposes. The burnt offering was a sacrifice that you would offer unto the Lord, by which you were offering your life to God in complete consecration. "Lord I'm giving my life to you. Let my life be consumed with your fire, with your love, Lord, as I serve you and I'm giving myself to serve you." Thus it was an offering of consecration of your life unto God. To me that's beautiful. To offer God your life through consecration. Then the peace offering was the offering of communion. It was where you would bring your lamb, the priest would cut it and take the fat and put it on the fire and that smoke would rise, actually the great aroma is from the fat, actually. And that would ascend unto God, and then you would sit down with your family, you'd roast the lamb and then you would eat the feast. They were called feast of the Passover. Feast of the Pentecost. These were feast days. Huge feasts! People would come and feast together with the Lord. You see, I've offered a part of it to the Lord, that He might share in the feast, and there was that consciousness of God's presence with the family, as we sat there together. This was offered to God as a sacrifice as a peace offering unto the Lord. And now as we eat together, we're eating with the Lord. And there was that idea of becoming one with God, and communing with God, as the family ate together, and feasted together. I love that! That's a beautiful offering.

The problem was, the sin offering that Ezekiel speaks about, and we aren't to Ezekiel yet, but we will mention it now, and then more fully when we get to Ezekiel. I believe that the sin offerings that will be offered, during the millennial reign of Christ, when He's reigning upon the earth, the sin offerings will be completely memorial offerings. They will be in memory of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who gave His life for us, and they will be looking back in memorial. They will not be offered to cover our sins, to make a covering. Because Jesus gave His life to make a covering once and for all. The sacrifice of Jesus is complete, but this will be a memorial, even as we have the communion service and we take the cup. As we take the cup, we are reminded of the blood of Jesus, that was shed for our sins. As we take the broken bread, we are reminded of the body of Jesus Christ, that was broken for us. And thus, it's a memorial, it's a reminder to us, the fact that Jesus gave His body to be broken for you, He gave His life for you, He shed His blood for the remission of your sins. We do this as a memorial to remind us of what Jesus has done for us. So, the sin offering of the millennial age, will be a reminder unto us of the Lamb of God, who gave Himself for our sins. It will be a very beautiful memorial, during the kingdom age. In the old testament, actually it was figurative, it was looking forward to the cross. Now it will be a memorial looking back upon the cross.

So, the Levites will again be ministering there as God has made the covenant with the house of Levi.

And the word of the Lord [verse nineteen] came again unto Jeremiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord; If you can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, that there should not be day and night in their season; Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers (33:19-21).

So, God said, "As long as the sun comes up, my covenant stands." Well it stands to the present day, I saw the sun up there today, and so the covenant still stands. And God said, "If you can break the covenant of the sun rising or the moon going through the sky at night, then my covenant with David can be broken." But God has established the covenant, and He will fulfill the covenant, and Jesus shall reign.

And as the host of heaven [that is the stars] cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so

will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me (33:22).

So, God's just gonna multiply His people. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, an interesting statement in Jeremiah's time because the scientists of Jeremiah's age, had counted the stars. Now you did have different counts, from different men who counted them. One of the scientists affirmed that there were 6,019 stars. Sat out there night after night counting stars. Another scientist challenged it and said no, there were 6,026 stars, and on a clear, dark night, in the desert, discounting the Milky Way, that's about how many stars you can count in the sky.

But now with telescopes and our ability to peer further into the heavens. We know that there are billions of stars in our Milky Way galaxy. And we know that there are billions of galaxies, and we thus know that the stars of heaven cannot really be numbered. Because there are billions times billions of stars out there in the universe. So Jeremiah is going against all of the science in his day declaring that the hosts, or the stars, of heaven cannot be numbered, just an interesting little sidelight.

Science has revised their text books every other year, you know, every few years they revise their text book. The bible has not needed revision yet. They have revised the translations but they don't revise the text, that is, the bible itself. It doesn't need revision. So, you going to trust scientists that have to revise their estimates every few years?

When I was a kid, they affirmed I was taught in science that the earth was four billion years old. That was a scientific fact, according to the scientists at that time. That's what I was taught. That's what my science text book said. Now the science text books say that the earth is sixteen billion years old. In fact just ten years ago, it was only fifteen billion years old. But the age of the universe is aging very fast! Now they're suggesting sixteen billion years. So, in the last ten years, it's aged a billion years. I haven't quite figured that out yet, but when I was in school it was four billion years and now its sixteen billion years, and I didn't go to school that long ago!

So the theories of science have to be constantly revised as new information is constantly being discovered. But the Bible stands, and it's a fascinating book. It could not have been written by man. Impossible!

So, the Lord came to Jeremiah, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah saying, [verse twenty three] consider thou not what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the Lord has chosen, he has even cast them off? [He chose the family of David. He chose the family of Levi, and now the Lord is cast them off.] thus they have despised my people, that they should be nor more a nation before them. Thus saith the Lord; [again repeating] If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them (33:23-26).

I'm going to bring them back. I'm going to keep the covenant. You'll see the fulfillment of this covenant. God is affirming it, and it's just as certain as the sun rising.

Now, going back to chapter thirty two, the introduction to chapter thirty two, we read, "The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah in the tenth year of Zedekiah the king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem: and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which was in the king of Judah's house. For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, Why does he prophesy, and say, Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it; And Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape out of the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon." Because of this prophecy that Jeremiah gave to Zedekiah, Jeremiah threw him in jail. Now, chapter thirty four is the prophecy that he had given to Zedekiah. So the first part of chapter thirty four, verse seven, is the prophecy that caused Jeremiah to be in prison. So, these are out of order from a chronological sense. We've already read that Jeremiah was in prison for this prophecy, now we get to the prophecy, so the chronological order is not correct. But, many places in scripture the order of the scriptures are not always in a chronological order. With the Hebrews, that was no problem, with us it's a problem. We like to put everything out in a chronological order, but that was not the case with the scriptures. In many instances where the scripture will

give an event, and then go on and tell of things, and then it'll come back and it doesn't fall in a chronology.

Chapter 34

So, this is the word which came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and all of his army, and all the kingdoms of the earth of his dominion, and all the people, fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities (34:1).

So he gives us a little introduction. This is the prophecy that Jeremiah had at this time when Nebuchadnezzar was coming with all of his hosts against Jerusalem.

Thus saith the Lord, God of Israel; Go and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah, and tell him, Thus saith Jehovah; Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire (34:2):

So this is the prophecy, "I'm going to give Jerusalem to the king of Babylon. He's gonna burn it with fire". Today, you can go to Jerusalem and you can see the excavations that have been made in the last ten years, by the late Professor Shiloh. There on the side of Offal, the city of David, the city of Jerusalem, at the time of Jeremiah. And in the ruins of the houses and in the ruins of the buildings, and all, that existed at that time. You can see in the Strata, a layer of ashes about six inches thick. The ashes from the fire of Jerusalem, when it was burned by Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians at the time of Jeremiah. The evidence is right there for you to see. That six inch layer of charcoal is from the fires that God said would take place when Babylon conquered Jerusalem.

He's to tell Zedekiah that the Lord was going to deliver the city into Babylon's hand, and they were going to burn it.

And you shall not escape out of the hand of the king of Babylon [Nebuchadnezzar] for you shall surely be taken [That is Zedekiah is going to be taken] and he's going to be delivered into his hand; and your eyes shall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, [you're going to look at him eye to eye] and he shall speak with you mouth to mouth, and you will go to Babylon (34:3).

You'll be taken to Babylon. Now, when Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians, Zedekiah and his family sought to escape. There is a huge cave that goes under the city of Jerusalem. It's between the Damascus gate and Herod's gate. This huge cave is entered from outside of the wall, and it is called Solomon's Quarries. It is believed that Solomon quarried a lot of the stone for the temple that he built, and for the walls of Jerusalem, from this quarry, this huge cave that goes under the city. Now, there are rumors that this cave actually continues way outside of the city of Jerusalem. And that if you go through this cave, you can actually come out into the Judean wilderness. It has been suggested by many different scholars that Zedekiah and his family actually escaped through this cave, and escaped out into the Judean wilderness, trying to get away from Nebuchadnezzar. However when Nebuchadnezzar heard that Zedekiah had escaped with his family, he sent troops after them and they caught them down by Jericho, and they brought him to Nebuchadnezzar.

Now, over in Babylon, Ezekiel was prophesying. Ezekiel was saying that Zedekiah would never see Babylon. Jeremiah was telling him here, "You're gonna behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, and he's gonna take you to Babylon." Because of the two different prophecies it said that Zedekiah did not believe that he would be taken as a captive to Babylon, because he thought that Jeremiah was giving a false prophecy; because, Ezekiel prophesied that Zedekiah would never see Babylon.

Well, after Zedekiah and his family was brought to Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar killed Zedekiah's sons right before his eyes. As he was watching, he had his sons killed. Then, Nebuchadnezzar put out Zedekiah's eyes, had them punched out, so that when Zedekiah was taken to Babylon, he never saw it. Thus both prophecies were fulfilled. Ezekiel prophesied you'd never see Babylon. He didn't. He was blind when he got there. Jeremiah's prophecy was also fulfilled. He was taken as a captive to Babylon. So, it's just, according to Josephus, Zedekiah thought that he would never be taken as a captive, because Ezekiel had said he would never see it. Ezekiel was right, but he misinterpreted it.

Yet [Jeremiah said] hear the word of the Lord, O Zedekiah king of Judah; Thus saith the Lord of thee, you will not die by the sword: [Now, his sons did, but he will not.] For you shall die in peace: and with the

burnings of your fathers, the former kings [In other words when they died, they would burn incense for the dead. It was just a custom, a tradition, and so they would be burning their incense for you.] *they shall burn the odors for thee; and they will lament thee,* [There will be a mourning, a period of mourning.] *and they'll say, Ah Lord! for I have pronounced the word, that which the Lord said (34:4-5).*

Now it made Zedekiah angry, and he threw Jeremiah in jail for it.

Then Jeremiah the prophet spoke all these words to Zedekiah the king of Judah in Jerusalem, And when the king of Babylon's army fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities of Judah that were left, against Lachish, and Azekah: for those defenced cities that remained in the cities of Judah. Now at this time the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, after king Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people which were at Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty to them (34:7-8);

Zedekiah had ordered that the wealthy people, the princes and all, allow their servants to go free. Things are looking bad so, "Set your servants free". Now, under the Jewish law, you were not to keep a servant who was a Hebrew more than six years. The seventh year he was supposed to go free. That was a part of their law. Even as their law said, you were to plant the land for six years, the seventh year you were to give the land rest. God had established the Sabbath. The six and the one pattern. So, "Six days thou shalt labor and do thy work, the seventh day, you're to rest." Six years a servant was to serve, but the seventh he was to be set free.

That pattern was established by God. I think that that pattern carries out. I do believe that God has established that pattern of servanthood of six and one, to give a pattern for God's whole history. I think that man went into slavery, to sin, just about six thousand years ago. If you figure the whole thing out, we're coming out to two thousand, and it was around four thousand A.D. that Adam sold into the slavery of sin, and man's time is just about expired of slavery to sin. I believe the seven thousandth year will be the glorious millennial reign of Jesus Christ. Man being set free from the bondage of sin, to reign in freedom with Jesus. No more sin! No more bondage to sin, and we're getting close. There are dates, and we're not certain of dates. No man knows the day or the hour. Just exactly what year B.C. it was that Adam went into the slavery of sin, we don't know, and God has kept it ambiguous, so that we wouldn't be so foolish as to set dates.

But the scripture says that, "The times and the seasons, I really have no need to write unto you. Because you're not the children of darkness, that they should overtake you unaware." I really believe that God has established that pattern, and I'm one of those that believe that we're getting close to being set free from the bondage to sin, and the slavery to sin. That we're gonna enter in to the glorious new age of our Lord, and of the Messiah, very, very, soon. I believe that it's coming very quickly. I'm excited about it. I can hardly wait for it! Especially when I read the newspaper and see the things that are going on.

So, they decided they would set, the king ordered them to set the slaves free. To proclaim liberty to them.

That every man should let his manservant, and his maidservant, who were Hebrews or an Hebrewess, go free; that none should be served by them, that is by a Jew his brother. Now when all of the princes and all of the people, which had entered into the covenant, heard that every one should let his manservant, and his maidservant, go free, that none should serve themselves of them any more, then they obeyed, and let them go. [The king said, "Let them go free" and the people obeyed the king and they followed his command.] But afterward they turned, and the caused the servants and the handmaids, who they let go free, to return, and they brought them again into subjection as servants and as handmaids. [Therefore when they broke this covenant and brought them back into slavery] the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah saying, Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel; I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the land of bondage, and I said, At the end of seven years let every man, let go his brother who is a Hebrew, who has been sold unto you; and when he has served you six years, you're to let him go from you: but your fathers did not hearken to me, neither did they incline their ear. [They disobeyed.] And you were now turned, you had done the right thing, in letting them go, proclaiming them liberty every man to his neighbor; and you have made a covenant before me with the house which is called by my name: But you've turned and you've polluted my name, and you've caused every man his servant, and his handmaid, who you had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and you brought them again into subjection, to be your servants and your handmaids. Therefore because you've broken this covenant, Thus

saith the Lord; You have not hearkened unto me in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbor; and behold I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord to the sword, you haven't set them free, so I'm going to set you free to be destroyed by the sword, and by the pestilence, and by the famine; and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. [You're gonna become slaves, you're gonna be serving.] And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in two, and passed between the parts (34:9-18).

Now, this was one of the customs in making a covenant, is that they would cut an animal in two and you would walk between the halves of the animal that was hanging there. It was just a sign of a covenant. "I have made a covenant with you." The sign of it was passing between. You have an example of that in Genesis, chapter fifteen. Evidently the nation of Israel did it when God established His covenant with them, but it isn't recorded for us in Exodus, but Jeremiah makes reference to here. "Having passed between the calf that was cut in two."

And the princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, and the priests, and all the people of the land, which passed between the parts of the calf; And I will even give them into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life: and their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the fowls of the heaven, and to the beasts of the earth. [God is going to punish them for this broken covenant.] And Zedekiah king of Judah and his princes will I give into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life, and into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which are gone up from you. Behold, I will command, saith the Lord, and cause them to return to this city; and they shall fight against it, and take it, and burn it with fire: and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without inhabitant (34:19-22).

Now, the Babylonians had come and they've begun to besiege the city, and Jeremiah called for the Egyptians to help. So the Babylonian army left Jerusalem and went to fight against the Egyptians, whom they defeated. When the Babylonians had left off the siege, the people thought, "Ah Ha! Our diplomacy has won the day, and now we don't have to worry anymore." But Jeremiah says, "They're gonna come back. The Lord has ordered them to return." And they surely did. After they defeated the Egyptians, they came back and they completed the siege of Jerusalem, they took Jerusalem and the word of God was fulfilled, as was prophesied by Jeremiah. The city was destroyed, burnt with fire, the princes the kings, and all were carried away to Babylon, where they served the Babylonians.

So, God's word. The certainty of God's word. The covenant that God has established, and the certainty of that covenant. I wouldn't mess with God, or with the word of God. Nor would I bank upon, "Maybe it won't happen", or "It won't happen to me." You can be certain that God's word is sure. It is steadfast. And what He has said, He will surely do. Now, that to me is a blessing. He has promised that I should live and reign with Jesus Christ in the glorious kingdom. God's word is sure, and that blesses my soul. If the fact that God keeps His word completely terrifies you, you're in the wrong position. You're in the wrong relationship with God. It should thrill you that God is so faithful in keeping His word. If you're a child of God, it's a thrill. If you're an enemy of God, then wow, it's a terror. So God is a terror to the enemies, but oh what a blessing to those who are His children.

Father we thank You for Your Word, and the covenant You have established with us, through Jesus Christ. A covenant that cannot be broken. And Lord we thank You that through Jesus, our sins have been washed. We've been pardoned, and through Jesus Christ we have that hope of eternal life, with you, in the glory of Your kingdom. Lord I pray for those tonight, who have not yet entered into this covenant relationship with You, who are still walking in rebellion, after the flesh, and the things of the flesh, who are in the process of destroying themselves in their sin. May they turn Lord, and may they find Your forgiveness and Your love, your pardon, Your washing and Your cleansing. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.