

Jeremiah 37 – When God’s Word Is Ignored

1. Introduction: A King Who Would Not Listen

Jeremiah chapter 37 brings us to the final years of the kingdom of Judah under King Zedekiah, the last king before Jerusalem’s fall to Babylon. This chapter records how God’s prophet continued to speak the truth, even when no one wanted to hear it.

It is a sobering picture of spiritual stubbornness—a king who wanted God’s blessing but not His authority, who sought prayers but ignored God’s commands.

Many today do the same. They want God’s help in trouble but resist His truth in their hearts.

2. Zedekiah’s Reign and Rebellion (Jeremiah 37:1–2)

“Now King Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah. But neither he nor his servants nor the people of the land gave heed to the words of the Lord which He spoke by the prophet Jeremiah.” (Jeremiah 37:1–2)

Zedekiah was not a free king; he was appointed by Nebuchadnezzar as a puppet ruler after Jehoiachin (also called Coniah) was taken captive to Babylon. But even under foreign domination, the Lord was still speaking through Jeremiah.

The tragedy is clear: God spoke, but no one listened.

It was not that God was silent—it was that people had closed their ears.

Practical application:

The same danger exists today. We often want God to speak, but only if it confirms our plans. Yet spiritual growth begins when we not only hear God’s Word but **submit** to it. As Jesus said, “Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it.” (Luke 11:28)

3. A King Who Wanted Prayer but Not Repentance (Jeremiah 37:3–5)

“And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal... and Zephaniah the priest to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, ‘Pray now to the Lord our God for us.’” (Jeremiah 37:3)

Zedekiah wanted Jeremiah’s prayers but not Jeremiah’s preaching. He wanted God’s help but not God’s correction.

While this request for prayer was being made, the Babylonian army temporarily withdrew because the Egyptian army marched north. It appeared that Judah had a moment of relief (Jeremiah 37:5).

But this false hope was short-lived.

Practical application:

How often do we treat prayer as a rescue button rather than a relationship with God?

We call on Him only when we are desperate, but when He calls us to repentance, we delay.

God's ears are open to the cries of the humble, but He will not answer the prayers of the proud (Psalm 34:15–16).

4. False Security and Self-Deception (Jeremiah 37:6–10)

“Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: ‘Thus you shall say to the king of Judah... Pharaoh’s army which has come up to help you will return to Egypt... And the Chaldeans shall come again and fight against this city, and take it and burn it with fire... Do not deceive yourselves.’” (Jeremiah 37:7–9)

God tells Jeremiah to send a blunt message: *Don’t fool yourselves*. The temporary withdrawal of Babylon’s army does not mean the threat is gone. The Egyptians will retreat, and the Babylonians will return stronger than before.

“Even if you had defeated the whole army of the Chaldeans... only wounded men would rise up and burn this city with fire.” (Jeremiah 37:10)

In other words, even if the situation looks manageable, God’s Word will stand. Judah’s destruction was certain because of its persistent rebellion.

Practical application:

The greatest deception is self-deception. We think we can outmaneuver the consequences of sin or delay repentance. But Scripture warns, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.” (Galatians 6:7)

Ignoring God’s Word never ends well. His commands are not restrictions—they are protection.

5. Jeremiah Imprisoned Unjustly (Jeremiah 37:11–16)

When the Babylonians temporarily withdrew, Jeremiah tried to go north to the land of Benjamin. But at the city gate, an officer accused him of defecting to Babylon.

“Then Jeremiah said, ‘False! I am not defecting to the Chaldeans.’ But he did not listen to him... and the princes were angry with Jeremiah, and they struck him and put him in prison.” (Jeremiah 37:14–15)

Even though Jeremiah was innocent, he was beaten and thrown into a dungeon—suffering for the very truth that could have saved the nation.

Practical application:

Sometimes obedience to God brings misunderstanding, even persecution. But we must be faithful anyway. Jesus said, “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:10)

Faithfulness to God is never wasted, even when it costs you your comfort.

6. The King’s Secret Question (Jeremiah 37:17–20)

“Then King Zedekiah sent and took him out; and the king asked him secretly in his house, and said, ‘Is there any word from the Lord?’ And Jeremiah said, ‘There is.’ Then he said, ‘You shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon.’” (Jeremiah 37:17)

Zedekiah secretly sought Jeremiah's counsel. He wanted to hear from God—but only behind closed doors.

Jeremiah's answer was firm and consistent: "Yes, there is a word from the Lord—you will be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon."

Zedekiah wanted comfort, not confrontation. But the truth of God does not change to suit our preferences.

Then Jeremiah pleads for mercy:

"Please do not send me back to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there." (Jeremiah 37:20)

Even prophets grow weary. Jeremiah was faithful, but he was still human—tired, bruised, and pleading for mercy.

Practical application:

Spiritual strength is not the absence of weakness—it is the courage to keep trusting God in weakness. Like Jeremiah, you may be misunderstood or mistreated, but God sees, God knows, and God sustains.

7. God's Provision in the Prison (Jeremiah 37:21)

"Then Zedekiah the king commanded that they should commit Jeremiah to the court of the prison, and that they should give him daily a piece of bread from the bakers' street, until all the bread in the city was gone. Thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison." (Jeremiah 37:21)

Even in prison, God provided. The Lord moved the king's heart to give Jeremiah daily bread. Though the city's supply was running out, God made sure His servant was sustained.

Practical application:

When you stand for truth, God will stand with you. You may be confined by circumstances, but the presence and provision of God are never confined. He still gives daily bread to those who trust Him.

A Challenge for Believers

This chapter challenges every believer to examine our response to God's Word.

Are we like Zedekiah—curious but disobedient?

Do we want prayer without repentance, blessings without obedience, peace without surrender?

It is not enough to hear God's Word; we must do what it says.

"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." (James 1:22)

Faith that does not obey is not faith at all.

Let us recommit ourselves to being people who trust God's Word even when it is unpopular, inconvenient, or costly.

An Invitation to Non-Believers

This story is also a warning to anyone resisting God's truth.

Zedekiah delayed repentance until it was too late. His indecision destroyed him.

God is patient, but His patience is not permission to persist in sin. He calls each of us to turn from rebellion and receive His mercy.

The message is the same today:

- "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)
- "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
(Romans 6:23)

Jesus Christ shed His blood on the cross to pay for your sins. He took your judgment upon Himself so that you might be forgiven and made new. And when He rose from the dead, He proved that He is God, Savior, and Lord.

Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your heart.

You can pray right now:

"Lord Jesus, I believe You died for my sins and rose again. I turn from my sin and surrender to You. Please forgive me, cleanse me, and fill me with Your Spirit. I confess that You are my Savior and Lord. Help me to follow You all the days of my life. Amen."

If you prayed that sincerely, God has heard you, and He welcomes you into His family.

Conclusion: The Word of God Cannot Be Silenced

Jeremiah 37 shows us the danger of ignoring God's Word and the faithfulness of those who obey it. Zedekiah heard but would not heed. Jeremiah suffered but remained faithful.

The question today is not whether God is speaking—the question is whether we will listen and obey. Let us be people who trust God's truth, walk in obedience, and boldly proclaim the message of salvation through Jesus Christ, the risen Lord, who alone gives forgiveness, freedom, and life everlasting.