### Jeremiah

## Chapter 34

1These words came to JeremiAh from Jehovah concerning NebuChadNezzar the king of Babylon, as well as about the entire camp of his army and all the kingdoms of the earth that are under the domination of his hand… All those people who are waging war against JeruSalem and the cities of Judah. 2For the Lord God of IsraEl told me to go to ZedekiAh the king of Judah and tell him that this is what Jehovah had decreed:  
  
 [‘Jehovah said:]  
  
 ‘When it comes to handing things over;  
 I’ll hand this city to Babylon’s king…  
 He’ll capture it and burn it with fire.  
  
 3‘Then no way will you be saved from his hands;  
 For he’ll capture you and snatch you away…  
 He’ll look at you eye to eye  
 And speak to you mouth to mouth…  
 And to Babylon, he will then take you.’  
  
 4‘Listen to what Jehovah’s decreed,  
 O ZedekiAh, king of Judah:  
  
 ‘You will not die by the broadsword;  
 Rather, in peace, you will die.  
 5And when you die, they’ll burn incense  
 As they did for your fathers before you.  
 And as they burn it, they’ll cry out ‘O Lord,’  
 While they are mourning for you!’  
  
 ‘Yes, this is what Jehovah has decreed.’  
  
6So I (JeremiAh) then went and said all these things to King ZedekiAh there in JeruSalem. 7And thereafter, the armies of the king of Babylon attacked JeruSalem and all the remaining cities of Judah (because the fortified cities of LachIsh and AzekAh in Judea still hadn’t [been conquered]).  
  
8And once again, the Word of Jehovah came to JeremiAh after King ZedekiAh [had issued a decree] to the people in JeruSalem concerning [God’s] Sacred Agreement, in which he called for everyone to set 9all their Hebrew male and female servants free (as well as all of the rest of their slaves), so that there would be no more slaves in Judah. 10And all the great men and all the rest of the people actually agreed to release their male and female slaves, so they wouldn’t have to serve them anymore… Yes, they actually paid attention and set them all free! 11But right after they did that, they went and took back their male and female slaves (whom they’d just set free) and once again put them back to work as their slaves!  
  
12So the Lord said to JeremiAh:  
  
 [‘Jehovah says:]  
  
 ‘In the day that I saved your fathers from Egypt  
 And from the houses in which they were slaves,  
 13I made a Sacred Agreement with them,  
 14Where I said that after every 6th year,  
 They must release all their brothers  
 (Those who’d sold themselves as their slaves)…  
 That they may only toil for 6 years,  
 And [on the 7th], they must be set free!  
  
 ‘But, they haven’t listened to Me,  
 Or turned their ears so they’d hear what I say!  
  
 15‘Yet today, they decided to do the right thing  
 When you told them to release their neighbors;  
 And before Me, they said they would do this,  
 There in the Temple that’s called by My Name.  
  
 16‘Then they turned and broke their promise to Me  
 By reclaiming [all of] their slaves…  
 Those whose lives had just been set free…  
 They turned back and made them slaves once again!  
  
 17‘It’s because of this,’ says Jehovah…  
 ‘Because they refused to listen to Me  
 And release their brothers and neighbors;  
 {Look!} I’m calling the release on their behalf  
 By the sword, by famine, and plague!  
 And then, I will scatter these people  
 Throughout the kingdoms of the whole earth.  
  
 18‘As to those who voided My Sacred Agreement  
 By not keeping the promise they made before Me  
 With a calf that they cut in two pieces;  
 19I will come through the midst of those halves…  
 To the rulers of Judah and JeruSalem  
 (To the mighty, as well as the priests,  
 And to all the people who live in the land);  
 20Then, to their enemies, I’ll hand them…  
 I’ll hand them to those who are seeking their lives!  
  
 ‘Then their rotting flesh will serve as a meal  
 For all the birds in the skies,  
 And for all the wild beasts on the ground.  
  
 21‘Then I’ll hand over Judah’s King ZedekiAh,  
 As well as all of his princes  
 To their enemies who are seeking their lives…  
 To the armies of Babylon’s king…  
 To those before whom they are fleeing!  
  
 22‘Look! I’m the One who issued the order, said Jehovah,  
 To bring them into this city,  
 Where they’ll fight against it and take it,  
 And then they will burn it with fire…  
 I’ll make all the cities of Judah  
 Places where no one will walk.’