

Handout: Jeremiah Lesson 16

Timeline:

- The King of Judah rebelled against the Babylonians by refusing to pay the annual tribute and making a treaty with the Egyptians. In 598 BC, the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar besieged the city of Jerusalem, deposed King Jehoiachin (Jeconiah) and initiated a mass deportation of prominent and skilled Jerusalemites into exile in Babylon (2 Kng 24:8-16).
- Nebuchadnezzar made Josiah's youngest, twenty-one year old son, Mattaniah, his vassal King of Judah, changing his name to Zedekiah (2 Kng 24:17-18).
- A decade later, King Zedekiah failed to learn from the former king's mistake. He decided to abandon his allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar by forming a relationship with the Egyptians.
- In December 589 – January 588 BC, at the end of the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, Nebuchadnezzar and his army laid siege to Jerusalem.
- In 588 BC, the siege was temporarily lifted when the Egyptians sent an army to aid their ally, the King of Judah.
- After defeating the Egyptians, Nebuchadnezzar resumed his siege of Jerusalem on the 1st of Adar (February), 587 BC.
- King Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem, and the Babylonian army destroyed the city and Temple on the 9th of Ab (July/August) in 587 BC.

Chapters 32-33 date to the last year of the reign of King Zedekiah (reigned 598/7-587 BC, eleven years as the ancients counted) and the eighteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar (reigned 605-562 BC). The date according to 32:1 is 587 BC, when the Babylonian siege prophesied in 34:21-22 was resumed (32:2 and 24). The additions to the Book of Consolation are written in prose with the exception of the Messianic prophecy in 33:15-16. The additions to Jeremiah's Book of Consolation have the same themes as those in Chapters 30-31:

1. The return of the Israelite and Judahite exiles.
2. The resettlement and restored communal lives of the exiles.
3. Promises of a future new covenant for a spiritually restored people.

After the introduction, there are a series of six oracles in Chapter 32 with Jeremiah's prayer to Yahweh and Yahweh's answer at the center. Each oracle begins "Yahweh says this" or "Yahweh Sabaoth says this" except Oracle 2:

- Oracle I: Judgment on Zedekiah (verses 3b-5)
- Oracle II: Narrative and command to purchase a field (verses 6-14)
- Oracle III: Salvation for the nation (verse 15)
Jeremiah's prayer to Yahweh (verses 16-25)
Yahweh's answer to Jeremiah's prayer (verses 26-27)
- Oracle IV: Judgment for the nation (verses 28-35)
- Oracle V: Salvation for the nation and an everlasting covenant (verses 36-41)
- Oracle VI: The people and the land restored (verses 42-44)

→ Over

32:40 I shall make an everlasting [eternal] covenant with them, never to cease in my efforts for their welfare, and I shall put respect for me in their hearts, so that they will never turn away from me again.

The “everlasting/eternal covenant is promised in Isaiah 55:3; Jeremiah 32:40; 50:5; Ezekiel 16:60 and 37:26. It is fulfilled in the New Covenant promised in 31:31 and announced by Jesus Christ at the Last Supper in Luke 22:20. The Letter to the Hebrews affirms the everlasting/eternal covenant in Jesus Christ: *I pray that the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood that sealed an eternal covenant, may prepare you to do his will in every kind of good action; effecting in us all whatever is acceptable to himself through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen* (Heb 13:20).

The two concluding oracles in Chapter 32 parallel the two concluding oracles in Chapter 31:

- The oracle on the New Covenant in 31:31-34 → The oracle on the Eternal Covenant in 32:36-41
- The oracle on the rebuilding of Jerusalem in 31:38-40 → The oracle on renewed fields purchased in Benjamin and throughout Judah in 32:42-44

Chapter 33 also divides into six oracles, with each oracle beginning with the words “Yahweh says this” or “Yahweh Sabaoth says this”:

1. Oracle #1: Judgment and forgiveness for Jerusalem (verses 2b-9)
2. Oracle #2: The return to normal life for the returned exiles (verses 10-11)
3. Oracle #3: The Messianic Branch of the House of David (verses 12-16)
4. Oracle #4: Continuation of descendants for the House of David and the ministerial priesthood (verses 17-18)
5. Oracle #5: The assurance of the eternal nature of the Davidic Covenant and the ministerial priesthood (verses 20-22)
6. Oracle #6: The assurance that God has not rejected Israel (verses 25-26)

In 33:1-9, God promises to restore His covenant people in five ways:

1. I shall bring them remedy and cure.
2. I shall reveal a new order of peace and loyalty.
3. I shall bring back the captives.
4. I shall cleanse them of their sins.
5. I shall forgive their sins.

I shall make an upright Branch grow for David... Jesus is the promised Davidic “Branch.” There are two Hebrew words that can be translated as “branch” that are used in referring to the Messiah: *tsemach* (see Is 4:2; Jer 23:5; 33:15; Zec 3:8; 6:12) and *netzer* (see Is 11:1; 14:19; 60:21; Dan 11:7). Some Biblical scholars think *netzer* is the root for the word Nazareth (Hebrew = Natseret; Aramaic = Nasrat), the city where Jesus was raised.