



## God is Faithful

Jeremiah 28-31

**RECAP**

**This week's focus: God has a plan for salvation, and He will be faithful to fulfill it.**

God promised to be faithful to His people even when they were unfaithful to Him. He sent the prophets to Israel and Judah to declare one thing: "Repent and return to the Lord." But God's people would not return to Him. They ignored the prophet's warnings. So, God did what He said He would do—He sent foreign armies to raid Israel and Judah. Israel did not survive and only Judah was left.

Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar laid three sieges against Judah and Jerusalem. The first came against King Jehoiakim and the second against King Jehoiachin. Nearly 10,000 Judeans were captured and taken away to Babylon. God commissioned Jeremiah to alert the adulterous people that they must own up to their reckless sin. And God also sent word that the worst was yet to come.

Zedekiah was Judah's last and most pitiful king. His government was controlled by Babylon, and he and the people rejected God, broke His law, and defiled His temple. The time for judgment had come, so God arranged the final battle: King Nebuchadnezzar vs. King Zedekiah. The outcome was certain. An 18-month blockade left Jerusalem's inhabitants weakened by famine.

King Zedekiah made a last-ditch plea for help from the prophet Jeremiah, although no one much cared for Jeremiah's response. He reported that Jerusalem would not be saved, and he urged surrender as their only hope of survival. Most regarded his claims as treasonous.

In 586 BC, the Babylonian army broke through the walls of Jerusalem. They demolished the city, looted the temple, and led the people away to Babylon. Jeremiah was among the few who were left behind. He grieved the loss of his beloved city and mourned the sin of God's people. He knew that Judah could have been saved, but even in his sorrow, this weeping prophet stood firm on the sure promises of God. He trusted that He would have compassion on the remnant who remained in Jerusalem. It had been eight centuries since God delivered His people from slavery in Egypt. Now they were exiles in Babylon. Hope vanished. But God told Jeremiah that not all was lost. He reassured Jeremiah and His people that He had a plan. His plan would instill in them identity, worth and assurance that He will be faithful to bring them back.

God assured them He would send a leader, Christ, to guide them back to their former glory. Through this new leader, he will establish a New Covenant that will look much different than the covenants that have come before. First revealed in chapter 31, the New Covenant sets up an entirely new way for mankind to relate to God. We no longer rely on one prophet to speak on God's behalf; God now promises that everyone can have a personal relationship with Him through Christ Jesus!



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**SHARE (5-10 min)**

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when you had to face the consequences of a bad decision. How did you feel experiencing those consequences?

**STUDY (about 30 min) Read Jeremiah 28-31**

1. Reflect on last week's reading and the sermon. Is there any truth that stands out as being particularly helpful, insightful, or difficult to grasp?
2. What does the Lord tell the Israelites to do while in Babylon in verses 29:4-7? Why? List the promises God makes to the Israelites in verses 29:10-14.
3. In Jeremiah 31:31-34, God establishes a new covenant. How will the New Covenant be different from the old covenant that was made after God rescued Israel from Egypt?
4. Throughout Israel's history, they continued to rebel and reject God, but God declares through the prophet Jeremiah that "You will be my people, and I will be your God." What does this reveal about the character of God?
5. In Jeremiah 31:33, the Lord says that he will "put [his] law within them, and [he] will write it on their hearts." What will it mean for man's relationship with God once the law is written in each person's heart?
6. How does Jeremiah 29:4-9 relate to your circumstances right now? What does it mean to "build houses" and "seek the prosperity of the city" where you live?
7. God promises His people that in the middle of difficult situations He has a plan to prosper them and give them a hope (Jer. 29:11). How can this promise be applied to your life? How can it be mis-applied to your life?
8. We, like the Israelites, continue to fail to abide by God's perfect will, but even through their failings, He "loved [them] with an everlasting love" and "continued [his] faithfulness to [them]." God's promise to remain faithful to Israel is the same as His promise to us through the New Covenant. Describe where in your life God's faithfulness is most evident?

**SUPPORT (15 min)**

Pray for each other, knowing that the sufferings of this world are opportunities for Satan to tempt us to not trust God. Pray for perspective and endurance in the middle of suffering. Also, pray that each other would be strengthened according to God's Word and love.