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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

Various information and topics that help the reader of the Bible understand the apostles and the Lord Jesus Christ's teachings.

Jeremiah 34.

(2010).

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Teach it, don't demand it.

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Jeremiah 34.

The following is a brief overview of the main topics.
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Nebuchadnezzar and his Army are fighting against Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 34:1 ----- ¹The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army and all the kingdoms of the earth under his dominion and all the peoples were fighting against Jerusalem and all of its cities:

In the previous chapter God's word came to Jeremiah while he was in prison, God's word is now coming to him while Babylon is fighting against Jerusalem and its cities

The statement, all the kingdoms of the earth; refers to every nation that is affiliated with Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and those under his dominion, all of these nations are attacking Jerusalem and all of its cities.

God tells Jeremiah to go and speak with Zedekiah.

Jeremiah 34:2-5 ----- ²"Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Go and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: Behold, I am giving this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire. ³You shall not escape from his hand but shall surely be captured and delivered into his hand. You shall see the king of Babylon eye to eye and speak with him face to face. And you shall go to Babylon.' ⁴Yet hear the word of the LORD, O Zedekiah king of Judah! Thus says the LORD concerning you: 'You shall not die by the sword. ⁵You shall die in peace. And as spices were burned for your fathers, the former kings who were before you, so people shall burn spices for you and lament for you, saying, "Alas, lord!" ' For I have spoken the word, declares the LORD."

Jeremiah tells Zedekiah king of Judah: -

- God is giving Jerusalem into the hand of the king of Babylon.
- Jerusalem will be burned.
- Zedekiah will not escape, but will be taken into Babylon.
- the king of Babylon will personally speak with Zedekiah.
- Zedekiah will not die by the sword, but in peace.
- People will lament for him at his burial.

Jeremiah 34:6-7 ----- ⁶Then Jeremiah the prophet spoke all these words to Zedekiah king of Judah, in Jerusalem, ⁷when the army of the king of Babylon was fighting against Jerusalem and against all the cities of Judah that were left, Lachish and Azekah, for these were the only fortified cities of Judah that remained.

Lachish; was a fortified city of Judah the Prophet Micah condemned Lachish's chariots as "the beginning of Zion's sin," perhaps because of the city's use as a staging point for the extravagant importation of Egyptian horses. Sennacherib successfully besieged Lachish and from here the Rabshakeh's troops marched against Jerusalem.

Azekah; was a fortified city of Judah 15 miles from Hebron.

Nebuchadnezzar conquered it, but it was preoccupied by Jews after Israel's 70 years in captivity.

Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon Victories; the armies of Nebuchadnezzar had conquered all the cities of Judah only Lachish Azekah and Jerusalem remained.

Slaves Set Free, but Taken Captive Again.

Jeremiah 34:8-11 ----- ⁸The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people in Jerusalem to make a proclamation of liberty to them, ⁹that everyone should set free his Hebrew slaves, male and female, so that no one should enslave a Jew, his brother. ¹⁰And they obeyed, all the officials and all the people who had entered into the covenant that everyone would set free his slave, male or female, so that they would not be enslaved again. They obeyed and set them free. ¹¹But afterward they turned around and took back the male and female slaves they had set free, and brought them into subjection as slaves.

Zedekiah doing a good thing told the people of Judah, no one should enslave a Jew, his brother and told them to set all their Hebrew slaves free, the people did what the king said, but later took them back and made them slaves again.

God Rebukes Judah for Making their Free Slaves Captive Again.

Jeremiah 34:12-16 --- ¹²The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ¹³"Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: I myself made a covenant with your fathers when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, saying, ¹⁴'At the end of seven years each of you must set free the fellow Hebrew who has been sold to you and has served you six years; you must set him free from your service.' But your fathers did not listen to me or incline their ears to me. ¹⁵You recently repented and did what was right in my eyes by proclaiming liberty, each to his neighbor, and you made a covenant before me in the house that is called by my name, ¹⁶but then you turned around and profaned my name when each of you took back his male and female slaves, whom you had set free according to their desire, and you brought them into subjection to be your slaves.

The LORD was pleased with Zedekiah and the people when they set their slave free, but it was short lived, as they stirred the anger of the LORD by taking them back and once again making them slaves.

As the ardent and observant reader progresses through the Bible they come to realise one of the great things that the LORD hates is: -

People oppressing and using other people, (especially the poor or those less fortunate) as merchandise to increase their own wealth and power. People with power or authority who pervert justice and oppress and use others for their own selfish and excessive gain are stirring up the wrath of God toward them.

God Condemns Judah to Destruction.

Jeremiah 34:17 ----- ¹⁷"Therefore, thus says the LORD: You have not obeyed me by proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother and to his neighbor; behold, I proclaim to you liberty to the sword, to pestilence, and to famine, declares the LORD. I will make you a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth.

In the New Testament Jesus, (the reflection of God's heart to us all) said the Ten Commandments regarding man can be summed up in the words, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." This means do not deliberately do harm to other humans. No sane person deliberately does things to inflict pain on themselves, loving others as you love yourself is not about feeling some warm and fuzzy emotion towards others, it is about not hurting others as you would not hurt yourself. The thing God hates the most is when we do harm to another person, physically, financially, sexually, emotionally or spiritually and the thing God loves the most is when we do good to others.

It is interesting to notice; that the major crime that God points out in Noah's time and one of the main reasons for the flood was because of all the violence in the land.

The only two Commandments God gave us; are love God and love others as you love yourself, doing-good and doing wrong is about our attitude toward God and how we treat other humans. Love embraces patience, kindness, it does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. At the moment faith, hope, and love remain, but the greatest of these three is love. (1 Cor. 13:4-7, 13). Against these there is no law or judgment because if we live by them we can only bring life and good to other humans.

The Apostle Paul tells us: -

Galatians 5:22-23 --- ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Those who were taking their brothers and sisters back and making them slaves were violating the Ten commandments regarding mankind, they were not loving their neighbours, but oppressing them for their own advantage and gain.

Note; this does not mean having servants today is a sin before God, many countries employ servants, in fact everyone who is paid wages is a servant to their boss. It is when that boss does not pay his servant or employee a fair wage for the work performed that the relationship becomes an offense to God. The Jews with power and authority were using the poor and less fortunate for cheap labour, and making extremely excessive profits by doing it while the slaves were struggling just to provide food for their families, this is what offends God.

The Calf that they Cut in two and Passed between its Parts.

Jeremiah 34:18-19 ---- ¹⁸And the men who transgressed my covenant and did not keep the terms of the covenant that they made before me, I will make them like the calf that they cut in two and passed between its parts— ¹⁹the officials of Judah, the officials of Jerusalem, the eunuchs, the priests, and all the people of the land who passed between the parts of the calf.

The calf that they cut in two and passed between its parts; may refer to Abram, when he asked the LORD, how will he know he is going to possess the Promised Land? And the LORD told him to take a heifer and divide it in two. Abram did this and then fell asleep, during his sleep he had a vision of a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp passing between those the pieces on this same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land (Genesis 15:8-18).

The divided heifer, the smoking furnace, and a burning lamp; symbolised the Hebrews' bondage in Egypt for 400 years, their birth as a nation and God leading them through every obstacle until they possess the Land God has covenanted to give Abram's offspring.

Thus the calf that they cut in two and passed between maybe a reference to Abram and the dividing of the calf as commanded by the LORD which was a symbolic symbol of Egypt (the calf) and Israel's deliverance (the calf cut in two) confirming to Abram that his offspring would inherit the Promised Land.

A smoking furnace and a burning lamp; is a symbol of great suffering under the hand of God. Out of this bondage God gave birth to a nation who He calls his first born and treasured possession.

Israel is a unique People to the LORD.

They are children of Abraham the father of faith, because they are his offspring. They were entrusted with the oracles of God and to them belongs the adoption, the glory and the covenants. They were given the law, the worship and the promises, to them belong the patriarchs and from their race, came the Christ who is Lord over all that God created.

(Rom 3:2) (Rom 9:4-5, 7).

The following verses show that Israel is a Unique Nation to God

The following verse literally applies to Israel, but by extension they apply to everyone who loves the LORD.

Israel is God's Treasured Possession.

Exodus 19:5 ----- ⁵Now therefore, if you (Israel) will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine;

Deut. 7:6 ----- ⁶"For you (Israel) are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

Deut. 14:2 ----- ²For you (Israel) are a people holy to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

Deut. 26:18 ----- ¹⁸And the LORD has declared today that you (Israel) are a people for his treasured possession, as he has promised you, and that you are to keep all his commandments.

Israel is the Apple of the LORD'S Eye.

Deut. 32:8-12 ----- ⁸When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God. ⁹But the LORD'S portion is his people, Jacob (Israel) his allotted heritage. ¹⁰"He found him Jacob (Israel) in a desert land, and in the howling waste of the wilderness; he encircled him, he cared for him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. ¹¹The LORD like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them (Israel) bearing them on its pinions, ¹²the LORD alone guided him (Israel), no foreign god was with him (Jacob) (Israel).

Israel is, Born by God.

Isaiah 46:3-4 ----- ³"Listen to me (Isaiah speaking as the voice of God), O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been borne by me (God) from before your birth, carried from the womb; ⁴even to your old age I (God) am he, and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I (God) will carry and will save.

Israel is God's Son.

Hosea 11:1 ----- ¹When Israel was a child, I (God) loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.

Summary; Israel a Unique Nation.

God deals with Israel differently to any other nation, He calls Israel His Son and the apple of His eye and says they are born by Him and chosen to be a people for his treasured possession. God declared His word, statutes and His rules to Israel; He has not done this with any other nation. They were entrusted with the oracles of God and to them belongs the adoption, the glory, the covenants and the patriarchs, they were given the law, the worship and the promises and from their race, came the Christ who is Lord over all.

Note; under the New Covenant all who belong to Christ are born of God and have become part of His family, His children and His treasured possession. Through Christ's death and resurrection God's Kingdom is now made up of Jews and Gentiles (everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew). All the promises made to Israel now apply to every child of God regardless of race.

God Condemns Judah to Destruction continued: -

Jeremiah 34:20-22 --- ²⁰And I will give them into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their lives. Their dead bodies shall be food for the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth.

²¹And Zedekiah king of Judah and his officials I will give into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their lives, into the hand of the army of the king of Babylon which has withdrawn from you. ²²Behold, I will command, declares the LORD, and will bring them back to this city. And they will fight against it and take it and burn it with fire. I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without inhabitant."

The armies of Babylon had withdrawn from attacking Jerusalem, probably because the people obeyed Zedekiah and did the right thing by letting their slaves go, but to their own destruction they took them back, oppressed them for their own gain. It is almost as though God is saying, "just as you brought your slave back I will bring Babylon back."

The LORD tells Judah He will: -

- Bring Nebuchadnezzar and his armies back to Jerusalem and they will burn it.
- Give Zedekiah, his officials and the people into the hand of their enemies.
- Make the cities of Judah a desolation without inhabitant."
- Give the birds and wild animals their dead bodies for food.

End.