

## “RUIN, REDEMPTION, AND RESTORATION”

Studies in the Book of Jeremiah

### “It’s Time to Pay the Piper”

**Jeremiah 39:1-18**

**INTRODUCTION:** The phrase ***"it's time to pay the piper"*** originates from the legend of the Pied Piper of Hamelin. In this story, a piper was hired to remove rats but was not paid by the townspeople. In retaliation, he lured away their children with his music. The legend teaches that debts or bad deeds must eventually be settled, often at a high cost. The term implies facing the consequences of one’s actions.

This concept of facing consequences is echoed in biblical history. For example, **Jeremiah 39** details the devastating fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians. This event fulfills God’s prophecies and demonstrates judgment for Judah’s disobedience. Thus, the phrase ***"It’s Time to Pay the Piper"*** is fitting in this context. (**Jeremiah 30:11**)

From Moses to Jeremiah, there are roughly **800 to 850** years. This long span shows how God has been remarkably patient and long-suffering with the Israelites, giving them repeated opportunities to return to Him. Throughout these centuries, ***God continually sent Prophets, Judges, Righteous Kings, and Leaders to guide the Israelites back to Him***, demonstrating remarkable patience and mercy despite their repeated disobedience, having ***a “stiff neck mentality”***. He urged them to turn away from idol worship, confess their sins, and worship the true and only God— ***“I AM WHO I AM.”*** (**Exodus 20:1-3**) **This was the first commandment of the “Ten Commandments.”** (**Mark 12:28-31**)

#### I. No Place to Hide, No Place to Run (V1-7)

- A. After two and a half years of **siege**, the pay day of consequences has come. Jerusalem is invaded, and Nebuchadnezzar takes the city in Zedekiah's eleventh year. Zedekiah and his soldiers flee from the city, but there is ***no place to hide, no place to run from God’s judgment.*** (V1-5)
- B. God’s fulfillment has come ***with bloodshed and suffering. Zedekiah's sons were killed, and he was blinded and taken into captivity, just as Jeremiah prophesied. God’s word is fulfilled.*** (V6-7)

#### II. God's Wrath, God’s Fire, Fire, Fire (V8-9)

- A. ***"God's wrath is like fire"*** it is a powerful biblical metaphor symbolizing **divine judgment, purification, and destructive power against sin.** (**Nahum 1:2-6**)
- B. ***Fire consumes and destroys***, illustrating the severe consequences of defying God's holy standards, seen in Sodom and Gomorrah (**Genesis 19**) and Ezekiel's prophecies (**Ezekiel 21:31**).

### III. **God's Mercy in the Midst of His Judgement (V10)**

A. The captive was taken away, but the poor who remained were given *“the vineyards and the fields.”* This act was not merely a redistribution of land; rather, it carried deep symbolic meaning in the biblical narrative. *“Vineyards and fields” symbolize hope, restoration, and God's enduring promise.* In **Jeremiah 32:6-15**, Jeremiah purchases a field as a sign that, despite present destruction, God promises a future restoration of Israel. Likewise, in

**Amos 9:14-15**, the prophet affirms that property, life, and prosperity will return to the land despite the current devastation. This is a powerful testament to God's future blessing even in the midst of judgment.

B. *This message assures us that even in times of severe judgment, loss, or personal trials, God maintains a plan for restoration and new life.* (Jeremiah 29:11) (Joel 2:25) (Psalm 23:3) (1 Peter 5:10) (2 Corinthians 5:17)

### IV. **Being On Mission For God Puts Us Under His Umbrella of Favor (V11-18)**

A. After the fall of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, *shows favor to Jeremiah, the prophet.* Recognizing Jeremiah's integrity and his role during the siege, Nebuchadnezzar instructs his officials that *Jeremiah must not be harmed and that any requests he makes—such as choices concerning his place of residence or companions—should be honored and respected.* This act of protection and consideration highlights the unique regard Nebuchadnezzar had for Jeremiah in the midst of national turmoil, and thus revealing *“the God Factor”*. (V11-14)

B. **Ebed-Melech**, an Ethiopian who previously aided Jeremiah in escaping from the cistern and dungeon, is informed by Jeremiah that *he will be spared due to his trust in God.* The narrative highlights the consistent demonstration of mercy toward individuals who place their faith in God. (V15-18)

#### **Isaiah 43:1-3**

But now, thus says the LORD, your Creator, O Jacob,

And *He who formed you*, O Israel,

“Do not fear, for I have *redeemed you*;

I have called you by name; you are Mine!

<sup>2</sup> “When you pass *through the waters*, I will be with you;

And *through the rivers*, they will not overflow you.

When you *walk through the fire*, *you will not be scorched*,

*Nor will the flame burn you.*

<sup>3</sup> “For I am the LORD your God,

The Holy One of Israel, your Savior;  
I have given ***Egypt as your ransom,***  
***Cush and Seba in your place.***

G.T.G

**7/12/26**

Rayfield Benton Jr. Pastor