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Called to Speak for the Lord – the Book of Jeremiah

The End of Jerusalem and the
Preservation of the Remnant

July 25, 2021

Sermon Text: Jeremiah 52

Scripture Reading: 2 Peter 2

This is the 44th and final time that we have met together to hear the words of Jeremiah, coming now to this last 52nd chapter. It is a very sobering and yet encouraging scripture. Follow along as we read it:

Jer 52:1-34 Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. (2) And he did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. (3) For because of the anger of the LORD it came to the

point in Jerusalem and Judah that he cast them out from his presence. And Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

(4) And in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came with all his army against Jerusalem, and laid siege to it. And they built siegeworks all around it. (5) So the city was besieged till the eleventh year of King Zedekiah.

(6) On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. (7) Then a breach was made in the city, and all the men of war fled and went out from the city by night by the way of a gate between the two walls, by the king's garden, and the Chaldeans were around the city. And they went in the direction of the Arabah. (8) But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho, and all his army was scattered from him.

(9) Then they captured the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, and he passed sentence on him. (10) The king of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and also slaughtered all the officials of Judah at Riblah. (11) He put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him in chains, and the king of Babylon took him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death.

(12) In the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month—that was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon—Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard, who served the king of Babylon, entered Jerusalem. (13) And he burned the house of the LORD, and the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem; every great house he burned down.

(14) And all the army of the Chaldeans, who were with the captain of the guard, broke down all the walls around Jerusalem. (15) And Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive some of the poorest of the people and the rest of the people who were left in the city and the deserters who had deserted to the king of Babylon, together with the rest of the

artisans. (16) But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left some of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and plowmen.

(17) And the pillars of bronze that were in the house of the LORD, and the stands and the bronze sea that were in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans broke in pieces, and carried all the bronze to Babylon. (18) And they took away the pots and the shovels and the snuffers and the basins and the dishes for incense and all the vessels of bronze used in the temple service; (19) also the small bowls and the fire pans and the basins and the pots and the lampstands and the dishes for incense and the bowls for drink offerings. What was of gold the captain of the guard took away as gold, and what was of silver, as silver.

(20) As for the two pillars, the one sea, the twelve bronze bulls that were under the sea, and the stands, which Solomon the king had made for the house of the LORD, the bronze of all these things was beyond weight. (21) As for the pillars, the height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, its circumference was twelve cubits, and its thickness was four fingers, and it was hollow. (22) On it was a capital of bronze. The

height of the one capital was five cubits. A network and pomegranates, all of bronze, were around the capital. And the second pillar had the same, with pomegranates. (23) There were ninety-six pomegranates on the sides; all the pomegranates were a hundred upon the network all around.

(24) And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest and the three keepers of the threshold; (25) and from the city he took an officer who had been in command of the men of war, and seven men of the king's council, who were found in the city; and the secretary of the commander of the army, who mustered the people of the land; and sixty men of the people of the land, who were found in the midst of the city. (26) And Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. (27) And the king of Babylon struck them down and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was taken into exile out of its land.

(28) This is the number of the people whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year, 3,023 Judeans; (29) in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar he carried away

captive from Jerusalem 832 persons; (30) in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Judeans 745 persons; all the persons were 4,600.

(31) And in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-fifth day of the month, Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, graciously freed Jehoiachin king of Judah and brought him out of prison.

(32) And he spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat above the seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon.

(33) So Jehoiachin put off his prison garments. And every day of his life he dined regularly at the king's table, (34) and for his allowance, a regular allowance was given him by the king, according to his daily needs, until the day of his death, as long as he lived.

Now, let's ask this question – *why does the book of Jeremiah end with this retelling of the capture, fall, and destruction of Jerusalem?* The event had already been recorded in chapter 39, though not in as much detail. So what is the purpose of the book ending in this manner?

The answer is at least two-fold:

1. The Word of God cannot be broken
2. The Preservation of the Remnant in Christ

The Word of God

Think back now to all of these previous 51 chapters of Jeremiah, and recall how many of Jeremiah's words, which were the Word of God, were:

- An exposure of the wicked sins of Judah,
- A call to the people to repent,
- A promise of destruction at the hands of the Babylonians, or
- A promise of restoration if the people repented

Those themes largely are what the whole book is about. All those years, Jeremiah faithfully served the Lord in the face of horrible opposition.

Jer 1:9-10 Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me, "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. (10) See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break

down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

Jer 1:14-19 Then the LORD said to me, "Out of the north disaster shall be let loose upon all the inhabitants of the land. (15) For behold, I am calling all the tribes of the kingdoms of the north, declares the LORD, and they shall come, and every one shall set his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, against all its walls all around and against all the cities of Judah. (16) And I will declare my judgments against them, for all their evil in forsaking me. They have made offerings to other gods and worshiped the works of their own hands. (17) But you, dress yourself for work; arise, and say to them everything that I command you. Do not be dismayed by them, lest I dismay you before them. (18) And I, behold, I make you this day a fortified city, an iron pillar, and bronze walls, against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests, and the people of the land. (19) They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, declares the LORD, to deliver you."

Jer 2:12-13 Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the LORD, (13) for my people

have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

Jer 3:12-15 Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, “Return, faithless Israel, declares the LORD. I will not look on you in anger, for I am merciful, declares the LORD; I will not be angry forever. (13) Only acknowledge your guilt, that you rebelled against the LORD your God and scattered your favors among foreigners under every green tree, and that you have not obeyed my voice, declares the LORD. (14) Return, O faithless children, declares the LORD; for I am your master; I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. (15) “And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.

Jer 5:9-13 Shall I not punish them for these things? declares the LORD; and shall I not avenge myself on a nation such as this? (10) “Go up through her vine rows and destroy, but make not a full end; strip away her branches, for they are not the LORD's. (11) For the house of Israel and the house of Judah

have been utterly treacherous to me, declares the LORD. (12) They have spoken falsely of the LORD and have said, ‘He will do nothing; no disaster will come upon us, nor shall we see sword or famine. (13) The prophets will become wind; the word is not in them. Thus shall it be done to them!’”

Jer 6:6 For thus says the LORD of hosts: “Cut down her trees; cast up a siege mound against Jerusalem. This is the city that must be punished; there is nothing but oppression within her.

Jer 7:4 Do not trust in these deceptive words: ‘This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.’

Here then is the summation of it all in this final chapter – *All that the Lord had spoken was brought to pass. Not a single word failed to come about.* In these closing words we have the unfailing Word of God recorded as fulfilled. All of the lies of the false prophets exposed.

Gal 6:7-8 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. (8) For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the

flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Consider this now in regard to our day. Has the Lord announced, and does He continue to do so...has He announced the destruction and judgment of this evil world? Of course. And what has been and is the response of man with few exceptions? *The very same as the response of the people of Jeremiah's day.* Refusal to repent. A mocking of God's Word and of God's servants. And particularly this is done by people, just like the false prophets and shepherds Jeremiah faced, today God's Word is particularly denied by people who wear the disguise of "Christian."

2Pe 3:1-4 This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, (2) that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, (3) knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. (4) They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell

asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."

This is the very same wicked spirit that animated the evil ones in Jeremiah's day. And what, in the end, happened? Chapter 52. Everything that God had spoken came about.

Now, here is an amazing thing. *This would not be the last time Jerusalem would be destroyed by the Lord for her sins. In fact, there would be two more such destructions!*

Mat 24:1-2 Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. (2) But he answered them, "You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down."

And there is still one more destruction of earthly, false Jerusalem to come, *and it will be replaced by the true Jerusalem, the New Heavens and Earth-*

Rev 3:12 The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I

will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.

Rev 21:1-3 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. (2) And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (3) And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

Earthly Jerusalem never learns. Earthly Jerusalem is Babylon. It has always opposed the City of God, hated Christ, and killed Christ's true Israelites. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets...". *Do you see the great error then of the widespread focus today among professing Christians on the earthly Jerusalem?*

Earthly Jerusalem, called Sodom and Gomorrah by Isaiah, *continues to oppose Christ today.* Jeremiah chapter

52 would happen again in 70AD when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, and it will happen again when Christ comes. *God's Word cannot be broken. What He says, He will do.* How many people today laugh and wag their heads when they hear the Lord's call to repentance and His warning of coming judgment. The vast majority of mankind.

Preservation of the Remnant

Now, there is one more very important theme that we have seen over and over like a thin line running through Jeremiah and in fact all through the Old Testament. It is seen in passages like this:

Jer 23:1-5 "Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!" declares the LORD. (2) Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who care for my people: "You have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for your evil deeds, declares the LORD. (3) **Then I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply.**

(4) I will set shepherds over them who will care for them, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares the LORD. (5) “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when **I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king** and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.

In all of this destruction of Judah, as is true in every judgment the Lord brings upon the wicked, *Christ preserves His own*. Where do we see this in chapter 52? It is here:

Jer 52:31-34 And in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-fifth day of the month, Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, graciously freed Jehoiachin king of Judah and brought him out of prison. (32) And he spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat above the seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon. (33) So Jehoiachin put off his prison garments. And every day of his life he dined regularly at the king's table, (34) and for his allowance, a regular allowance was given him by the king, according to his

daily needs, until the day of his death, as long as he lived.

If you look at the opening verses of Matthew, here is what you will read. I won't read the entire genealogy, but let's just highlight a few places in it:

Mat 1:1-17 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

(2) Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, (3) and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, (4) and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, (5) and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse,

(6) and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, (7) and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, (8) and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and

Joram the father of Uzziah, (9) and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,

(10) and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, (11) **and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.** (12) **And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel,** and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, (13) and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, (14) and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, (15) and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob,

(16) and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, **of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.** (17) So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, **and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.**

What is the connection to Jeremiah 52? It is in verse 11 where we have mentioned *Jechoniah*. This name is a variant of the name Jehoiachin of Jeremiah's day. So when the book of Jeremiah ends, it ends with words that tell us *this is not the end*. The Lord preserved, in King Jechoniah, the lineage of Christ. Even right in the midst of all this judgment and deportation to Babylon. Why would a pagan Babylonian king show an exiled, captured king of Judah such favor?

(32) And he spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat above the seats of the kings who were with him in Babylon. (33) So Jehoiachin put off his prison garments. And every day of his life he dined regularly at the king's table,

We live in a wicked, evil, perishing world that is accelerating to God's judgment. Our own nation is filled with wicked people and false prophets and they are on the increase. What happens to Christ's true people in such times? The Lord preserves us-

Jer 52:30 in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Judeans 745 persons; all

the persons were 4,600.

So there it is. God's Word cannot and will not fail. Christ knows His own, and not a single one of them will ever be lost, even though we still live in Babylon -

Psa 137:1-6 By the waters of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion. (2) On the willows there we hung up our lyres. (3) For there our captors required of us songs, and our tormentors, mirth, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!" (4) How shall we sing the LORD's song in a foreign land? (5) If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill! (6) Let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy!