

## ***Bible Study Notes - Chapter 33***

### ***Promise of Restoration – Verses 1-14***

<sup>1</sup>While Jeremiah was still confined in the courtyard of the guard, the word of the LORD came to him a second time: <sup>2</sup>“This is what the LORD says, he who made the earth, the LORD who formed it and established it—the LORD is his name: <sup>3</sup>‘Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.’ <sup>4</sup>For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says about the houses in this city and the royal palaces of Judah that have been torn down to be used against the siege ramps and the sword <sup>5</sup>in the fight with the Babylonians: ‘They will be filled with the dead bodies of the people I will slay in my anger and wrath. I will hide my face from this city because of all its wickedness. <sup>6</sup>“Nevertheless, I will bring health and healing to it; I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security. <sup>7</sup>I will bring Judah and Israel back from captivity<sup>b1</sup> and will rebuild them as they were before. <sup>8</sup>I will cleanse them from all the sin they have committed against me and will forgive all their sins of rebellion against me. <sup>9</sup>Then this city will bring me renown, joy, praise and honor before all nations on earth that hear of all the good things I do for it; and they will be in awe and will tremble at the abundant prosperity and peace I provide for it.’ <sup>10</sup>“This is what the LORD says: ‘You say about this place, “It is a desolate waste, without people or animals.” Yet in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are deserted, inhabited by neither people nor animals, there will be heard once more <sup>11</sup>the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, and the voices of those who bring thank offerings to the house of the LORD, saying, “Give thanks to the LORD Almighty, for the LORD is good; his love endures forever.” For I will restore the fortunes of the land as they were before,’ says the LORD. <sup>12</sup>“This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘In this place, desolate and without people or animals—in all its towns there will again be pastures for shepherds to rest their flocks. <sup>13</sup>In the towns of the hill country, of the western foothills and of the Negev, in the territory of Benjamin, in the villages around Jerusalem and in the towns of Judah, flocks will again pass under the hand of the one who counts them,’ says the LORD. <sup>14</sup>“‘The days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will fulfill the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah.

**33:1-26** God would restore Jerusalem, not because the people cried, but because it was part of his ultimate plan. The Babylonian disaster did not change God's purposes for his people. Although Jerusalem would be destroyed, it would be restored (after the 70-year captivity and in the end times when the Messiah will rule). God's justice is always tempered by his mercy.

**33:3** God assured Jeremiah that he had only to call to God and God would answer (see also Psalm 145:18; Isaiah 58:9; Matthew 7:7). God is ready to answer our prayers, but we must ask for his assistance. Surely God could take care of our needs without our asking. But when we ask, we are acknowledging that he alone is God and that we cannot accomplish in our own strength all that is his domain to do. When we ask, we must humble ourselves, lay aside our willfulness and worry, and determine to obey him.

### ***Promise of Restoration – Verses 15-33***

<sup>15</sup> *"In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line; he will do what is just and right in the land. <sup>16</sup> In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which it<sup>[c]</sup> will be called: The LORD Our Righteous Savior.' <sup>17</sup> For this is what the LORD says: 'David will never fail to have a man to sit on the throne of Israel, <sup>18</sup> nor will the Levitical priests ever fail to have a man to stand before me continually to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings and to present sacrifices.'"* <sup>19</sup> *The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: <sup>20</sup> "This is what the LORD says: 'If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night no longer come at their appointed time, <sup>21</sup> then my covenant with David my servant—and my covenant with the Levites who are priests ministering before me—can be broken and David will no longer have a descendant to reign on his throne. <sup>22</sup> I will make the descendants of David my servant and the Levites who minister before me as countless as the stars in the sky and as measureless as the sand on the seashore.'"* <sup>23</sup> *The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: <sup>24</sup> "Have you not noticed that these people are saying, 'The LORD has rejected the two kingdoms she chose'? So they despise my people and no longer regard them as a nation. <sup>25</sup> This is what the LORD says: 'If I have not made my covenant with day and night and established the laws of heaven and earth, <sup>26</sup> then I will reject the descendants of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his sons to rule over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes and have compassion on them.'"*

**33:15-16** These verses refer to both the first and second comings of Christ. At his first coming he would set up his reign in the hearts of believers; at his second coming he will execute justice and righteousness throughout the whole earth. Christ is the "righteous Branch" sprouting from David, the man after God's own heart.

**33:18** As Christ fulfills the role of King, he also fulfills the role of Priest, maintaining constant fellowship with God and mediating for the people. This verse does not mean that actual priests will perform sacrifices, for sacrifices will no longer be necessary (Hebrews 10:4, 11-12). Now that Christ is our High Priest, all believers are priests of God, and we can come before him personally.

## ***Bible Study Notes - Chapter 34***

### ***Warning to Zedekiah – Verses 1-7***

<sup>1</sup> *While Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army and all the kingdoms and peoples in the empire he ruled were fighting against Jerusalem and all its surrounding towns, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD: <sup>2</sup> "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Go to Zedekiah king of Judah and tell him, 'This is what the LORD says: I am about to give this city into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will burn it down. <sup>3</sup> You will not escape from his grasp but will surely be captured and given into his hands. You will see the king of Babylon with your own eyes, and he will speak with you face to face. And you will go to Babylon. <sup>4</sup> "Yet hear the LORD's promise to you, Zedekiah king of Judah. This is what the LORD says concerning you: You will not die by the sword; <sup>5</sup> you will die peacefully. As people made a funeral fire in honor of your predecessors, the kings who ruled before you, so they will make a fire in your honor and lament, "Alas, master!" I myself make this promise, declares the LORD.'"* <sup>6</sup> *Then Jeremiah the prophet told all this to Zedekiah king of Judah, in*

*Jerusalem, <sup>7</sup> while the army of the king of Babylon was fighting against Jerusalem and the other cities of Judah that were still holding out—Lachish and Azekah. These were the only fortified cities left in Judah.*

**34:1-22** Nebuchadnezzar's attack on Jerusalem was the fulfillment of many of Jeremiah's predictions. In the book of Jeremiah, many prophecies were both given and quickly fulfilled.

### *Freedom for Slaves— Verses 8-22*

*<sup>8</sup> The word came to Jeremiah from the LORD after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people in Jerusalem to proclaim freedom for the slaves. <sup>9</sup> Everyone was to free their Hebrew slaves, both male and female; no one was to hold a fellow Hebrew in bondage. <sup>10</sup> So all the officials and people who entered into this covenant agreed that they would free their male and female slaves and no longer hold them in bondage. They agreed, and set them free. <sup>11</sup> But afterward they changed their minds and took back the slaves they had freed and enslaved them again. <sup>12</sup> Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: <sup>13</sup> “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I made a covenant with your ancestors when I brought them out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. I said, <sup>14</sup> Every seventh year each of you must free any fellow Hebrews who have sold themselves to you. After they have served you six years, you must let them go free.’<sup>a</sup> Your ancestors, however, did not listen to me or pay attention to me. <sup>15</sup> Recently you repented and did what is right in my sight: Each of you proclaimed freedom to your own people. You even made a covenant before me in the house that bears my Name. <sup>16</sup> But now you have turned around and profaned my name; each of you has taken back the male and female slaves you had set free to go where they wished. You have forced them to become your slaves again. <sup>17</sup> “Therefore this is what the LORD says: You have not obeyed me; you have not proclaimed freedom to your own people. So I now proclaim ‘freedom’ for you, declares the LORD—‘freedom’ to fall by the sword, plague and famine. I will make you abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth. <sup>18</sup> Those who have violated my covenant and have not fulfilled the terms of the covenant they made before me, I will treat like the calf they cut in two and then walked between its pieces. <sup>19</sup> The leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the court officials, the priests and all the people of the land who walked between the pieces of the calf, <sup>20</sup> I will deliver into the hands of their enemies who want to kill them. Their dead bodies will become food for the birds and the wild animals. <sup>21</sup> “I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah and his officials into the hands of their enemies who want to kill them, to the army of the king of Babylon, which has withdrawn from you. <sup>22</sup> I am going to give the order, declares the LORD, and I will bring them back to this city. They will fight against it, take it and burn it down. And I will lay waste the towns of Judah so no one can live there.”*

**34:8-9** Babylon had laid siege to Jerusalem, and the city was about to fall. Zedekiah finally decided to listen to Jeremiah and try to appease God—so he freed the slaves. He thought he could win God's favor with a kind act, but what he needed was a change of heart. The people had been disobeying God's law from the beginning (Exodus 21:2-11; Leviticus 25:39-55; Deuteronomy 15:12-18). When the siege was temporarily lifted, the people became bold and returned to their sins (34:11-17; 37:5, 11).

**34:15-16** The people of Israel had a hard time keeping their promises to God. In the temple, they would solemnly promise to obey God, but back in their homes and at work they wouldn't do it. God expressed his great displeasure. If you want to please God, make sure you keep your promises. God wants promises lived out, not just piously made.

**34:18-20** Cutting a calf in two and walking between the halves was a customary way to ratify a contract (Genesis 15:9-10). This action symbolized the judgment on anyone who broke the contract. God was saying, "You have broken the contract you made with me, so you know the judgment awaiting you!"