

Jeremiah 34

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A Prophecy against Zedekiah

¹The word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, when Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and all his army, and all the kingdoms of the land of his dominion, and all the peoples, fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities thereof, saying: ²Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel: Go, and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah, and tell him: Thus saith the LORD: Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire; ³and thou shalt not escape out of his hand, but shalt surely be taken, and delivered into his hand; and thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, and he shall speak with thee mouth to mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon. ⁴Yet hear the word of the LORD, O Zedekiah king of Judah: Thus saith the LORD concerning thee: Thou shalt not die by the sword; ⁵thou shalt die in peace; and with the burnings of thy fathers, the former kings that were before thee, so shall they make a burning for thee; and they shall lament thee: 'Ah lord!' for I have spoken the word, saith the LORD.

⁶Then Jeremiah the prophet spoke all these words unto Zedekiah king of Judah in Jerusalem, ⁷when the king of Babylon's army fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities of Judah that were left, against Lachish and against Azekah; for these alone remained of the cities of Judah as fortified cities.

Freedom for Hebrew Slaves

⁸The word that came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, after that the king Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people that were at Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty unto them; ⁹that every man should let his manservant, and every man his maidservant, being a Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman, go free; that none should make bondmen of them, even of a Jew his brother; ¹⁰and all the princes and all the people hearkened, that had entered into the covenant to let every one his man-servant, and every one his maid-servant, go free, and not to make bondmen of them any more; they hearkened, and let them go; ¹¹but afterwards they turned, and caused the servants and the handmaids, whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into subjection for servants and for handmaids;

¹²therefore the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying: ¹³Thus saith the LORD, 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 house of bondage, saying: ¹⁴At the end of seven years ye shall let go every man his brother that is a Hebrew, that hath been sold unto thee, and hath served thee six years, thou shalt let him go free from thee'; but your fathers hearkened not unto Me, neither inclined their ear. ¹⁵And ye were now turned, and had done that which is right in Mine eyes, in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbour; and ye had made a covenant before Me in the house whereon My name is called; ¹⁶but ye turned and profaned My name, and caused every man his servant, and every man his handmaid, whom ye had let go free at their pleasure, to return; and ye brought them into subjection, to be unto you for servants and for handmaids.

¹⁷Therefore thus saith the LORD: Ye have not hearkened unto Me, to proclaim liberty, every man to his brother, and every man to his neighbour; behold, I proclaim for you a liberty, saith the LORD, unto the sword, unto the pestilence, and unto the famine; and I will make you a horror unto all the kingdoms of the earth. ¹⁸And I will give the men that have transgressed My covenant, that have not performed the words of the covenant which they made before Me, when they cut the calf in twain and passed between the parts thereof; ¹⁹the princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem, the officers, and the priests, and all the people of the land, that passed between the parts of the calf; ²⁰I 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 food unto the fowls of the heaven, and to the beasts of the earth. ²¹And 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, that are gone up from you. ²²Behold,

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.