

Honoring Our Family

May 1, 2016 ~ Jeremiah 35

v1 ~ “The word which came to Jeremiah .. in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah”

- ❖ When you hear the name Jeremiah, you think “the weeping prophet”
 - ✧ But just “What was Jeremiah weeping about?”
 - ◇ Weeping over “fall of Jerusalem” to the Babylonians (*Nebuchadnezzar*)
 - ✧ The time is around 600BC
 - ◇ The northern kingdom (*Israel*) had fallen to Assyrians over 100 years earlier
 - ◇ The Assyrian kingdom (*Nineveh*) had just been defeated by the Babylonians
- ❖ Jehoiakim reigned for just over 10 years / proud and arrogant
 - ✧ In **Jeremiah 36** he burns Jeremiah’s scroll piece by piece as it’s read to him
 - ✧ A few years after this he’s taken prisoner by Nebuchadnezzar and executed

v2 ~ “Go to the house of the Rechabites”

- ❖ “house of the Rechabites” is figurative / not a house but a household (see v3)
- ❖ God’s instructions to Jeremiah are brief
 - ✧ Bring them into the temple and “give them wine to drink”

v3-5 ~ “Then I took Jaazaniah .. and I said to them, ‘Drink wine.’”

- ❖ Several descendants of Rechab are mentioned by name
 - ✧ Jaazaniah (brothers & sons) / Jeremiah / Habazziniah / .. / Rechab
- ❖ Several names of “men of God” are mentioned by name
 - ✧ sons / Hanan / Igdaliah / princes / Maaseiah / Shallum
- ❖ There is a whole lotta “name dropping” going on here
 - ✧ Name dropping speaks of power, importance, influence
 - ✧ Jeremiah is setting the atmosphere for this meeting about to take place

v6-7 ~ “But they said, ‘We will drink no wine .. you are sojourners’”

- ❖ Note that not only one man spoke for the household ~ “they said”
 - ✧ These men were not being dominated by a strong patriarch
- ❖ And a new name is mentioned, that of Jonadab, another distant relative
 - ✧ Don’t 1) drink wine, 2) build house, 3) sow seed, 4) plant vineyard, 5) own any
 - ✧ Instead 1) dwell in tents
- ❖ Note the duration of Jonadab’s directive, “forever”

Xition: And who has embraced this lifestyle?

v8 ~ “Thus we have obeyed .. our daughters”

- ❖ For generations they’ve all obeyed this ancestor’s commands
- ❖ And this includes everyone, “we, our wives, our sons, our daughters”

v11 ~ “But it came to pass .. so we dwell at Jerusalem.”

- ❖ But they are temporarily dwelling in Jerusalem, due to roving armies
 - ✧ Babylonians / Chaldeans / Syrians
- ❖ We’ll dig deeper into the roots of the Rechabites, but first . . .
 - ✧ We’ll cover the main message God and Jeremiah bring in this chapter
 - ✧ The main point of the sermon is different and we’ll return to it

The Main Message of Jeremiah 35

- ❖ **Read vss 12-16**
- ❖ God contrasts the faithfulness of the Rechabites w/the unfaithfulness of Judah
 - ✧ Jonadab was a mere man whose words lacked divine authority
 - ✧ Yet the Rechabites remain obedient & faithful to his command
 - ✧ Whereas God spoke the world into existence
 - ◇ God alone can be trusted, He alone is righteous
 - ◇ His commands are not burdensome, or as limiting, as Jonadab’s . . .
 - ✧ Yet God’s people (*Judah*) remain disobedient & faithless towards Him
- ❖ **Read v17** ~ God has Jeremiah prophesy the “doom” of Jerusalem (**v17**)
 - ✧ Jerusalem falls to the Babylonians (*Nebuchadnezzar*) within 15 years

What Jeremiah 35 is Not About

- ❖ Some abuse this text and say it teaches abstinence from alcohol
 - ✧ But if it teaches that, then it teaches too much . . .
 - ✧ Because it would teach no house building, no farming, no owning of land

“Who are the Rechabites?” / “Who is Jonadab?”

- ❖ It is thought that Rechab was a descendant of Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law
 - ✧ So they are Kenites (non-Semitic) and thus converts to Judaism
- ❖ **v6** ~ “We will drink no wine, for Jonadab .. commanded us..”
- ❖ Story of Jonadab is in **2 Kings 10** / But let’s start in **2 Kings 9**
- ❖ Before we introduce Jonadab we have to talk about Jehu

Xition: The story of Jehu is fascinating . . .

Anointing of Jehu

- ❖ Elijah had executed Baal priests on Mt. Carmel (**1 Kings 18**)
 - ✧ Elijah had then fled Jezebel's wrath (**1 Kings 19.3**)
 - ✧ God said to anoint Hazael over Syria, Jehu over Israel, and Elisha (**vss 15-17**)
- ❖ Jehu is finally anointed by a prophet sent by Elisha in **2 Kings 9**
 - ✧ Joram is king in Samaria (*Jehu is his commander*)
 - ✧ They've been defending Ramoth Gilead (*eastern desert*) from Syrians
 - ✧ Joram was wounded and has gone to Jezreel (*due west*) to heal up
- ❖ Jehu's army attacks Jezreel
 - ✧ Jehu kills Joram (**v24 ~ king of Israel**) and Ahaziah (**v27 ~ king of Judah**)
 - ✧ Then Jehu enters Jezreel and eunuchs push Jezebel from window (**v33**)
- ❖ Jehu sent letters to Samaria ~ "**Appoint a king and prepare to fight!**" (**2 Kings 10**)
 - ✧ But Ahab's faithful followers are afraid (**v4**)
 - ✧ They execute Ahab's 70 sons and bring their heads in baskets to Jezreel
- ❖ Jehu then departs for Samaria (**v12**)
 - ✧ En route he runs into 42 of Ahaziah's brothers (princes of Judah)
 - ✧ His men kill them all and he continues on
 - ✧ What follows is the deception in which all Baal worshippers are killed
- ❖ Now here is where we introduce Jonadab

Participation of Jonadab

- ❖ Jonadab was a contemporary of Jehu
 - ✧ He enters the story as Jehu is headed to Samaria to kill Ahab supporters
 - ✧ **Read 2 Kings 10.15-17** ~ "**Now when he departed .. spoke to Elijah**"
- ❖ Jonadab then assists Jehu in the deception
 - ✧ **Read v23** ~ "**Then Jehu and Jonadab .. worshippers of assists in the Baal**"
- ❖ Jonadab sought out Jehu in the middle of a coup
 - ✧ Perhaps he knew Jehu / Jehu's greeting hints at that
 - ✧ Either way / He was a courageous man / He was not a spectator in life

Finally We're Getting to the Point

- ❖ We already gave the main message of **Jeremiah 35**
 - ✧ God used a lesser to greater comparison of Jonadab and Himself
 - ✧ He directed Jeremiah to prophecy the "**doom**" of Jerusalem

Xition: But the primary message for us from this text is different . . .

240 Years of Faithfulness

- ❖ “By the time of Jeremiah 35 how long had the Rechabites lived this lifestyle?”
 - ✧ The story of Jehu and Jonadab occurred around 840BC
 - ✧ Jeremiah is rebuking Jehoiakim around 600BC
- ❖ It had been about 240 years when God used them as an illustration
 - ✧ Comparing that to our time that would be 1776 to 2016

God’s Blessing on Obedience

- ❖ **Read vs 18-19** ~ “Jonadab .. shall not lack a man to stand before Me forever.”
- ❖ The Rechabites are honored by God in perpetuity for their faithfulness
 - ✧ This is not just an earthly honor / I believe it refers to salvation . . .
- ❖ Imagine this / The Rechabites had faithfully followed Jonadab’s commands
 - ✧ For roughly 240 years from 840 to 600 BC
- ❖ And the Rechabite family has continued through male heirs to this day
 - ✧ That’s 2,856 years / Over 70 generations at 40 years per generation
 - ✧ They will continue on throughout earth’s history forever
- ❖ You probably personally know of several family lines that have or will die out
 - ✧ This Rechabite family has persisted for over 2,800 years
 - ✧ This Rechabite family will persist throughout all time
 - ✧ They’ll always have a male heir / A believing male heir to the end of time

Family is Important to God

- ❖ “Is God honoring them because of the specific rules they followed?”
 - ✧ Perhaps these believing Rechabites still adhere to these rules – but I doubt it
 - ✧ No – He’s honoring them because of their “filial piety”
- ❖ **Read Ephesians 6.1-4** says, “Children, obey your parents .. of the Lord.”

- God blessed the Rechabites far beyond a promise of long life on the earth
- God multiplied that promise, extending it through all earthly time into eternity future
- God multiplied that promise “to infinity and beyond” (*for Levi’s benefit* 😊)
- God rewards the faithful diligence of parents / the faithful obedience of children

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,

And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

To God our Savior, who alone is wise,

Be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.

Amen *pause* Go in peace . . .