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a Production of
Precept Ministries International
P.O. Box 182218, Chattanooga, TN 37422-7218
1-888-734-7707/ www.preceptsforlife.com

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SERIES: Jeremiah, Part 2 (God's Certain Judgment)

TITLE: Program 20 – Breaking The Covenant

FRIDAY

OPEN

Do you take the Bible, read it, think, I don't agree with that and you lay it aside? Do you think that you can do that and get away with it? O Beloved, listen, there is a God in heaven, the Creator of the heavens and the earth and man. There is a God that has spoken. There is a God that watches over His Word to perform it. (See Jeremiah 1:12) You cannot take the Word of God, set it aside and think you can get away with it.

PART ONE

Well, Beloved, on this final day of this week of study in Jeremiah, we're going to look at Jeremiah chapter 34. And as we look at this chapter what I want you to remember is the context, the setting. All of this is lumped together because God wants us to understand the importance of covenant. Now so many times what happens is people open the Word of God. They read it. They think they know what it says or they know what that one verse

says. They don't understand its context. They say, "Oh, I don't agree with that, or oh, that'll never happen." And they take the Word of God and they lay it aside. They walk away from it. And they think that they can leave the Word of God over there and live life over here totally devoid of the Word of God. And yet, if they get in trouble they do want Him. They do want Him to deliver them from this terrible situation. They want Him to give them hope, but otherwise, what they want to do with God is they want to put the Word of God over there and live independently. And then they think that they can govern their lives apart from knowing and understanding that God is a covenant keeping, covenant making God. Now, as we've been looking at Jeremiah chapter 32, 33 and now 34, it is the reign of Zedekiah. The enemy is outside the gate. God has told Jeremiah and the people that He is going to judge them, that He is going to take that city. He is going to level it. It's going to be without man. It's going to be without beast. But, I love this; because He is a covenant-keeping God, because He watches His word to perform it, as He says in Jeremiah chapter 31. (See Jeremiah 31:31) Because if He makes a promise, He is obligated to keep that promise because He's God, then God has promised that He is going to restore Judah and Jerusalem, that He is going to bring in His righteous Branch (See Jeremiah 33:15), which is a promise of the fact that Jesus is going to come and He is going to reign on the earth. Now we don't have the word "Jesus" there, but He talks about His righteous Branch, (See Jeremiah 33:15) because in 2 Samuel chapter 7, God made a covenant with David. And that covenant with David was that David would always have someone to sit on his throne forever and ever. (See 2 Samuel 7:16) That someone who was going to sit on his throne is the Messiah, is the Promised One, is Meshiach, is the Christ, is the Anointed One. That's what "Messiah" means. He's going to sit on the throne. He made a covenant with David that that would happen. He also made a covenant with the Levitical priests and the covenant with the Levitical priests was: You will always be priests to Me. And you know

what? We will have a temple and there in the temple you will be offering burnt offerings to Me and sacrifices because He made this covenant. (See Numbers 4:1-4) Now we that if you will look at Jeremiah chapter 33, we see that in Jeremiah 33. He says, verse 20, **“Thus says the LORD, ‘If you can break My covenant for the day and My covenant for the night, so that [night] and [day] will not be at their appointed time, then My covenant [also may] be broken with David My servant...,’ the one that is to sit on the throne of David, “...so that he will not have son to reign on his throne, and with the Levitical priests, My ministers.” (Jeremiah 33:20-21)** So we have David and we have the Levitical priests. He says, “Now if you can break My covenant for day and night then that covenant can be broken.” But you can’t because He’s God, because He’s the One that spoke and created the heavens and the earth, because He’s the One that commands the night. He’s the One that created the night. He’s the One that created the day. He’s the One that put the stars in place and the sun and the moon and we see all of that in Genesis chapter 1. God did it. And so He goes on now to say that if, verse of Jeremiah 33, to put us in context, **“...‘If My covenant for day and night [shall not stand] and the fixed patterns of the heaven and [the] earth I have not established, then I would reject the descendants of Jacob and David My servant, not taking from [them] descendants rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob....’ He says, “....But I will restore their fortunes and...have mercy on them.” (Jeremiah 33:25-26)** Now when He says this then we move into Jeremiah chapter 34. **“The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army, with all the kingdoms of the earth that were under his dominion...,’ under Nebuchadnezzar’s dominion, “...and all the peoples, were fighting against Jerusalem and against all [of] its cities, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD [the] God of Israel, “Go and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah and say to him: ‘Thus says the LORD, “Behold, I am giving this city into the hand**

of the king of Babylon, and he will burn it with fire. [And] you [you Zedekiah] will not escape from his hand, for you will surely be captured and delivered into his hand....””””” (Jeremiah 34:1-3) You’re not gonna escape. You’re going to be put in chains. You are going to be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon. Now as we progress through Jeremiah you’re going to see this. You’re going to see what happens in Jeremiah chapter 39. You’re going to look at the opportunities that Zedekiah had. You’re gonna see this yet, that Zedekiah had to listen to the Lord and to not be led as a captive into Babylon. You’re going to see that Zedekiah’s sons could have been spared. You’re going to see that they did not have to die, that the officials of Jerusalem did not have to die, that the city did not have to be burned, that the temple did not have to be destroyed if only Zedekiah had listened to the Lord. But you know what? Zedekiah thought he was smarter than God. Zedekiah at one time says pray for me and then at another time he ignores what God; you’re gonna see it; he ignores what God has told him through Jeremiah. He takes the Word of God and he lays it aside and he thinks that he can get away with it. Watch what happens. Look at what God tells us in Jeremiah chapter 34. He says in verse 3, **“You will not escape from his hand...you will surely be captured and delivered into his hand...you will see the king of Babylon eye to eye, and he will speak [to] you face to face, and you will go to Babylon.’ 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.’” (Jeremiah 34:3-4)** You’re not gonna be put to death by the sword. **“You will die in peace; and as spices were burned for your fathers, the former kings who were before you, so they will burn spices for you; and they will lament for you, “Alas, lord!” For I have spoken the word,’ declares the LORD. 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 remaining cities of Judah, that is, Lachish and**

Azekah...they alone remained as fortified cities among the cities of Judah. (Jeremiah 34:5-7) And **“The word [of the LORD] came to Jeremiah from the LORD after...,”** after, time phrase, put a clock there, **“...[after] King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people who were in Jerusalem to proclaim release to them.” (Jeremiah 34:8)** So now God is going to speak to Zedekiah again, but He’s going to speak to Zedekiah after Zedekiah makes a covenant with the people that are living in Jerusalem to proclaim release to them. Now what is he talking about, proclaiming release to them? Well, I want us to see it. It says this, **“that each man...,”** verse 9 **“...should set free his male servant and each man his female servant, a Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman; so that no one should keep them, a Jew his brother, in bondage.” (Jeremiah 34:9)** You see under the law and we’ll look at it in just a minute, under the law if I could not pay a debt, if under the law I could not fulfill my obligation which I made to another person, then I would become their slave and I would have to serve them. Now we see this and you want to write it down in Exodus chapter 21, verse 1 it says **“Now these are the ordinances which you are to set before them: if you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment.” (Exodus 21:1-2)** So what was Zedekiah doing? Zedekiah called all the people and said, we are going to release the slaves. Babylon is fighting against us. We’re not gonna let you stay slaves. We’re going to release them. But you know what? He thought he could do what he wanted and get away with it. He thought that He could take the Word of God and lay it aside without any repercussions. O how wrong he was. You’ll see it in just a minute.

PART TWO

Welcome back, Beloved. Remember I left you with Zedekiah making a promise that he is going to set free all the Hebrew slaves. He makes a

covenant. A covenant is a solemn binding agreement. We mark “covenant” by coloring it red because it involves the shedding of blood. Then we put it in yellow, a yellow box around it showing that God is a sovereign administrator of covenants. In other words, if a covenant is made a covenant is to be fulfilled. If it’s not fulfilled then you’re calling God to judge you. So watch what happens. He, Zedekiah makes this covenant. And then it says this in verse 10, **“And all the officials and all the people obeyed who had entered into the covenant that each man should set free his male servant and each man his female servant, so that no one should keep them any longer in bondage; they obeyed, and set them free.” (Jeremiah 34:10)** But, the next verse, **“But afterward....”** You want to mark that with a clock. **“[But afterward] they turned around and took back the [female slaves which] they had set free, and [they] brought them into subjection...,”** they brought them into subjection, **“...for male servants and for female servants.” (Jeremiah 34:11)** They thought they could get away with this. He wanted to take what he had done, which was made a covenant, and knowing that God watches over covenants, then he broke the covenant. He made the covenant; he broke the covenant. You know that’s like so many people. We have good intentions with God. We say we’re going to need to do something and then we don’t do it. We make a promise; we break a promise. It’s all about us. It’s all about our convenience. It’s all about what we think. We act like we are God and we think we can get away with it. But watch what it happens. Verse 12, **“Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel, “I made a covenant with your forefathers in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, saying, ‘At the end of seven years each of you shall set free his Hebrew brother who has been sold to you and has served you six years, you shall send him out free from you; but your forefathers did not obey Me or incline their ear to Me.’”’” (Jeremiah 34:12-14)** You want to write down, if you didn’t

do it Exodus 21 ff, the verses that follow, Deuteronomy 15:12, the verses that follow, which talks about this covenant. He says **“Although recently you had turned and done what is right in My sight, each man proclaiming release to his neighbor, and you had made a covenant before Me in the house which is called by My name.” (Jeremiah 34:15)** You came to My house. And when you came to My house, when you came to the temple you made this covenant. And He says “Now you’ve broken it.” One minute you’re serving God. One minute you’re doing what I say. Every six years you release them. You release them and now you’re grabbing them and taking them back. Now watch what He says. He says **“Yet you turned and [you] profaned My name, and each man took back his male servant and each man his female servant whom you had set free according to their desire, and you brought them into subjection to be your male servants and [your] female servants. Therefore thus says the LORD, ‘You have not obeyed Me in proclaiming release each man to his brother and each man to his neighbor....’ (Jeremiah 34:16-17)** You have not obeyed My word. **“‘...Behold, I am proclaiming release to you....’”** You’re not going to do it, **“‘...[I’m proclaiming release to you,] declares the LORD...,’”** release, **“‘...to the sword...to famine; [to pestilence] I will make you a terror to all the kingdoms of the earth.’” (Jeremiah 34:17)** Not that the kingdoms of the earth are going to be afraid of you, but the kingdoms of the earth are going to look at what I did to you through the sword, through famine, through pestilence and they’re gonna look at you, and they’re gonna be horrified at what they see, at the judgment that I brought on you. Well in Genesis chapter 15 when God makes a covenant with Abraham you see Abraham taking these animals and cutting them in half and laying one piece over here and the other piece over there, one half over here and the other half over there. And so then God comes down in a smoking oven and a flaming torch and He passes between the pieces. (See Genesis 15:9-21) A covenant is a solemn binding agreement made by

passing through pieces of flesh. They cut a covenant, blood was shed. God made that covenant. Well I studied that, and one day I was reading this passage in Jeremiah. I came unglued. I got so excited because listen to what it says. **“I will give...,”** verse 18, **“...the men who...transgressed...[the words of] My covenant... which they made before Me, when they cut the calf in two and passed between its parts.”** (Jeremiah 34:18) It says, **“the officials of Judah...the officials of Jerusalem, the court officers...the priests...all the people of the land who passed between the parts of the calf.”** (Jeremiah 34:19) In other words they proclaimed release. They were going to obey God, so what do they do? They take those animals and they lay out their bodies and as they lay out their bodies then the king, the officials, the priests, the people walk between the parts of the calf. They enter into that covenant. And when they entered into covenant it's like David saying, “God do so to me and more,” pointing to the animal, “if I break this covenant.” David and Jonathan said it. (See 1 Samuel 20:42) In other words God, You hold me accountable for this covenant. You see we think we can take the Word of God, pick and choose and do what we say and God says “O no, O no.” And then He says this, **“I will give them into the hand of their enemies....”** He says, **“...And into the hand of those who seek their life. And their dead bodies will be food for the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth.”** (Jeremiah 34:20) You're gonna die because of this. **“Zedekiah king of Judah and his officials I will give into the hand of their enemies...into the hand of those [that] seek their life...into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon which has gone away from you.”** (Jeremiah 34:21) You know what happened? You're going to see it when you get to Jeremiah 37, verse 4 and 8. Egypt raises its head and so Babylon withdraws from Israel to go fight against Egypt. And they think oh we're free. God's not gonna do what He said He was gonna do. But then Babylon comes back and this is what He's saying here. He's saying, He says, **“...into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon which has**

gone away from you. Behold, I am going to command,' declares the LORD, 'and I will bring them back to this city...they will fight against it...,'" Babylon, "...'take it and burn it with fire; and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without inhabitant.'" (Jeremiah 34:21-22)

Why? Because they thought they could pick and choose their obedience to the Word of God and you can't. It's the whole counsel of God. He is to be obeyed. He is to be believed. He's the Lord. He's the God of all flesh. There is nothing too difficult for Him. (See Jeremiah 32:27) He can bring peace and righteousness. He can also bring judgment. Yours and ours is to bow the knee, to believe, to obey.