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

TITLE: Program 40 – Zedekiah – The Last Rebel

FRIDAY

OPEN

How well, Beloved, do you know the Word of God? There's something you need to understand about it. Because it is the Word of God, what God says will surely come to pass. What God has predicted He will perform; He watches over His Word to perform it. (Jeremiah 1:12) So you can stake your future on it. But know this: If you turn your back on God, you'll receive the judgment of God. We'll talk about it today.

PART ONE

Jeremiah 51 ends with “...**Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.**” (Jeremiah 51:64) And you and I have come full circle. In Jeremiah chapter 1 we learned that this man who was but a youth was appointed as a prophet to the nations. (Jeremiah 1:5-6) And God asked him, “...**What do you see...?**” (Jeremiah 1:11) He says “...**I see...an almond tree.**” (Jeremiah 1:11) And then God, using a play on the Hebrew word says this, “...**I [will]**

watch over My word to perform it.” (Jeremiah 1:12) Jeremiah was not to be dismayed by the faces of those when he went and made the proclamation of the word of God to them, (Jeremiah 1:17) when he laid out for Israel the fact that if they did not repent, if they did not return as faithless sons and allow God to heal their faithlessness, then God was going to have to judge them. (Jeremiah 3:12-14) They never believed it was going to happen. They would say, [The temple, the temple, the temple’s here.] (PARAPHRASE, Jeremiah 7:4) It won’t happen. It won’t happen. But it did. They had false prophets saying to them [Peace, peace, when there was no peace.] (PARAPHRASE, Jeremiah 6:14) And they preferred to listen to the false prophets. We come to the end of Jeremiah chapter 51. We come to the end of his prophecies about the nations. And we have seen that chapter 51 and chapter 52 is very, very long. We have come to the end of our study, and yet there’s one more chapter left. And it’s like with that chapter, God puts His signet on the wax. He seals it and He tells us and shows us that we are to believe that what He has purposed will come to pass. (Jeremiah 51:12) In Jeremiah chapter 51 we see that Seraiah who is the brother of Baruch goes with Zedekiah and takes this message to Babylon. They do it in the fourth year of Zedekiah. (Jeremiah 51:59) And I told you that you can read about that fourth year in Jeremiah chapter 27 and 28 when they were delivering another message about their need to settle down in Babylon. But what God does is He lets them know in these two chapters that Babylon, although they were to settle down, although they were to pray for the welfare of the cities where they lived, they would only be in captivity for 70 years. (Jeremiah 25:11) They would come out of that captivity and he tells them as we have seen this week, come out from Babylon, come out from My people, wander away, flee, do not stay. Depart. (See Jeremiah 50:8 & 51:6) Get out of there because God is going to judge it. It says in verse 60, **“So Jeremiah wrote in a single scroll all the calamity which would come upon Babylon....”** (Jeremiah 51:60) All the calamity, and that’s why he takes us from the

present all the way to the end, and that's why we can parallel it with Revelation chapter 17 and 18. And it says **"...That is, all [the] words which have been written concerning Babylon." (Jeremiah 51:60)** God watches over His word to perform it. (Jeremiah 1:12) **"Then Jeremiah said to Seraiah, 'As soon as you come to Babylon...see that you read all these words aloud, and say, 'You, O LORD...,''"** now watch, **"...have promised concerning this place to cut it off, so that [nothing will dwell] in it, whether man or beast, but it will be a perpetual desolation"....as soon as you finish reading this scroll, you will tie a stone to it and throw it [in] the middle of the Euphrates, and say, "Just so shall Babylon sink down and not rise again because of the calamity that I am going to bring...on her; and they will become exhausted."'** Thus far are the **words of Jeremiah." (Jeremiah 51:61-64)** Now they believe that someone else might have written chapter 52, because it talks about the destruction of Jerusalem. But I doubt that, because Jeremiah was around. Why would he not write down about the destruction of Jerusalem? He was there. He saw it happen. He survived it, as we know, because we've read the Book. But let's move on to the way that God in His sovereignty has chosen to close this book. Now we have read in Jeremiah chapter 39 about the destruction of Jerusalem. We have read about the siege of the city. (Jeremiah 39) But there are new insights given us in chapter 52. And in chapter 52 you're going to see what becomes predominate. What becomes predominate is the temple, the temple that they thought God would never destroy. Now watch what it says, chapter 52, verse 1. **"Zedekiah..."** he's the final king remember. Jeremiah prophesies from the reign of Josiah all the way through Zedekiah. **"...Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah,"** a different Jeremiah. **"He did evil in the sight of the LORD like all that Jehoiakim had done. For through the anger of the LORD this came about in Jerusalem and [in] Judah**

until He [God] cast them out from His presence. And Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.” (Jeremiah 52:1-3) Now you can read about this at the end of Chronicles. You can read about it at the end of 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles and 2 Kings. We don’t have time, but we suggested that you do this when you get your homework. When you study with us we don’t want to just lecture you. I don’t want to just sit here and just teach you the Word of God without you getting into the Word of God yourself. One man called the other day. He was 82 and he was just so excited at what God was teaching him at 82, from the Word of God and he just wanted to talk to me. And I would have loved to have talked to him but my lifestyle is so very, very busy because I’m feeding you because we need to know truth for ourselves. Well this is what it says. **“Now it came about in the ninth year of his reign...,”** Zedekiah’s reign, **“...on the tenth day of the tenth month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all [of] his army, against Jerusalem, [and] camped against it and built a siege wall around it. So the city was under siege until the eleventh year of...Zedekiah.”** (Jeremiah 52:4-5) The ninth year, the tenth year, the eleventh year the city was under siege. **“On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people [in] the land.”** (Jeremiah 52:6) Now you and I know from having read through Jeremiah that after the captivity when the people were left in the land there was plenty of food out there, plenty of food. But they didn’t have access to it. They could have if they had listened. If they had left the city and gone out to the Chaldeans and surrendered they could have had food. They would not have been eating their children. They would not be skin and bone. It says, **“Then the city was broken into, and all the men of war fled and went forth from the city at night by the way of the gate between the two walls which was by the king’s garden, though the Chaldeans were all around the city. And they went by the way of the Arabah.”** (Jeremiah 52:7) And it says **“But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook**

Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho, and all his army was scattered before him.” (Jeremiah 52:8) Do you realize, do you remember when God said to Zedekiah, through Jeremiah, He said, “Now listen, if you will listen to Me this is what I’m going to do. If you will go outside the city, if you will surrender to the king of Babylon I promise you that I will spare this city. I promise you that I will spare your life. I promise you that the temple will be spared.” But Zedekiah would not listen because he was afraid of going to Babylon. Remember he was afraid of going to Babylon. (See Jeremiah 21:1-10) He was afraid of what the exiles would do to him because he had been an evil king. But watch. It says, **“Then they captured the king...,”** verse 9, **“...and [they] brought him...to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, and he passed sentence on him. (Jeremiah 52:9)** And, **“The king of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes....” (Jeremiah 52:10)** He stood there and watched Nebuchadnezzar and his men put his sons to death. **“...He also slaughtered all the princes of Judah and Riblah.” (Jeremiah 52:10)** They all could have been spared if they had listened to God. **“Then he blinded the eyes of Zedekiah....”** It would be the last thing that Zedekiah would see was the blood of the sons of Judah, the officials of Judah and his own sons. **“...And the king of Babylon bound him with bronze fetters and brought him to Babylon and put him in prison until the day of his death.” (Jeremiah 52:11)** If only he had listened. And see: What is God’s word to you and to me, Beloved? It is that God watches over His word to perform it. (Jeremiah 1:12) You and I can know this: everything written in this Book is surely going to come to pass. And if we are wise and not stupid as he says (Jeremiah 51:17) and we make God our God and follow Him, then we will know the truth. It says **“Now on the tenth day of the fifth month, which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard, who was in the service of the king...came to Jerusalem.” (Jeremiah 52:12)** And, **“He burned the house of the LORD, the king’s**

house and all the houses of Jerusalem....” (Jeremiah 52:13) He burned them. They could have survived if they had only listened to God. We’ll talk about it more in just a minute because it’s vital that you know these precepts for life.

PART TWO

O Beloved, Beloved, do you realize, do you realize that if they had listened to God, if Zedekiah, the leader had feared God and listened to God, if he had made God the habitation of his righteousness (See Jeremiah 50:7) he would not have seen his sons die? The city would not have been burned. His palace would not have been burned. But most of all, the temple would not have been burned. God, as we have talked about all week, as Jeremiah 50, verse 7 says they were to make God the “**...habitation of righteousness....**”

(Jeremiah 50:7) It says in verse 13 of Jeremiah chapter 52, “**He burned...,**” the captain of the guard burned “**...the house of the LORD, the king’s house...all the houses of Jerusalem...every large house he burned with fire. So all the army of the Chaldeans who were with the captain of the guard broke down all the walls around Jerusalem. Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away [some of the exile] the poorest of the people, the rest of the people who were left in the city, the deserters who had deserted to the king of Babylon and the rest of the artisans.**” (Jeremiah 52:13-15) Those escaped. “**But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left some of the poorest [in] the land to be vinedressers and plowmen. Now the bronze pillars which belonged to the house of the LORD and the stands and the bronze sea, which were in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans broke in pieces and carried all their bronze to Babylon.**” (Jeremiah 52:16-17) They’re taking the spoils of the very temple of God to Babylon, Babylon who is an idolatrous city, Babylon who has been the hammer of all the earth, Babylon who has been God’s rod of judgment against them, but they’re going to Babylon when

they belong in Jerusalem, because Jerusalem was to be a symbol of the habitation of His righteousness. And it says **“They also took away the pots...,”** verse 18, **“...the shovels, the snuffers, the basins, the pans...the bronze vessels which were used in temple service. The captain of the guard also took away the bowls, the firepans, the basins, the pots, the lampstands, the pans...the drink offering bowls, what was fine gold and what was fine silver.”** (Jeremiah 52:18-19) It was the best for the Lord. **“The two pillars, the one sea, and the twelve bronze bulls that were under the sea and the stands, which King Solomon had made for the house of the LORD— the bronze of all these vessels was beyond weight. As for the pillars...,”** the pillars outside the temple, **“...the height of each pillar was eighteen cubits, and it was twelve cubits in circumference and four fingers in thickness, and hollow. Now [the] capital of bronze was on it; and the height of each capital was five cubits, with network and pomegranates upon [it]....”** (Jeremiah 52:20-22) Now listen, the pomegranates were worn also on the garments of the priest. And that pomegranate, they say that they all had the same number of seeds, which was equal to the commandments of the Lord, to remind them that they were to be a holy people. **“...And the second pillar was like [this] including pomegranates. There were ninety-six exposed pomegranates; all [around] the pomegranates numbered a hundred on the network all around.”** (Jeremiah 52:22-23) These are things of beauty and they’re going to be carried into Babylon. **“Then the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest and Zephaniah the second priest, with the three officers of the temple. He also took from the city one official who was overseer of the men of war, and [the] seven of the king’s advisers who were found in the city, and the scribe of the commander of the army who mustered the people of the land, and sixty men of the people of the land who were found in the midst of the city...the captain of the guard took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah.”** (Jeremiah 52:24-26)

Now listen, and **“Then the king of Babylon struck them down and put them to death at Riblah...” (Jeremiah 52:27)** Now do you remember Baruch? Do you remember Jeremiah chapter 45? Do you remember how God said to Baruch don’t desire great things for yourself? I will give you your life. (See Jeremiah 45:5) His brother’s life is taken by Nebuchadnezzar and he is spared. **“...So Judah was led away into exile from its land. These are the people whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away into exile: in the seventh year 3,023 Jews; in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar 832 [people] from Jerusalem; in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar...the captain of the guard carried into exile 745 Jewish people; there 4,600 persons in all.” (Jeremiah 52:27-30)** What is he showing us? He’s showing us this constant taking out, taking out and taking them into exile. These people, if you remember, are the good figs. They’re the ones that have their lives spared. **“Now it [happened] in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-fifth of the month, that Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the first year of his reign, showed favor to Jehoiachin king of Judah and brought him out of prison. Then he spoke kindly to him and set his throne above the thrones of [those who were] kings...in Babylon.” (Jeremiah 52:31-32)** Remember Babylon’s been the hammer of all the earth. **“So Jehoiachin changed his prison clothes, and had...meals in the king’s presence regularly all the days of his life. For his allowance, a regular allowance was given him by the king of Babylon, a daily portion all the days of his life until the day of his death.” (Jeremiah 52:33-34)** And the book of Jeremiah ends with a capture of Jerusalem. But remember there is a promise in Jeremiah chapter 3 as God says in verse 14, **“Return, O faithless sons...for I am a master [for] you...I will take...one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.” (Jeremiah 3:14)** It says **“...I will give you shepherds after My own heart, [which] will feed you [with] knowledge and**

understanding.” (Jeremiah 3:15) Verse 17: “At that time they will call Jerusalem ‘The Throne of the LORD,’ and all the nations will be gathered to it, to Jerusalem, for the name of the LORD; nor will they walk anymore after the stubbornness of their...heart.” (Jeremiah 3:17)

Oh Beloved, we’ve looked at two cities. We have looked at Babylon and we have looked at Jerusalem. And when you come to Revelation what you see is you see in chapter 18 the destruction of Babylon and you see the establishment of Jerusalem. (Revelation 18:2) Why? Because the God Almighty reigns. What He has purposed will come to pass. As they’re talking about hallelujah, the smoke, her smoke, Babylon’s smoke rises up forever and ever. Revelation 19:4 **“And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures [fall] down and [worship] God who sits on the throne saying, ‘Amen. Hallelujah!’ And a voice [comes] from the throne [and says] ‘Give praise to...God, all you...bond-servants...who fear Him, the small and the great.’” (Revelation 19:4-5)** who make Him in essence their habitation. And he says **“Then I heard something like the voice of a... multitude...saying, ‘Hallelujah! For the Lord our God...Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give...glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.’ (Revelation 19:6-7)** To her, **“It was given...to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints,”** the righteousness. **(Revelation 19:8)** When you go to Revelation, you see the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven. (See Revelation 21:2) That’s the city that you and I are to belong to and to serve. That’s the habitation of righteousness. It’s God’s city.