

Jeremiah 39
How It Ends In The End
J.D. Farag

KAPONO: Thank You so much for this time of worship, Lord. Oh, Lord, Lord, we need you, Lord. And I tell you what, I need You right now, Lord, I need You right now. Yeah. Give me focus, Lord. Thank You so much for this time.

I know Your Word will just speak to our hearts this evening, Lord. So thank You again for this time of worship. I know that You will bless it, Lord, and use it for Your good. Again, thank You for this time, Lord. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

PASTOR JD: Amen and amen. All right, good evening to you. Hey, before your seated, if you haven't already, you might want to at this time come up and get the elements. Same for those of you joining us online. We're so glad that you are. We want to welcome you and also invite you at this time to get the elements ready so you can partake with us at the conclusion of the Bible study tonight.

While you're doing that, I want to let you know, those of you that are here, that this upcoming Tuesday, 7:00 p.m. December 6 here in the sanctuary is our prayer meeting. Really hope you're able to come and join with us and pray with us as a church together. So with that, tonight we're making our way through this amazing book of Jeremiah. We are tonight going to do three chapters. Yeah, with Communion.

[Applause]

See? That's what I love about you guys. You're like, bring it. Speaking of bring it, did you bring your pajamas and toothbrush? (Chuckling)

Nah, this is... well, actually, let's at least by way of an introduction, talk about why I made the decision to teach these three chapters together tonight because they speak very pointedly to how it could end and will end in the end. Isn't that just catchy?

Well, it gets better. I'm saying it that way because how it will end in the end will depend on whether or not one takes heed to God's warning and God's word. And as we're about to see tonight in these three chapters, several people, one in particular who will be introduced to you for the first time tonight, did not have to have it end the way it would end. So that's one of the reasons why we're doing these three chapters together.

So why don't we pray? If you would, please join with me; we'll ask God to bless our time together. Looking forward to it.

Father in heaven, thank You so much, Lord, this is that time of the week that we are so appreciative of, even protective of, because it's our time together with one another, but more importantly, with You in and through Your Word.

And so we so look forward to coming together on the Thursday night in the middle of the week and just open up our Bibles in this beautiful place, the safe place, the sanctuary, and in the presence of our brothers and sisters, we just dedicate this time that we have together to You. And in so doing, we, with great anticipation, look to You, the author and the finisher of our faith to build us up in the faith.

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Because faith comes by hearing and hearing by Your Word. And such is the case tonight as we get into Your Word. Lord, let it get into us, and as it does, Lord, let it do the needed changes in our hearts.

So Lord, thank You so much for this time and our celebration of the communion table tonight. Thank You in advance for what You're going to do. In Jesus' name, we pray, amen and amen. All right. Let's jump right in.

Jeremiah, Chapter 39:1, "In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and besieged it. In [Verse 2] the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, the city was penetrated [Speaking of the city wall].

Now let me just kind of provide a little bit of the back story so you kind of get a gauge and a feel for where we're at in what's happening here. This besieging of Judah has actually been over the course of approximately a year-and-a-half, and you could divide it up into three invasions, as it were. And this is the third and final one, and this time, they have broken through the wall. It's game-over.

And this is exactly what Jeremiah for 40 years has been prophesying. He's been prophesying and warning that this day would come. And now this day, the ninth day of the month, to be specific, it came.

I mean, if I'm Jeremiah, I'm not even close, and we should all thank God for that. But if I'm Jeremiah, I'm like, I told you so in Jesus' name. But not Jeremiah; never imagine for a moment that he's in any way relishing, gloating, if you prefer.

No, I think he's grieving. He was right all along, precisely fulfilled, according to his prophetic warnings. 40 years. 40 years. And now it happens.

Well, **"Then [Verse 3] all the princes of the king of Babylon came in and sat in the Middle Gate:** *[Now I'll do my best on these names; you'll have to be gracious to me and bear with me] Nergal-Sharezer, Samgar-Nebo, Sarsechim, Rabsaris, [Sorry about spitting on everybody in the front row on that one] Nergal-Sarezer, Rabmag, with the rest of the princes of the king of Babylon.*

So it was [Verse 4] when Zedekiah the king of Judah and all the men of war saw them, that they fled and went out of the city by night, by way of the king's garden, by the gate between the two walls. And he went out by way of the plain.

But [Verse 5] the Chaldean army pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho." [He didn't get very far; he was likely on his way to the Dead Sea area, for those of you that have been to Israel with us] "And when they had captured him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he pronounced judgment on him.

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Then [Verse 6] the King of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes in Riblah. The king of Babylon also killed all the nobles of Judah. Moreover [Verse 7] he put out Zedekiah's eyes and bound him with bronze fetters to carry him off to Babylon."

Now, we had talked about this a few weeks ago. There was a very specific prophecy in the Book of Ezekiel about how that Zedekiah, King Zedekiah would be taken to Babylon, but he would not see Babylon. And that's why. Oh, he would be taken to Babylon, but he would be blinded, and as such, not see Babylon.

Oh, this is horrific and graphic. The last thing he would see, the image that would be burned indelibly on his mind and heart, would be the killing of his sons before his eyes.

"And [Verse 8] the Chaldeans burned the king's house and the houses of the people with fire and broke down the walls of Jerusalem. Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive to Babylon the remnant of the people who remained in the city and those who defected to him, with the rest of the people who remained."

So off they go. That's how it ends. Sadly, that's how it ends for Zedekiah. But you know what makes it so sad? It didn't need to end this way.

I was thinking about this today in preparation in anticipation of teaching this tonight. How many times — and I wonder if Zedekiah thought about this, but too late? How many times did he talk with Jeremiah, Jeremiah talk with him, even privately?

A couple of weeks ago, you might remember, he called Jeremiah and brought him privately, even secretly just to talk with him, ask him, and it was like he came so close it seemed, so close, but yet so far. And he tells Jeremiah, and it's recorded for us, very powerful and very applicable, by the way, he tells Jeremiah that he just can't because he's afraid of what the people will think of him.

Does that sound a little bit familiar? When you're witnessing to somebody and man, you just think you're so close, but yet so far, and they don't come to Christ.

Why?

Because they're bound, trapped by the fear of man, a man-pleasing fear of men. He feared men and what men would think of him were he to repent, and if he would have but repented, it wouldn't have ended this way. It is so tragic. And it is so tragic for those who come so close as Zedekiah, I believe, actually truly did but would not make that commitment for fear of man.

I wonder if at this point, and you got to know that he's recalling, rewinding all of the videos, replaying all of the videos over all of the years that Jeremiah prophesied about this happening, and now it's happening. This is really happening. That's how it ends for Zedekiah.

Verse 10. How are you doing so far? Are you depressed?

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Verse 10, “But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left in the land of Judah the poor people [This is interesting] who had nothing and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time.”

Wow! Well, this is interesting. I mean, in the end, the poor would inherit the land. Does that sound familiar? Well, it should because it's true. But this is one of those places, and we might see another one of these yet tonight, but this is one of those places where I think we would do well to ask the “why question” again, the “why” behind the “what.”

Okay, so this is what we're told they were given. They had nothing, and they're given all of this and particularly because they were poor and meek. And so they inherit all of this? Okay, that's the “what.”

Why?

Here's a thought. The meek have no agenda. The meek can be trusted. The meek are the ones who are the most grateful. **“To much has been given. much is required.” “The one who has been forgiven of much loves much.”** That's how it works. You can't entrust something like this to someone who is rich and full of pride and arrogance and haughty. It would be disastrous. But it's the poor, and they're given this, and that's how it ends for them.

“Now [Verse 11, this is just wow, okay?] Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, saying, “Take him [Verse 12] and look after him, and do him no harm; but do to him just as he says to you.”

Okay, we need to talk about this for a couple of reasons, the first of which is this is a Babylonian whom Nebuchadnezzar has charged with the task of getting to Jeremiah and saying to Jeremiah, Jeremiah, hey, whatever you want, consider it done. You just say the word, and we're going to do it. Whatever you want, we're going to look after you. We're going to take care of you.

Okay, again, if I'm Jeremiah, and I'm not, I'm thinking myself: Why are you, as a Babylonian, treating me better than my own people? Well, again, we need to talk about this, okay? And I need to maybe share my heart on this because there's some truth to this. Isn't it's sad that oftentimes the world will treat us better than the Christian?

Now think this through with me. This is the Babylonian king sending his captain of the guard to tell Jeremiah that, hey, we're going to take care of you from here on out. Heretofore, he's been beaten, threatened, his life threatened, attempts made on his life to kill him. He's been abused physically, brutally, verbally, of course. He's been imprisoned, left to die by his own people. And now the king of Babylon says, Hey, Jeremiah, we're going to take care of you.

“So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard [Verse 13] sent Nebushasban, Rabsaris, Nergal-Sharezer, Rabmag, and all the king of Babylon’s chief officers. Then [Verse 14] then they sent someone to take Jeremiah from the court of the prison [Oh, wait a minute, he's still in

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prison?] [Yeah.] **and committed him to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, that he should take him home. So he dwelt among the people.”**

Wow! This is how it will end for Jeremiah, and so, too, is this how it will end for the Jeremiahs of this world who are found faithful in the face of unspeakable persecution, mistreatment, mocking, ridiculing, even threatening.

Verse 15, “Meanwhile the word of the Lord had come to Jeremiah while he was shut up in the court of the prison, saying, “Go [Verse 16] and speak to Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian.” [Remember him?]

We were introduced to him of a few weeks ago This guy is our friend We like him. He's a good guy. So now again, Jeremiah is told by the Lord to go to him with a word from the Lord. And what is that word?

Go to him saying, **‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Behold, I will bring My words upon this city for adversity and not for good, [It's not a good word] and they shall be performed in that day before you. But [Verse 17] I will deliver you in that day,” says the Lord, “and you shall not be given into the hand of the men of whom you are afraid.”** [Which means that he feared what they would do to him]

Now that the final siege has taken place, they've broken through the wall and taken captive, this is the final, final, the end, and certainly he would have every cause, every reason to fear what's going to come upon him, what's going to happen to him.

But God sends Jeremiah with this word to him, and he says, **verse 18, “For I will surely deliver you, and you shall not fall by the sword; but your life [Listen to this] shall be as a prize to you [Why?] because you have put your trust in Me,” says the Lord.”**

Wow! I mean, hey, this Ethiopian — again, he's an Ethiopian. He may not be a Babylonian but he's an Ethiopian. Do you remember what he did when he put his trust in the Lord? He trusted the Lord against all odds with great cost to his own personal safety. He put His trust in the Lord and stood alone and in effect, saved Jeremiah's life.

And God's like, I honor that. I acknowledge that. I'm going to bless that. I'm going to reward you for that. I'm going to give you a prize for that. Because that was faith. That was trust. And that's how it ends for Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian.

And that's how it ends for all of those like him. God will never be a debtor to anyone. When you do what He did as unto the Lord with such faith as this — in the Gospels, I'm always taken aback by how moved the Savior is when He comes upon someone who has faith. He'll even stop everything and draw attention to that individual and will even say things like, **“I have never seen such faith as this in all of Israel.”** Or how about this? **“Your faith has healed you.”** Oh, faith? Yeah. That's what he did. That's what he had.

You know in Hebrews, and we studied this in our verse-by-verse study through Hebrews, which was a very intense book, amazing book, of course. Of course, I know I say that about

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all the books in the Bible. They're all amazing, but there's that one verse; you know it well, **“Without faith [Without faith] it is impossible to please God.”** But let's flip that around. If without faith, it's impossible to please God, then that means that with faith it's possible to please God. And that's exactly what He did.

How pleasing to God was this? It was so pleasing that the Lord would send Jeremiah and at a time when he probably needed it the most, he's probably terrified, again, rightfully so just with a dread of fear about what's going to happen to him.

And the Lord sends Jeremiah to him and says, I'm not going to let anything happen to you because you put your trust in Me. And here's the thing: Anyone who puts their trust in the Lord will never, I mean never be disappointed. You will never be let down. When you have faith in God and trust in God, pshew! That's it, pshew; I know that's deeply profound. That's well, the only thing I can say.

Chapter 40:1; we're doing good, right? Not really, but don't look at your watches.

“The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord after Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he had taken him bound in chains among all who were carried away captive from Jerusalem and Judah, who were carried away captive to Babylon.

And [Verse 2] the captain of the guard took Jeremiah and said to him: “The Lord your God has pronounced this doom on this place.” *[You'll forgive me for chuckling. I think you'll see why here in a moment]*

“Now the Lord has brought it and has done just as He said. Because you people have sinned against the Lord and not obeyed His voice, therefore this thing has come upon you. And now look, I free you [He's talking to Jeremiah] I free you this day from the chains that were on your hand. If it seems good to you to come with me to Babylon, come, and I will look after you [I'll take care of you]. But if it seems wrong for you to come with me to Babylon, remain here. See, all the land is before you; wherever it seems good and convenient for you to go, go there.”

Now while Jeremiah [Verse 5] had not yet gone back, Nebuzaradan said, “Go back to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon has made governor over the cities of Judah, and dwell with him among the people. Or go wherever it seems convenient for you to go.”

Jeremiah, whatever you want, man. Just do it; do whatever you want. You're free. Just whatever you want consider it done.

“So the captain of the guard gave him rations and a gift and let him go.”

That's huge, by the way. Remember now Jeremiah's probably well, he's in his 60s at the very least, which is not like 60 today, thank God, because I'm 60. I mean, that was a hard life back then. And so it was more like 80s or even 90s. So he's an aged man, and got the scars

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to prove it, all that he's been through, all the beatings, all the imprisonments. And he's probably lost a lot of weight by now, not by choice. He's very weak, frail.

And so they give him rations and a gift, and they let him go. **“Then Jeremiah went [Verse 6] Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, to Mizpah, and dwelt with him among the people who were left in the land. And [Verse 7] when all the captains of the armies who were in the fields, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam governor in the land and had committed to him men, women, children, and the poorest of the land who had not been carried away captive to Babylon, then they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah — [Now we're going to be introduced to these guys, and I want you to pay particular attention to the first one here] Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah, Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth, the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jezaniah the son of a Maachathite, [Oh, that's a — I just cleared my throat on that one] they and their men. And Gedaliah...”**

Now let me just kind of explain something here. It's going to be germane to our understanding. This Gedaliah now was appointed by Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon to oversee and govern Judah and the people that remained including now Jeremiah. So he's now been installed by Babylon to govern over Judah.

So we're told that, **“He took an oath before them and their men saying, “Do not be afraid to serve the Chaldeans. Dwell in the land [Speaking of Judah] and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you. [It's exactly what Jeremiah said, and they fought against it]**

As for [Verse 10] me, I will indeed dwell at Mizpah and serve the Chaldeans who come to us. But you, gather wine and summer fruit and oil, put them in your vessels, and dwell in your cities that you have taken.”

Likewise, when all the Jews who were in Moab, [This would be modern-day Jordan bordering Israel] among the Ammonites, in Edom, [Again, this is the Edomites, the descendants of Esau, the fraternal twin brother of Jacob] [Yeah, right?] [Okay, good] [Wow! Rough week: Just thank you again for your grace] in Edom, and who were in all the countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant of Judah, and that he had set over them Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, then all the Jews returned, [Verse 12] out of all places where they had been driven, and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah, and gathered wine and summer fruit in abundance.”

Could you imagine how they must have felt right about now? All right, it's safe to go back now. And we're going to have some wine to drink, some fruits to eat.

“Moreover [Verse 13] Johanan the son of Kareah and all the captains of the forces that were in the fields came to Gedaliah at Mizpah, and said to him [Now I want you to listen very carefully because this is really important] “Do you certainly know that Baalis the king of the Ammonites has sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to murder you?” But Gedaliah

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the son of Ahikam did not believe them. Then Johanan the son of Kareah spoke secretly to Gedaliah in Mizpah saying..."

So now after Gedaliah says no, I don't believe that, Johanan goes to him separately, privately and says, **"Gedaliah, let me go, please, and I will kill Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, and no one will know it. Why should he murder you so that all the Jews who are gathered to you would be scattered, and the remnant in Judah perish?"**

But [Oh, this is horrible] Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam said to Johanan the son of Kareah, "You shall not do this thing, for you speak falsely concerning Ishmael."

I spent a little bit of time just kind of inquiring of the Lord concerning this Gedaliah; I mean, this guy doubtlessly, he loved God, was faithful to God, served God, but regrettably, he had what I'm going to refer to in a twofold way as an innocent naivete and even secondly, an ignorant naivete. And as we'll see in the next chapter, this does not end well for him.

I don't want to get ahead of myself, but I do want to draw your attention to something that is, again, very important here. And this is another "why question" that we really need to ask because it really applies to where we're at today.

Question: Why would Gedaliah refuse to believe that this Ishmael could be so evil as to want to murder him, again under the banner of this innocent and even ignorant naivete? I wonder if he had bought into this notion that nobody could be that evil? You see where I'm going with this?

And by the way, spoiler alert, he will perish at the hands of Ishmael, who, by the way, again, we're going to see this in a moment, he was a descendant of King David, which may be another reason why Gedaliah was so against any idea of this guy doing anything like that. There's no way. No one's that evil. Oh, yes, they are, and yes, he is.

Gedaliah, I'm trying to speak truth into your life whether you want to hear it or not. But this man is evil and he wants to kill you. And I know you don't believe it, but it's the truth. And how many people, and I'll just leave it at this and I'll leave it with the Holy Spirit to do that which only He can in taking this further and making application to our lives today, but how many people have died unnecessarily? It ended in their death because of said ignorant naivete? And it cost them their life?

Well, this is evil. They want to kill you. They want to depopulate. This is evil through and through. And you don't believe it because to you, your world doesn't allow for that. No, I don't believe; I trust this guy. You trust them? Oh, do you trust the science?

Did I take it too far? I probably did. I'll find out soon enough. So will you too, by the way, but whatever, whatever; it's true!

This is Ishmael. The name alone, by the way, associated with the flesh. That should tell you something right there. This guy is so evil, and we're going to see the unthinkable evil, the

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unspeakable evil that he is going to mete out as he murders this ignorant and naive Gedaliah.

Chapter 41, yeah! Oh, you of little faith! (Chuckling)

“Now, [Verse 1] it came to pass in the seventh month that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal family [There it is] and of the officers of the king...”

By the way, he probably had bitterness and resentment, feeling slighted that he wasn't set as governor over Judah instead of Gedaliah. He's not royal. He's not of the lineage of David. I am! You're appointing him?

Well, he “came with ten men to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, at Mizpah. And there they ate bread together in Mizpah.”

Now, I need to insert here something very important, and it has actually application in the communion table we're going to celebrate tonight. In the Middle East in that day and certainly to this day, when you eat at the table with someone and break bread with someone, it is an intimate bonding with someone who now you are loyal to for life unto death. So for him to do this, this way, he is at Gedaliah is home and is breaking bread with him. And it's supposed to be a common union/communion. We're one together, breaking bread together. It's a common union together.

“Then [Verse 2] Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men who were with him, arose and struck Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, with the sword, and killed him whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land. [Doesn't get any more evil than that]

Ishmael [Verse 3] Ishmael also struck down all the Jews who were with him, that is, with Gedaliah at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans who were found there, the men of war. And it happened [Verse 4] on the second day after he had killed Gedaliah, when as yet no one knew it, that certain men came from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, eighty men with their beards shaved and their clothes torn, having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring them to the house of the Lord.”

This was a display of mourning. It was unnecessary, but it was a display of mourning and then offering there because of the destruction now of Judah.

Now Ishmael *[Verse 6, this is hard to read, let alone teach]* **“Now Ishmael the son of Nethaniah went out from Mizpah to meet them, weeping as he went along; [Really?] and it happened as he met them that he said to them, “Come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam!” So it was, [Verse 7] when they came into the midst of the city, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah killed them and cast them into the midst of a pit, he and the men who were with him. But ten [Now you got 80 minus ten. That means he killed 70 of the 80] But ten men were found among them who said to Ishmael, “Do not kill us, for we have treasures of wheat, barley, oil, and honey in the field.” So he desisted and did not kill them among their brethren.**

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Now the pit [Verse 9] into which Ishmael had cast all the dead bodies of the men whom he had slain, because of Gedaliah, was the same one Asa the king had made for fear of Baasha king of Israel. Ishmael the son of Nethaniah filled it with the slain.”

It's seemingly at first read a detail that you've got to wonder about and why it was included. I have a thought on that. I think what God is wanting us to see here tonight is the extent to which the evil of man can go. There is no limit. It is — it is — what's the word I'm looking for? It is uncontrolled, unchecked, unbridled evil.

Just the imagery, again, with the detail. You've got this pit that we're told that King Asa had built and made, and this Ishmael fills it with no less than 70 of these men. That's a lot of bodies. Again, I don't mean to be so graphic. I just want you to get a picture in your mind.

Verse 10, “Then Ishmael carried away captive all the rest of the people who were in Mizpah, the king’s daughters and all the people who remained in Mizpah, whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had committed to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam. And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah carried them away captive and departed to go over to the Ammonites. But when Johanan the son of Kareah and all the captains of the forces that were with him heard of all the evil that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had done, they took all the men [Verse 12] and went to fight with Ishmael the son of Nethaniah. [Get them, kill them! Is that bad?] [It's not in the text. I just wanted to add that] and they found him by the great pool that is in Gibeon.

So it was [Verse 13] when all the people who were with Ishmael saw Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces who were with him, that they were glad. Then all the people [Verse 14] whom Ishmael had carried away captive from Mizpah turned around and came back and went to Johanan the son of Kareah.

But [Verse 15] Ishmael the son of Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with eight men and went to the Ammonites.”

Oh, how I wish *verse 15* didn't read that way. I would have much rather had *verse 15* read something like this. Then [Not but, then] Ishmael the son of Nethaniah was hung up by his fingernails. Okay, well, I won't take it any further. I think you get the picture. Pray for me. But it doesn't say that.

So you know, here I am; I'm, you know, I usually start several days in advance, usually actually the week before. I want to get — I love Jeremiah.

I mean, maybe I've shared this, maybe this is as good of a time as any to share this. It might be apropos in the context of what we're talking about tonight, but don't get me wrong, but I actually look more forward to teaching Jeremiah on Thursday nights than I do the Update and even the 1 Peter teaching on Sunday mornings.

No, I do. I tell you, and here's why. Here's why. Let me explain why. First of all, I love Jeremiah. I think you do too, right? What, I mean, what a mighty man of God! Oh, would to

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God that there were more Jeremiahs faithfully for 40 years. All that he went through. Oh, I just — I love this man. I love this man.

But there's another man here that I don't love. His name is Ishmael. And I just in my preparation, actually, starting last week, I start by reading it, and I pray and I read it again. I read it several times before I even start, you know, preparing the study, the teaching.

So I'm really — I put myself in the passage. I put myself there. I want you to know, I've been to Judah. I've seen those Chaldeans. I know what they look like. They're mean and ugly, by the way, just so you know. I mean, I put myself there.

I was actually in that room with Zedekiah and Jeremiah when Zedekiah came that close. I didn't really want to be around when Zedekiah got his eyes, you know... I actually just I was somewhere else at that time. But I put myself there because this really happened, right? This is something and this is a thing, by the way, when we read the word of God, especially Old Testament, because, after all, isn't the Old Testament old?

Yeah, yeah, it's really old.

It's as new as new can be in terms of its application to you and me. So I'm there and I'm putting myself there, and I'm just going, wow, man!

And I'm watching this Ishmael guy; what a — I gotta be careful here. Dirty, dirty, slimy, and he gets away! I'm like, God, why did You let him get away? Why don't you let Johanan kill him? What's up with this? And then as I'm still reading, studying, I'm searching the scriptures.

By the way, I'll save you the time. I searched high and low, far and wide. I could not find anywhere where the name Ishmael, this Ishmael is ever mentioned again. Well, as you might imagine, that really added to my rage.

I'm like, God, why isn't there a record of what happened to this guy, how it ended for this guy? I want to know. In fact, I'd like to know ahead of time, because I want to be there when it does. I want to watch it happen. I want to — again, is that bad? I'm sorry. I'm just being honest with you. I want this guy to get what he deserves. I want in the end to have him get what he should get in the end. And I couldn't find how it ended for him.

This is — I'm inquiring of the Lord. That sounds very pastoral, right? That's not right. I was complaining, murmuring, sort of arguing with the — questioning, okay? Is that okay?

Questioning. Lord, what in the world? What happened to him? What a cliffhanger. Why didn't You tell us? I mean, You, first of all, You let him get away. Now, I could understand it. I could deal with it. I could work through it. if a couple of chapters later, we hear how it ends for this guy. But no, nothing. Nada, zilch. Zero. Why?

Couple of thoughts. First of all, well, let me preface it this way. You can be rest assured that he, in the end was recompensed according to all the evil that he had done. That's a fact. That's the truth.

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Now, God, in His sovereignty and wisdom, deemed it unnecessary to record for us, really for me; I should probably speak for myself. Guys who really want to know the details of what happened to this guy. But God deemed it unnecessary to include that.

But here's the reason I believe that we're left with this open-ended question of how did it end for this ugly guy, this evil man, Ishmael? Could it be that it's because the Ishmaels of this world are alive and well today?

Let that sink in. I mean, I would love nothing more than to have the final chapter in the book of this guy's life. But again, God deemed it unnecessary to include that. And I think it has a lot to do with this one simple truth. He wants us to know that this kind of evil Ishmael is still around, the evil alive and well today?

And as we just talked about I'm sad to say, dare I say that Ishmael is, the evil of this Ishmael is being perpetrated on mankind in real time in this world today? We're going to talk a little bit about this in the Prophecy Update on Sunday. It is just — it's so unbelievable. I mean, it's so hard to believe.

By unbelievable, I mean — and this, again, in all fairness to Gedaliah, you know, Paul, writing to Titus, said, “To the pure, all things are pure, and to the corrupt, all things are corrupt,” meaning that when you're innocent like that and pure like that, you see people through that lens.

So when you're a Gedaliah and all things are pure and you're innocent, there's this purity and this innocence. And you're confronted with an Ishmael, you tend to, though at great peril to him and us, we tend to view them through the lens of our innocent purity. And conversely, if you're a pathological liar, guess what? Everyone is a pathological liar. **“To the corrupt, everyone is corrupt.”**

So if I am someone who is honest, I'm going to naturally default in assuming that you, too, are like me, honest. Are you with me? This is a very important principle, and I'm going somewhere with this, so please bear with me.

But if I'm a liar, a pathological liar and I'm talking to someone, I am going to look at them and assume that they are like me, a liar. They're not being truthful with me. So **“to the pure, all things are pure. To the corrupt, all things are corrupt.”**

Now how does that apply to what we're experiencing in the world today? And this is, by the way, I'll say it again. I hope you don't tire me saying it because I'm going to keep saying it. But this is the end. This is how it ends. This is the way it will end. And this is when it will end. It's the end. This is it. This is the end. This is how it ends.

And the evil today is dismissed with this Gedaliah naivete because no, the government wouldn't do that. The medical community wouldn't do that. I really did it now; I've got nothing to lose. So I'm just going to go for it. That's Ishmael, the evil of Ishmael alive and well today.

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And I would just lastly say this, and we'll bring it in for a landing. If you're a Gedaliah, first of all, we love you. Bless your heart. We love being around you. You're the kind of guy we want to have over for dinner.

Don't have Ishmael over for dinner. That didn't work out too well. But you're the kind of guy we want to hang out with, fellowship with.

But your greatest asset can become your greatest liability. Your greatest strength can become your greatest weakness.

It is what Paul wrote to the Corinthians. He said, **“Be careful if you think you stand.”** This is *1 Corinthians 10:13*, I think. **“Be careful if you think you stand lest you fall.”**

Why would Paul say that?

Because we tend to fall in the areas that we think we stand the strongest in. Why? Because we think, hey, I've got that area under control, so we let our guard down. The enemy is like, all right, let's do this. And so we fall. But we tend to shore up the areas that we're weak in. So we, at the expense of the areas that we're strong in, so our strongest strengths, assets can become our greatest downfalls.

Ask Peter about that, by the way.

How did Peter fall when he denied Jesus?

He fell in the area of courage.

Are you kidding me? Courage was Peter's middle name. He had the courage to tell Jesus in that storm, on that boat, **“Bid me come.”** And he stepped out of the boat, walked on water. That's Peter. Courage.

How about when they arrested Jesus? He had the courage to take on the entire Roman army, even taking out his sword, cutting off the ear of Malchus. That's courage. I think the Hebrew word is hutzpah. I know I spit on the communion elements. Get these from these tables over here.

Okay, I need to make my point. Thanks for bearing with me. Be careful if you're a Gedaliah because you are very vulnerable. Because your weakness is that you trust because you're one who can be trusted. Your weakness is you think everyone's honest because you are one who is honest. Your weakness is that nobody could be that evil because you yourself are pure. And I'm telling you, it could cost you your life, literally. Be careful Gedaliah. We love you but be careful because that's how it will end for you.

Verse 16, “Then Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that were with him, took from Mizpah all the rest of the people whom he had recovered [Really rescued] from Ishmael the son of Nethaniah after he had murdered Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the mighty men of war, and the women and the children and the eunuchs, whom he had brought back from Gibeon.

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And [Verse 17] they departed and dwelt in the habitation of Chimham, which is near Bethlehem, as they went on their way to Egypt, because of the Chaldeans; [Why?] because they were afraid of them [Why?] because Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had murdered Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon had made governor in the land."

So you understand what's going on here, right? They are terrified, and rightfully so because now when Babylon, when Nebuchadnezzar hears that this Ishmael guy murdered the governor that he appointed over Judah, only chaos will ensue.

And now, I mean, the chapter ends with a series of events that will unfold in the end because of what happens here at the end. And we'll going to, Lord willing, next week three more chapters. Oh, we just did it. We'll do it again.

But again, they have to go together because what we're going to see is God again, warning them, Johanan in particular, don't go to Egypt. You're making a decision, a life-and-death decision based on your fear of the Chaldeans.

And Egypt is a type of the world. And they felt they would be safer in Egypt than they would be if they remained in Judah. And how it ends for them? Well, you have to come next week and bring your pajamas and toothbrushes as well.

Well, I want to — I actually have been really looking forward to the communion table tonight. The Lord really ministered to me something that I want to share with you that is just, oh, so encouraging. I hope you'll be as encouraged as I was when God ministered to me.

Luke 22 is the account of what we affectionately refer to as The Last Supper, and Luke by the Holy Spirit, *verse 14* says, **"When the hour had come, He [Speaking of Jesus] sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." [He's on his way to the cross, they know that, He told them that] for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."**

Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." [It's the second time He expresses that] And He took bread, gave thanks, and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

So for those of you here, take the top part off and just hold on to the bread for just a moment. So we hold in our hands a symbol of the body of Jesus Christ. that was broken in our stead, not His bones, that would have disqualified Him as the Passover lamb. The Passover lamb could not have any bones broken. No, the skin was broken.

So He wants to remind them of that which they, like us, are prone to forget. What are we prone to forget? What Jesus did for us.

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What did Jesus do for us?

Well, He died for us. Do you know what this means? I want you to hear me on this because this was, this just blew me away. And it's so simple and yet so profound. What we're going to do tonight is celebrate what Jesus did for us when He died for us. And it changes everything. Because no longer do we have to merit, merit His favor.

What do you mean?

Oh, no longer do I live; it's no way to live. In fact, you cannot live this way. Hey, I had a good day today. God's going to bless me. Hey, I blew it today. God's going to, man, He's going to bring the hammer down.

No! Because of what Jesus did. No longer do I get crushed under the guilt and condemnation of my sin because of what Jesus did for me. So now my relationship with the Lord is not predicated upon anything that I do. It's only predicated upon that which He's already done, period. It is finished. There's nothing I can do.

Well, yeah, but, Pastor, what about — I mean, what are you saying? I mean, no matter what I do?

Yeah, It's paid for.

Yeah, but surely God's going to... I mean, some of the things God's like, you know, I'm going to need a couple of days on this one.

No, I'm forgiven because of His body broken for me and His blood shed for me.

So as we partake tonight, I would just encourage you, and I hope it is an encouragement to you, I would just really encourage you to maybe revisit your relationship with the Lord, because the enemy would love nothing more than to keep you crushed under condemnation. **“And there is therefore now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus.”**

I mean, I know this might be shocking, but we are going to sin. Do you think that when we sin, the Lord's in Heaven going, “Again; you did it again? You got to be kidding Me! You even made a vow to Me.”

Oh, so now my relationship is predicated upon my obedience to You and my vow to You? I have to merit it? I have to earn it? I have to deserve it? No, I'm saved by grace through faith. **“So where did sin abound, there does grace much more abound.”** That's just how it works.

But see the enemy doesn't want us to know that because he wants to keep us under that condemnation. Because see, condemnation drives us further away from the Lord, whereas conviction draws us closer to the Lord.

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That's how you know the difference. By the way, that's a litmus test. So you use sin. And then you start entertaining this notion that God's not too happy with me. I mean, I know He loves me. I just don't think He likes me right now.

Where did you get that? That's false. That's not true. No, Jesus loves you and He likes you, but Satan doesn't want you to live like that because he knows that when you live free, and **“whom the Son has set free is free indeed,”** you — it's not that you'll be sinless, it's that you will sin less.

Let me try that again. We're almost done. Thank you for your patience because this is the common argument. If you tell people that, they're just going to sin more. Doesn't work that way. When you've tasted of the cup of God's mercy and grace, and when you sin against the Lord and what you're the recipient of from the Lord is more grace, that does something to you. You don't want to sin against that.

That's Romans — it's really late when I can't remember *Romans 2:4*; I hope it's 2:4 where Paul says it's the kindness of God that leads a man to repentance not the justice of God, the wrath of God, the punishment of God.

I'm having too much fun with that one. You can tell, I've been to that dance before; I know all the steps.

No, it's the kindness of God, it's the grace of God, it's the love of God. When I come out of that and realize that God still loves me, He's not mad at me, that changes everything.

Let's partake together in remembrance of what Jesus did. Thank you. Thank you so much, God. Oh, Lord, thank You for this. Thank You for what this means for us. Lord, I pray for anyone, even myself included. I'm just as prone to this as anyone, I let the enemy get in my head and start condemning me. And the guilt just builds up, and the condemnation brings me down. And I need to be reminded that my relationship with You is not predicated upon that because of this that we're doing tonight in remembrance of You and what You did. Thank You so much, Jesus.

“Likewise [Luke goes on to write] He [Again, speaking of Jesus] also took the cup after supper saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.”

So again, for those of you here, you'll peel back the rest of the packaging and hold on to it for a moment. So now we go from the bread, which is a symbol of the body of Christ, to the cup, which is a symbol of the blood of Christ.

Now, this is what sealed the deal, if I can say it like that because see, the Bible says there is no remission of sin without the shedding of blood. Remission, meaning removing, not covering. “kofar” that's Old Testament in Hebrew, only covered the sin. But when Jesus came, He paid for the sin once and for all.

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And not only is it now just covered; it's actually completely removed as far as the East is from the West. **“Though your sins be as scarlet and remembered no more.”** That's what this cup represents.

Now, how does this apply to what we just talked about? Okay. What we're about to do tonight as we take together of the cup, a symbol of His blood, is to remember that all my sin, all sin, not some sin, not most sin, not everything but that sin, no, all sin, is paid for. Because this is the new covenant in His blood.

So that settles it. So there's nothing you can do after the fact. There's nothing you can bring to the table in addition. There's nothing that can be said because it is finished, period.

So as we partake, I want you to think about this. The next time the enemy comes and starts rubbing your nose in what you did, You know exactly I'm talking about, right? You say, man, I'm covered in the blood. Get out of my face. Just get — nice try. Leave.

Go to somebody else's address. Just leave me alone. I am covered by the blood on the door posts of my house. And so the Angel of Death is going to pass over me. So you just pass on by. You just keep on moving.

Cause I got the blood, like in the Exodus with the Israelites And that 10th plague, the blood at the top, the basin at the bottom, on the side, on the side, in the shape of a cross before the Romans ever came up with crucifixion. This is the Passover prophecy that Jesus fulfilled.

So let's partake together. And if you would, please do so in remembrance. And once you do, please stand. Kapon, come on up.

Father, how could we ever thank You enough for loving us so much that You would send Your only begotten son to die for us, pay in full for us, that whosoever among us would believe would not perish in hell for all eternity, but have everlasting life in heaven with You. Oh, Lord, when You in that upper room said to the disciples twice that You couldn't wait, fervently desired, eagerly await for that time when what we just did here tonight and what You did with them then, will find its ultimate fulfillment in Your kingdom, Lord, we can't wait either!

So Lord, come quickly, we pray. Maranatha, in Jesus' name. Amen.