

Jeremiah 29
A Future and a Hope
J.D. Farag

Just one chapter tonight. I always try to - I don't ever want to rush through communion, and I try to do my best to leave enough time at the end so that we're not rushed.

It's such a great time to just celebrate the Lord's table together. So we're looking forward to that tonight. So why don't we pray?

If you would, join with me.

Father in Heaven, thank You. Lord this is our time with You tonight. And we don't want anything to interrupt it or distract from it.

Lord, this is that time that we have together with brothers and sisters in Christ. It's our communion service tonight, and we look forward to that every month.

But Lord, we look forward to just having this time that we can open up our Bibles and just put aside all of the busyness and stress and pressure and issues that we deal with on a daily basis and give You our undivided attention.

Lord, there's just...our attention. So much competes for our attention. Well, this is our time, Lord, and we want to give You our undivided attention.

So, Lord, as we do, would You minister to us? We need to be ministered to. Would You speak to us? We need to be spoken to.

So Lord, thank You. Thank You in advance for what You're going to do in our time together tonight in Your Word. We're just so grateful to you, Lord. We thank You so much. We love You so much. In Jesus' name, amen and amen.

All right. So, *Chapter 29*. Yeah, doubtless you already know that this chapter has that well-known verse, a life verse for many, *verse 11*, that "The Lord knows the thoughts that He has towards us being thoughts of peace, not of evil, to give us a future and a hope," Jeremiah 29:11.

Well, as we're about to see the context in which this magnificent promise of God is written is as powerful and profound as it is prophetic.

You know, it's nothing wrong with it, but we're oftentimes prone to extract just one verse out of the Bible, like Jeremiah 29:11.

And we sew pillows, and we write. You do?

Okay, well, I think my wife actually has an apron with *Jeremiah 29:11* on it, so...

But again, nothing wrong with that. But what's oftentimes missed in that is the context in which a life verse like that is written, and it just comes to life when you see the "why" behind the "what" of that particular verse, which we're going to do.

So let's jump in *verse 1*. **"Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the remainder of the elders who were carried away captive—to the priests, the prophets, and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon."**

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This [Verse 2, parenthetically, we're told] happened [This is the timeline] after Jeconiah the king, the queen mother, the eunuchs, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen, and the smiths had departed from Jerusalem.)

The letter [Verse 3] was sent by the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiyah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to Babylon, to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, saying, [Verse 4], Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon."

Okay, let's kind of get ourselves situated and acclimated and calibrated to what's going on here.

Now, this is important, as we're going to see here in a moment. But there were three invasions of Babylon into Judah in which they took captives from Jerusalem to Babylon.

At the time that God has Jeremiah write this letter recorded here in *Chapter 29*, the first invasion has already taken place, and they've already taken captive the cream of the crop, the best of the best.

And it's believed that this first invasion and subsequent captivity in taking these people, some estimate there were potentially thousands that were taking captive in the first invasion. Among them was, many believe, Daniel.

In fact, if you're interested, you might want to read *Daniel Chapter 9*, because in *Daniel Chapter 9*, Daniel references this prophecy here in Jeremiah.

Now, what's really interesting about this is that Jeremiah and Daniel would have known each other. And interesting, this letter that God has Jeremiah write to them, to the prophets, Daniel would have been the recipient of this letter.

And we're going to have the content of this letter. It's already starting to become very rich here of the context of this life verse in *verse 11*.

So this is a letter now that is sent to these captives. And apparently, we're given the name of the guy that took it there, Elasah, and it is specifically addressed to these captives in this first invasion.

There would be two more, two more invasions where thousands upon thousands of Jews will be taken from Jerusalem, captive to Babylon for a period of 70 years, which is again what Daniel refers to in *Chapter 9*.

Now, *verse 5*. This is the content of the letter. **"Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters—that you may be increased there, and not diminished.**

[Translated: you're going to be there a while]

And [Verse 7, this is very interesting] seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive and, pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace."

Okay, wait. I'm gonna pray for Babylon? I'll pray for the peace of Jerusalem but not Babylon.

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No, no, no, no. You're going to be there for a while. And it would be good for you to pray for Babylon.

Yeah, but they're the captors; we're the captives.

Yeah, pray. Pray for the peace of Babylon. Because if you pray for the peace of Babylon, you will have peace in Babylon because you're going to be there for a while. So pray that things go well.

Now, again, there's this very interesting detail that will come out here more in a moment, but I want to draw your attention to something here that's easily missed at first read.

This is how we should live in this world though not of this world until that grand and glorious day when we're taken out of this world, right?

Interesting, there's actually historical accounts of this time frame where there were some serious problems in Babylon at the time that the captives, the first captives, were taken into Babylon.

And the thought is that there were some of them that were kind of fighting against the captivity causing problems in Babylon because, after all, if you remember from last week, Hananiah told them, you're not going to be here very long.

So they were sort of trying to help God out because this false prophet Hananiah had prophesied that they were going to come back in two years.

And here Jeremiah's saying, no, actually, God's going to have you there for 70 years. So go ahead and buy a home. Let your daughters and sons get married, have children.

And here they're going, no, Hananiah said we're only going to be here for a couple of years. We're just going to rent.

[Laughter]

I'm trying to - work with me here on this, okay?

You see how this is kind of - do you see why God would have Jeremiah and inspired Jeremiah to write a letter like this with this detail here?

You're going to be there for a while. I know Hananiah told you that you were only going to be there for, you know, just going to be a stop on your itinerary, but you're coming back.

And he said he was going to bring the vessels back, bring you back. And he actually put a timeline on it: Two years.

There's only one problem. He died. Yeah, like two months after Jeremiah said, **"You're not of God. God did not send you, and you're going to die."** And he died. So I guess he's not going to bring them back in two years.

So anyway, I'm sorry. Just indulge me on that one. I just kind of a little bit of a sanctified...

Well, let's move on, *verse 8*. I might have enjoyed that a little bit too much.

"For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: [And here it is] Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are in your midst deceive you, nor listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed.

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For they [Verse 9] prophesy falsely to you in My name. I have not sent them, says the Lord.

For thus says the Lord: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you and cause you to return to this place.”

Okay. So it seems that in that first invasion and captivity, that they actually got some of the bad apples as well because this letter is sent now from Jeremiah, who's still in Jerusalem, from Jerusalem to Babylon, and it's addressed to the prophets, the priests. Well, apparently, you got some false prophets there too.

And Jeremiah, by the Holy Spirit, inspired by God, writes to them and says, Hey, those prophets that are there with you in Babylon, I know what they're telling you. And they're doing this in My name. They're lying to you. They're prophesying falsely to you.

What are they saying to you?

Oh, hey, you guys, come on, we're only going to be here for a little while.

Yeah, but, dude.

They call them dude?

Jeremiah said we're going to be here for 70 years. So one of you is wrong. I wonder who is wrong and who's right.

(Dun dun dun dun – Jeopardy Show music)

You prophesy falsely in My name. You're telling the people that you're only going to be there for two years. That's false. It's going to be 70 years. Don't listen to them.

Well, we have a problem. Because I would much rather listen to the guy that's telling me, Hey, it's okay, you're only going to be here for two years.

I don't want to listen to the guy that is telling me, you're going to be here for 70 years. Well, let's see. I'm 40 now. That means I'll be a 110? I ain't ever going back to Jerusalem. If I do, it's going to be... Well, never mind.

So I'm obviously going to warm up to the guy that's falsely telling me what I want to hear, what my ears are itching to hear. We're going to talk about this on Sunday and the Prophecy Update.

I would much rather listen to the guy that's going to tell me what I want to hear. What do I want to hear? I'm only going to be here for two years. I want to listen to that guy.

The only problem is, is that he's falsely telling you this. He's lying to you, and you want to believe it. You want him to be right. And you want Jeremiah to be wrong.

Because these two prophecies, these two prophets, are directly in opposition, one to the other. They contradict each other. But here's the problem: God's Word through Jeremiah is the final word.

So if something goes against or contradicts or is incompatible with the Word of God, guess which one's wrong?

If it's not - if it goes against the Word of God - let me – nah.

Should I? Okay. Why not? Why not?

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Okay, I'm talking about, and I'll never use illustrations or examples from here. I always use examples from when I was in the pastorate on the mainland. So relax, okay?

You've got a couple. They're living together, and they come to you, and they tell you, yeah, we're, you know, living together and, you know, we're married in God's eyes and, you know, so it's okay. And we had, you know, this one pastor tells us, yeah, it's okay.

I was like, really?

Again, this is on the mainland. Don't be looking around like, I wonder who he's talking about? It wasn't here.

So I just simply, lovingly say, "They're wrong." Because God's Word is true and let God be true and every man a liar.

If you've got somebody telling you something that contradicts what God's Word says, they're wrong.

Oh, I want that to be right. I want that to be true. I'm going to warm up to that for obvious reasons because I want to hear that. It's all good. I don't want to hear that.

No, that's sin. That's sin; we still call it sin. I know the - we've come up with different words to kind of soften it up a little bit, tone it down a little bit. But no, it's called sin. It's called sexual immorality. It's called fornication. And it's sin.

And you need to make it right because that ain't right, and they're wrong, and you're wrong, and you need to get right because this is God's Word. This is God's Word, and God's Word is the final word.

So you come up to me and you start telling me all of these things. The litmus test for me is, well, let me see, is this biblical?

If it's not biblical, if it contradicts the Word of God, then get out of my face, man, and stop speaking falsely to me, and especially when you speak falsely in the name of the Lord. That's like the worst.

Verse 8. It gets better, actually worse.

"For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let..." [*Keyword "let" - they were letting them do this and get away with this*]

"Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are in your midst deceive you."

[*They were there with them in their midst, and they were letting them deceive them*]

[*And then here it is again*] **nor listen to your dreams which you..."**

Is that the same the same verse?

Wow! That was better the second time. Oh, wow, man, I - we're in *verse 11*. Sorry about that. That was better the second time. We may need to go back and redo it.

And here's *verse 11*: **"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you."**

Now stop right there. Let's work through this.

You don't know. But I know. Your thoughts are not My thoughts. My thoughts are too high for your understanding. My ways are not your ways.

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I know you don't know, but I know. You don't know what I'm doing. You don't know what I'm thinking. But I know what I'm doing, and I know what I'm thinking. I know the thoughts that I think.

And this is interesting: Toward you. Not of you.

I'm thinking of you.

Oh, thank you.

Toward you: your way.

You know what I did today in preparation for this chapter tonight is I spent some time - I would really encourage you to do this in Psalm 139.

Is it 139 or... I'm already losing confidence in my ability to remember where I'm at in the Word of God. Little shaken. I think it's 139 where David, just, I mean, it's so powerful.

He's just praising the Lord and he says of the Lord that "Your thoughts toward me are so numerous and incalculable, you cannot actually count them because they're as numerous as the sands on the seashore." That's how often your thoughts are directed towards me, my way.

What do you think? What do you think?

That's how God thinks about you, towards you. He thinks about you all the time. The sands on the seashore. Let's just take the number of the sands on Kailua Beach. That's a lot. That's how often He thinks towards us.

And what does He think when He directs His thoughts towards us?

His thoughts towards us, **"toward you, says the Lord, are thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."**

And that word "future" sort of carries with it the idea of, in the end. In other words, this will come to an end. And I'm going to bring it to an end, a future end, have hope.

Now you're in Babylon. You've been taken captive. And you hear that Jeremiah wrote a letter that this guy brought. And now you want to know what's in that letter because you're really struggling.

And you're confused because you've got guys over here telling you it's going to be two years. You got Jeremiah saying it's going to be 70 years. All you know is I'm here, and this isn't good. I don't want to be here. I want to be home. I'm homesick for Jerusalem. And now I'm taken captive here in Babylon.

And you read this part of Jeremiah's letter. How encouraged are you? How much hope do you have now?

This is what I mean by the context in which a life verse like this is written. This is why it's so powerful. Because they would have certainly thought that God was angry at them, and even worse, that God was through with them.

And is this not true of us when we're going through a difficult time? What is our default? Let's be honest. What is our default?

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Oh, man, I really blew it this time. God's not too happy with me. In fact, truth be made known, He's pretty upset with me. In fact, I'm pretty sure He's done with me.

And the Lord needs to remind you, remind me, no, I'm not through with you. I have a plan, a future plan. And My thoughts toward you are thoughts of peace. I'm not going to harm you. I have a future planned for you. And it's good. It's a future and a hope.

And My thoughts towards you are thoughts of peace, not of evil. I don't have any evil thoughts towards you. I don't have any malicious thoughts towards you.

I love you. I'm not angry with you. And I'm certainly not through with you either.

This is *Romans 8*. This is *Romans 8*, "Nothing, no one will ever separate you from the love that God has for you, neither height, nor depth, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers of darkness or anything created."

I mean pretty much covers everything. You cannot find anything that the Apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, missed when he goes through that list of anything that could possibly separate us from the love that God has for us. There's nothing you can do that makes God love you less.

But the enemy doesn't want you to know that. That's why he's all over you at times like this. And what's he saying to you?

Man, I don't know. That was pretty bad. God's pretty mad.

See, Satan is all about distancing us from the Lord. Because see, once we get saved and we come to the Lord, he has a shift his strategy.

See, he'll always do everything and stop at nothing before we get saved to keep us from getting saved. But then, once we get saved, his sole goal is to distance us, disenfranchise us from the Lord.

And this is his most powerful way of doing it. He starts bringing in the guilt and the condemnation.

Well, that's *Romans 8:1*. "There is therefore now no guilt, no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus."

There's no condemnation, there's no anger. There's no ill will. No, it's peace. It's good. It's a future. It's hope. And God's not through with you God's not mad at you. God loves you.

And that - talk about another life verse, *verse 28*. Within that context of Chapter 8, we quote it so well. **"For we know, [Not hope, wish, think] we know that God works all things together for the good for those that love Him and are called according to His purpose."**

Yeah, but this is really bad.

It doesn't matter how bad it is.

Yeah, but this is going to be that one time where *Romans 8:28* doesn't apply.

It still applies. I know it might seem like it. We're going to talk about this in a moment. It might seem like - you're looking at your circumstances, you're thinking: **"All things work together for the good?"**

I think all things except this thing because this is really bad.

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I don't know how God is going to do this. I don't know how God is going to bring good out of this.

You don't know how God's going to do it? That's okay. God knows how He's going to do it.

I know what I'm doing. I know My thoughts. I know you don't know My thoughts. And by the way, think about it. You don't want to know how God thinks because, yeah, you're not God.

Could you imagine if your thoughts were like God's thoughts? Oh, man, we're toast. How disconcerting is that?

He's God.

His ways are too high for our understanding. **"Who knows the mind of the Lord?"**

Yeah, you don't know how God's going to do it, but God knows how He's going to do it. And here's the other thing. God knows when He's going to do it.

See, I struggle more sometimes with the "when" than I do the "how."

Okay, I believe; I know God is able. There's nothing too hard for the Lord. He's the God of the impossible. I get that, and I believe that. But here's my struggle. When?

What are you waiting for, Lord? Now would be a good time. Because it's like getting worse.

And the Lord says, I know what I'm doing.

I know You know what You're doing. I believe you, Lord. But it's not You doing this; it's when are You going to do this?

Because see, you know how we are, right? We want everything now! Now! Because we're so patient. Isaiah 30:18.

I'm still shaken, I'm not very confident. And so it's probably not. But Isaiah 30:18, **"The Lord will wait so He can be gracious unto you."**

Just wait. Just wait. You'll see what God's going to do. God's going to do it. And He's going to do it in His time and in His way and for His glory.

Before we leave this life verse, *verse 11*, one more thought. We'll move on to *verse 12*; hopefully, it's *verse 12*, and we're not going to go back to *verse 11* again.

The reason that this is a life verse for many and rightfully so is because it is that much-needed reminder, and we need to be reminded.

In fact, that's what the communion celebration is all about. It's a reminder: **"As often as you do this, do this in remembrance."**

Remember.

Why?

Because we forget.

When are we more likely to forget? When we're in captivity in our Babylon? When we're struggling in our trials?

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And so here comes this letter with the Word of God, a *Jeremiah 29:11*, and it just settles us.

Oh, yeah. No, God's not mad at me.

God still loves me. God still has a plan for me. God's not through with me. There is a future end and there is hope. Thank You, Lord, for *verse 11*,

Verse 12; I'm sure of it, right here, *verse 12*.

“Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity.”

By the way, spoiler alert, Chapter 30 and 31, Lord willing, next week is all about that.

“I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.”

Again, how encouraging would this be? You're captive there in Babylon, and you're hearing this word. God's giving you His word that I'm going to bring you - I know you're in captivity, but I'm going to bring you back. This is not how it ends. I'm going to bring you back to the land from which you were carried away captive, the place that I allowed you to be carried away captive.

What's the point?

Here's the point. God's prophetic plan will always prevail even when the difficult circumstances make it seem impossible.

Oh, I think we so error greatly when we look at our God through the lens of our circumstances. And even worse than that, we interpret the circumstances, the difficulties in our lives through that same lens.

So in other words, where I'm at right now, what I'm struggling with and what I'm going through seems to override what God's promise is to me.

We oftentimes interpret, I should say, misinterpret those trials in our lives, as: We must be out of God's will. I mean, yeah, maybe God's mad at me. Okay, He's not mad at me, but I'm surely not in God's will; otherwise, I wouldn't be in the middle of this trial.

You can be right smack in the middle of the trial of your life and actually be right smack in the middle of God's will for your life.

Stop interpreting the circumstances in your life that way. Don't look at your God through your circumstances. Look at your circumstances through your God.

See, what happens is when you focus on the issues, the struggles, the trials, the difficulties, they just get bigger and bigger and bigger. And in so doing, God gets smaller and smaller and smaller.

And that's just the way the mind works. We just have this incredible ability to take something and just, I mean, make it so perilous. I mean, we're really good at it. It's the “what ifs.” You know what I'm talking about?

You take that situation, you start forwarding it, fast-forwarding it, and “what if” and “what if” and oh no!

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And God's like, what are you doing? Why are you doing that? I mean, you've made this thing just so big now, and I'm over here going, Hello! Remember Me?

And you start looking at your God, and all of a sudden, those circumstances become smaller. And your God becomes bigger.

It's Philippians 4:8 actually, "Think on these things because as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

They've actually done brain scans and shown where if you - the way you - you are what you think.

Now, please, this is not a positive confession thing. But the parts of the brain when you're not thinking on things that are pure and righteous and of a good report and things that glorify God and the Word of God, that part of the brain, it just turns gray.

And then when you're meditating on the Word of God, the brain just starts sending all the right messages. That's the brain center. That's the message center to the entire body.

And it changes everything.

And our problem is, is that when we're going through a trial is that those circumstances just overpower. They overpower everything.

I think we would do well to say to our circumstances: You sit down and shut up.

Yeah, I said shut up. Don't email me, please. I get enough emails anyway.

Just sit down and stop talking. Is that better? That's more sanctified, I guess, more pastoral.

You just sit down and stop talking. Because I stopped listening to you. I'm going to listen to the Word of the Lord.

Because **"Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God."**

But fear comes by hearing that.

No wonder I'm crippled in fear. No wonder I'm filled with anxiety. I'm listening to that? No, just stop talking; that's enough.

In fact, you know what? Leave the room actually, leave the room. And don't let the door hit you on the way out. In fact, I'm locking the door. You can't come back in. You are not allowed on the premises of my mind and my heart.

Okay. I feel better now.

Verse 15, "Because you have said, "The Lord has raised up prophets for us in Babylon"— therefore thus says the Lord concerning the king who sits on the throne of David, concerning all the people who dwell in this city, and concerning your brethren who have not gone out with you into captivity— thus says the Lord of hosts: [Verse 17] Behold, I will send on them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them like rotten figs. [Remember Chapter 24?] rotten figs that cannot be eaten, they are so bad."

Do you know what's happening here?

Well, it would seem that these false prophets that were there in their midst in Babylon were deceiving these captives into believing that those that were still in Judah were better off.

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Now, stay with me.

They're captive now in Babylon, but their uncles and aunties and brothers and --they're still in Jerusalem. And they're like, what's up with this? That's not fair.

And so Jeremiah has got to address it. And again, it's like he's saying, stop listening to them. Don't be deceived by them, because apparently, it sounds like they're telling you, yeah, you guys are the bad figs because you got taken captive. And those guys there in Judah, man, they're just - they're laughing going Na na na na nah, you got taken captive, and here we are in Judah. Actually, you don't want to still be there. You know why?

Because the Lord is going to send the sword, the famine, the pestilence. So you might want to rethink that.

You're there captive in Babylon. Remember what, Jeremiah, by the word of the Lord, prophesied and said to them, **“Don't fight this. You're going to be under the yoke of the King of Babylon.”**

You want to live? You go to Babylon and you're captive in Babylon for 70 years. You want to die? Fight it and try to stay in Jerusalem.

So here's these guys in Jerusalem, the brethren in Jerusalem thinking, hey, we're still here. You know, God's dealing with them over there. They're taken captive in Babylon. Lord, when you're done, let me know. We'll be here in Jerusalem. You know where to find us. You know our address.

Actually, no, you won't.

I wonder. They needed to hear this too, right? Because they're asking those questions. Why did we get taken captive and they didn't.

Oh, that's why. I'm good now. Never mind. Sorry I asked. I'm good here. I'll just stay here, buy a house now, actually because I'm not going to rent any more. I'm going to start planning the wedding now. We're going to have grandchildren. Yeah!

Verse 18, right? Yeah, we're good. Thank You. Thank You for being so gracious to me, by the way.

“And I will pursue them with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence; and I will deliver them to trouble among all the kingdoms of the earth—to be a curse, an astonishment, a hissing, and a reproach among all the nations where I have driven them, because [*Verse 19*] they have not heeded My words, says the Lord, which I sent to them by My servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them; neither would you heed, says the Lord.

This almost reads verbatim, like *Chapter 24*, with that parable of the rotten figs, the good figs, and the bad figs.

Verse 20, **“Therefore hear the word of the Lord, all you of the captivity, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon.**

Thus says the Lord of hosts, [*Verse 21*] the God of Israel, concerning Ahab the son of Kolaiah.”

Now, this is not King Ahab, that wicked king. This is another guy that is named after him.

That is called cruel parents. Oh, you got a boy. Let's name him Ahab. No, don't name him Ahab.

So this is another guy, same name.

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“And Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, who prophesy a lie to you in My name: Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall slay them before your eyes.”

This is one of those places in God’s Word when – they’re words on the pages of our Bible or on the screens of our device, but this actually happened.

So you got these guys, Ahab and Zedekiah. They're false prophets, and they're prophesying a lie to the people. And God's going to have them killed.

Okay, have a nice evening. In other words, those in captivity there that are listening to these guys day-in and day-out, every day, all day, every night, all night lie to them and tell them this prophecy, this word that contradicts the Word of God.

God says no, I'll take care of it. I'll take care of it.

Verse 22 And because of them a curse shall be taken up by all the captivity of Judah who are in Babylon, saying, “The Lord make you like Zedekiah and Ahab (Chuckling)

[I'm sorry I'm chuckling]

whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire”

This is the same furnace that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would go into, only they would not be roasted.

These are roasted prophets, I guess. And this king of Babylon, by the way, I'm just, you know, saying - just a thought.

I think he was a like a pyromaniac. He just had this thing for fire, I guess. I don't know.

But this became now a saying at that time.

Is that too much? Okay.

So *verse 23*, let's keep moving.

“Because they have done disgraceful things in Israel, have committed adultery with their neighbors’ wives, and have spoken lying words in My name, which I have not commanded them. Indeed I know, and am a witness, says the Lord.”

Now that's an interesting detail, again, easily missed at first read.

You may not have known about this, but I did. Oh, they were doing a pretty good job of doing this behind the scenes, but I saw everything. You may have never witnessed it, but I witnessed everything, says the Lord.

Verse 24, now, this gets very interesting. We're going to be introduced to another guy here.

You shall also speak to Shemaiah the Nehelamite, saying, *[Verse 25]* Thus speaks the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, saying: You have sent letters in your name to all the people who are at Jerusalem, to Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, and to all the priests, saying, “The Lord has made you priest instead of Jehoiada the priest, so that there should be officers in the house of the Lord over every man *[Listen very carefully]* who is demented and considers himself a prophet, *[Hmm, I wonder who he is talking about]* that you should put him in prison and in the stocks.

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Now, therefore, [Verse 27], why have you not rebuked Jeremiah of Anathoth who makes himself a prophet to you?

For he has sent to us in Babylon, saying, ‘This captivity is long; build houses and dwell in them, and plant gardens and eat their fruit.’”

Really?

Wow, who is this guy? He's not our friend. He's sure not Jeremiah's friend.

Apparently, this Shemaiah had sent out some emails to oppose, discredit, rebuke, decommission, and even imprison Jeremiah. Why?

Because he's lost his mind saying the things he's saying. Why haven't you de-prophet him, make him a non-prophet prophet or something, rebuke him? Why are you letting him do this? Clearly, he's lost his mind. Have you listened to what he's been saying? He even sent a letter to everyone here telling them we're going to be here for 70 years, to buy houses, and plant vineyards and gardens, and dwell in them. He's lost his mind. He's out of his mind. Why don't you do something about it? Why haven't you done something about it?

I'm not angry.

Isn't this interesting?

Excuse me, Shemaiah, uh, he's speaking the truth. And you think he's out of his mind because of what he's saying?

It's the Word of God. He's preaching the Word, the Word of truth in season and out of season. Oh, I know what your problem is.

See you're telling people what their ears are itching to hear: Two years, tops.

Oh, I want to hear that.

But. Excuse me, Shemaiah, I love you, man. But, you know, Jeremiah's over here telling us it's going to be 70 years.

Yeah, I know. I've already sent an email. I'm going to - I'm going to try to get him taken care of and imprisoned and... I mean, he's - that's crazy, man. No way. He's out of his mind. Clearly, he's lost his mind. He's got dementia, early onset dementia.

Verse 29, now this is – I love God's Word, man. I love God's Word. Now please picture this scene now, right?

This is a letter. And **“Now Zephaniah [We're told, verse 29] the priest read this letter in the hearing of Jeremiah the prophet.”**

Now, picture the scene. You're there, right?

And here's Zephaniah. And it's like, hey, Jeremiah, come here; you got a minute? Obviously, you were not copied in this email from Shemaiah. You want me to read it to you and tell you what it says?

Yeah, sure. Why not?

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Shemaiah, right?

Yeah.

I already know what it says, but go ahead; that's fine, read it to me.

So he reads it to him.

"Then [Verse 30] the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, [Thank you, Lord, that Your Word comes at times like that] saying: [Verse 31] Send to all those in captivity, saying, Thus says the Lord concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite:[Uh-oh] Because Shemaiah has prophesied to you, and I have not sent him, and [Here it is again] he has caused you to trust in a lie — therefore thus says the Lord: Behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite and his family: he shall not have anyone to dwell among this people, nor shall he see the good that I will do for My people, says the Lord, because he has taught rebellion against the Lord."

If this is reminiscent of the guy we were introduced to in the previous chapters, the Hananiah guy who basically did the same thing, that's because it should. He did the same thing.

Before we partake together of communion, I want to mention one thing that I think we would do well to take note of. It's kind of a takeaway here, I think.

You've got guys today. You got many Shemaiahs alive and well today. You got many Hananiahs alive and well today that are teaching and preaching and even prophesying falsely and causing people to believe and be deceived and trust in a lie because it's so much more palatable. And it's really kind of what their ears are itching to hear.

But then you've got a handful of Jeremiahs that are still preaching the truth. They're still preaching the word.

And God, in the end, will have the final word in the end.

And it does not bode well for the Shemaiahs and the Hananiahs that are doing that.

Now, if it were me, I would have liked for it to have been immediately. You know, Hananiah, it was two months. I think it should have been like 2 minutes. I think it should have (clapping sound) that's it.

Anybody else want to contradict the Word of God? Now's the time.

No, I'm good.

Shemaiah: We're not told specifically, but what we are told, and this would have been huge. You have to understand that first of all, the good, the future, the hope in the end that I have for you, the plan that I have for you, he ain't going to be there for it.

And he's not going to have any descendants, which in that culture, even to this day, is everything. He's not going to have any descendants because he did this.

And lastly, he taught rebellion. He taught them to trust in a lie directly opposed, in contradiction to the truth. All because you did not want that to be the truth. You wanted the two years from the Shemaiahs to be the truth, not the 70 years from the Jeremiahs to be the truth.

And so because you did that, I'll have the final word on that.

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To me, it's a great source of encouragement. Many pastors – we're going to again talk about this on Sunday in the Prophecy Update. The numbers are just breathtaking, if I could be so candid with you, pastors that have completely abandoned the Word of God.

They don't preach the Word. They don't teach the truth. They don't even believe that Jesus is the only way. They actually teach and believe that you can be a good person and go to heaven.

These are pastors!

We need look no further than that to why the church is in the condition that it's in today. I mean, the proof is in the pudding, as they say.

I mean, no wonder. Well, that explains it. I mean, the pastors don't believe the Word of God. Why would the people believe the Word of God?

There's a famine of the Word of God in the land. And it's the Shemaiahs and the Hananiahs that are at the helm of it.

But God: He'll have the final word. They won't get away with it. They won't get away with it.

Well, it's a horrible way to dovetail into communion, but actually it's not because thank You, Lord, for communion. Kind of just snaps me back!

You know, I'm done with Shemaiah. Are you? Let's talk about Jesus now.

Luke's Gospel Chapter 22, verse 14, "When the hour had come, He [Speaking of Jesus] sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him.

And He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 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."

That's twice now that He's expressed this fervent desire, this eagerness, knowing that the next time He partakes it will be when this that we're going to do tonight finds its ultimate fulfillment in the Kingdom of God.

And [Verse 19] 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 that are here, if you'll take the packaging, peel back the top, and just take the bread and hold on to it for a moment.

Thank You, Lord, for communion. This just sets everything right, doesn't it?

I mean, it just brings you back to the basics, the foundation of our salvation.

And I need to be reminded, oh yeah, I'm saved because sometimes, again, the world and the struggles in life are so overpowering.

It's almost like you forget, and you start living like you're not saved. And then the communion table just brings it back. It's like, oh, yeah, what was I stressing for?

I'm saved! This is as bad as it gets, remember?

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Jesus came for me, and He died for me, and His body was broken for me, and His blood was shed for me. And He's coming back for me to take me to that place that He's prepared for me.

Man, you want to talk about a future and a hope? The plan that He has: This is really good. And it changes everything.

Yeah, what's happening right now is really bad, but no matter how bad it is, it cannot change how good God is!

And the goodness of God should overpower whatever it is that we're experiencing in this life, in this world.

He's going to come and take us out, not in 70 years either. And I'm not saying two years either. I wouldn't dare do that. But it's soon and very soon.

This is a symbol of His body that was broken. So as we partake, let's do so in remembrance of Him. Would you partake with me?

Thank You, Lord. Oh, Lord. Thank You so much. Thank You for giving us this to do in remembrance of You. Oh, we need it. We need it. We need it. As often as we do it, we do so to remember what you did for us.

Lord, thank You. Thank You so much. Thank You for Your body that was broken for us.

Luke goes on in *verse 20* and writes, **“Likewise 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.”**

If you'll take the rest of the packaging and peel it back and again, just hold on to it.

I know I say this every time, and I hope you don't tire of me saying it, but it has to be said.

The symbol of the cup and its power cannot be overstated.

We sing it; we say it: ‘There's power in the blood,’ the blood of Jesus Christ.

And we hold in our hands a symbol of His blood, the blood of the New Covenant. The New Covenant. Because the shedding of blood is for the remission of sins. And His blood was shed in our stead for the remission of our sins.

Just let that sink in for a moment before we partake.

Are you heavy laden and crushed under the weight of the guilt of your sin?

And is the enemy not there always just rubbing your face in it all the time?

Well, this is a reminder, a much-needed reminder that that has been paid for. It's covered. It's been removed. I'm justified; it's just if I'd never sinned.

That sin because of the blood of Jesus has been removed as far as the East is from the West and remembered no more. How about that? That's how powerful His blood is.

So as we partake, let's do so in remembrance of His blood shed in our stead as we partake of this symbol. Would you partake with me?

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Kapono, why don't you come on up? Why don't you please stand? We'll close in prayer and close in song.

And once again, Lord, we're just so thankful to You, just cannot thank You enough. It's truly impossible this side of glory to ever express to You how grateful we are, how thankful we are, Lord.

Thank You for salvation. Thank You for the gift of eternal life. Thank You that You paid in full the price and that we're purchased and not our own but purchased by Your blood.

Lord, thank You that every sin, every sin is forgiven and paid for because of Your blood.

Lord, thank You that there's no more condemnation, no more guilt because of that.

Lord, thank You for this chapter in Your Word tonight. I think in a way, all of us are like those captives in Babylon.

Needing hope, needing encouragement, needing Your word, Your promise to us.

So Lord, thank You that You're going to take us out of this Babylon of this world.

Lord, thank You. We love You so much. In Jesus' name, Amen.