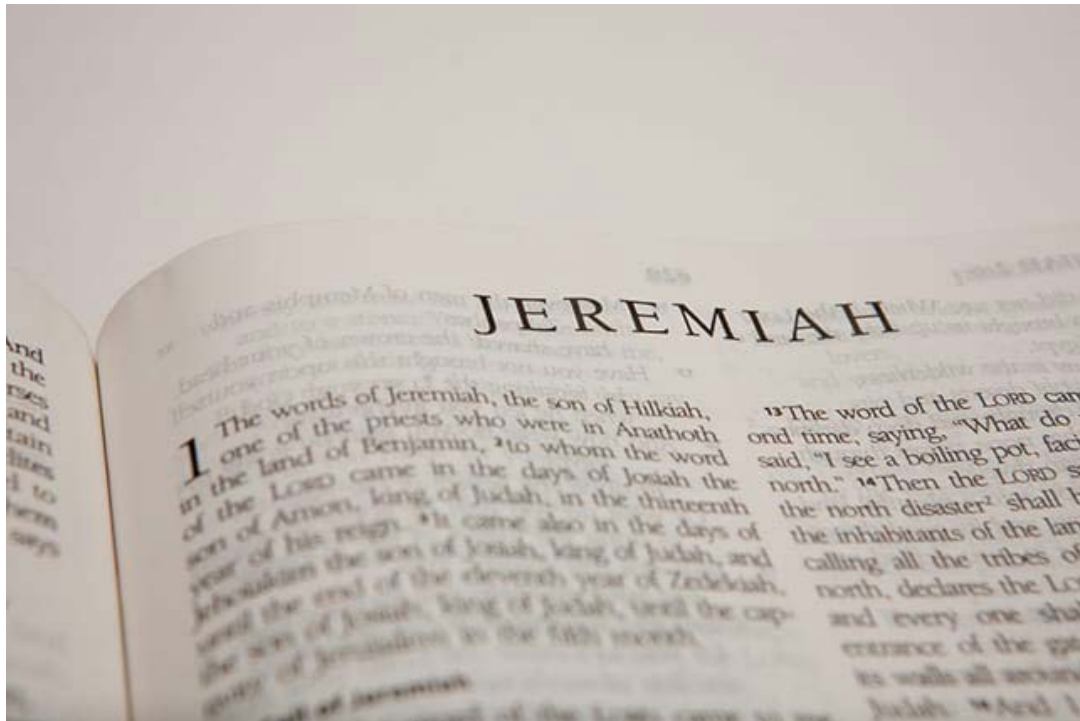


THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH  
THE INDESTRUCTIBLE WORD  
JEREMIAH 34-38



T. M. Moore

*A Scriptorium Study*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

The Indestructible Word: Jeremiah 34-38  
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## Introduction to Jeremiah 34-38

The issue of the reliability of God's Word is the focus of this section of the book of Jeremiah.

God faithfully proclaimed His will to His people through Jeremiah. But the people looked for more agreeable words from false prophets. They chose to listen to those whom God had not sent rather than him whom God had spoken to for forty years.

Jehoiakim threw Jeremiah's book into the fire; but God instructed Jeremiah to write it again, and to enlarge it. You can ignore God's Word, revile it, reject it, or ignore it. But God's Word continues, and it will not fail.

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## 1 Bent for Sin

*Pray Psalm 53.6.*

Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion!  
When God brings back the captivity of His people,  
Let Jacob rejoice *and* Israel be glad.

*Sing Psalm 53.5, 6.*

(Leoni: [\*The God of Abraham Praise\*](#))

The wicked flee in shame; their ways our God rejects.  
Renew Your people in Your Name with great effects!  
Let great rejoicing sound once we renewed have been,  
and let salvation's Word resound from us again!

*Read and meditate on Jeremiah 34.1-22.*

*Prepare.*

1. What was God's Word to Zedekiah?
2. What happened to the Hebrew slaves in Jerusalem?

*Meditate.*

God sent Jeremiah to Zedekiah once again to proclaim his fate. The city of Jerusalem would surely fall to Nebuchadnezzar, and Zedekiah would be taken into captivity to Babylon. He would die in peace there (v. 5), but that was hardly consolation. Zedekiah would see his sons slain before his eyes, the last sight he would see before Nebuchadnezzar blinded him and took him captive.

My sense of the action in this chapter is that, at verse 8, Babylon had withdrawn from their siege, perhaps to wait for more supplies, or to fight off some other enemy. With a little window of peace, Zedekiah decided to make a noble – and safe – gesture: to free all the Hebrew servants in Jerusalem (vv. 8, 9). He declared this as a covenant and called the people to enter it with him. Many complied and set their Hebrew servants free. But it wasn't long before the people snapped back to their selfish, sinful ways, and took their former servants back into bondage once again (vv. 10, 11).

Through Jeremiah, God warned the people (1) about the solemnity of making covenants (vv. 12, 13) and (2) what the Law of God taught concerning Hebrew servants (v. 14). The people were guilty of transgressing on both counts, having abandoned their covenant with Zedekiah and enslaving their servants again (vv. 15, 16). The people had proven their bent toward sin, and God promised to bring judgment against them (vv. 17-21). He would bring the Babylonians back to Jerusalem to finish the work He had begun with them under the kingship of Jehoiakim (v. 22).

The princes and people of Jerusalem showed that they had no regard for liberty (v. 17). Consequently, they would lose their own when Nebuchadnezzar returned.

We have been set free in Jesus from the power of sin. Let us prove our bent toward Christlikeness by refusing to become slaves to wickedness in any way.

*Reflect.*

1. What does this passage teach about the role of the Law of God in the community of God's people?

2. How does obeying God's Law check our natural bent to sin (cf. Rom. 7.7, 12)?

3. God's covenant required the shedding of blood for all who would enter it (vv. 18, 19). How do we enter God's covenant? How can we be renewed in it?

*The king himself, as well as the people, were reduced to the greatest extremities, and yet they would not be admonished by God's Prophet; and hence it is expressly said in 2 Chronicles 36:16, that Zedekiah did not regard the word of the Prophet, though he spoke from the mouth of the Lord, by whom he had been sent. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Jeremiah 34.1*

*Lord, let Your truth set me free from all sin today as I...*

*Pray Psalm 53.1-5.*

Pray for the lost and all who struggle with obedience to God and His Word. Pray for yourself as well, that you might walk the path He has marked out for you this day.

*Sing Psalm 53.1-5.*

**Psalm 53.1-5** (Leoni: [\*The God of Abraham Praise\*](#))

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God at all!"

Corrupt are they in whole and part, unjust and small.

Not one of them does good; God sees their wicked ways.

None understands the Word of God or gives Him praise.

Have all these wicked men no knowledge of God's grace?

The Church they hate with passion and seek not God's face.

Lord, strike their hearts with fear, where fear was not before.

And scatter all who camp so near Your holy door.

## 2 The Lesson of the Rechabites

*The Indestructible Word (2)*

*Pray Psalm 1.6.*

For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,  
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

*Sing Psalm 1.6.*

(St. Thomas: [\*I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord\*](#))

In Jesus' righteousness, though sinners fail and fall,  
His flock He will preserve and bless, who on His favor call.

*Read and meditate on Jeremiah 35.1-19.*

*Prepare.*

1. For what things did Jeremiah praise the Lord?
2. What was troubling him in his prayer?

*Meditate.*

God's people did not have to disobey Him. They chose to do so. Their reasons were not hard to identify: They wanted to do what they wanted to do, and not what God had prepared for them. They wanted an easier route to blessing and happiness than obedience to God's Law, so they turned to pagan deities and practices. Just to be safe, they kept God in their hip pockets and continued to worship Him. But their worship was empty, self-centered, and merely cultural. It had no transforming power, and the people left it conveniently behind when they left the temple (cf. Ps. 50).

But it was possible to obey God, and God brought out the example of the Rechabites to demonstrate this was so. They had lived in tents and drunk no wine as their father had instructed them. Not even the prophet Jeremiah could persuade them to betray their heritage. They understood that God's Law required them to honor their fathers, and they were determined to do nothing other or less.

If these sons and daughters of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, could obey their forefather, shunning the securities of place and wealth and resisting the lusts of the flesh, should not the people of God have obeyed Him as well?

The judgment of God would fall upon every household in Judah and Jerusalem because of their disobedience. Families would be destroyed, divided, and dispersed. Most people would never again see their loved ones or their children's children. But for Jonadab, the faithful son of Rechab, he would "not lack a man to stand" before the Lord forever (v. 19).

God honors those who look to Him in faith and obedience and walk the path marked out by His Word. When Jesus commands us to follow Him, it is in the path of God's Law, doing good works in His Spirit, and glorifying God in all we do. Anything less than this is less than true Christian faith.

*Reflect.*

1. Why was God bringing His judgment against His people? Had He warned them? Has He warned us?
2. Why do people think the way to greatest happiness is in doing things their way rather than God's?

3. How can believers help one another to walk God's path of righteousness faithfully?

*God promises generally a reward to all who keep the Law, for every command has in general connected with it the hope of reward; but this is in a special manner added to the Fifth Commandment: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest prolong thy life," etc. It is, then, nothing strange that God promised a reward to the Rechabites, because they followed the command of their father, for he had promised that in the Law. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Jeremiah 35.19**

*Guard me today, O Lord, against all disobedience, so that I...*

*Pray Psalm 1.1-5.*

Thank God for the righteous men and women you know, and pray that He might transform you increasingly into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

*Sing Psalm 1.1-5.*

**Psalm 1.1-5** (St. Thomas: [\*I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord\*](#))

How blessed are they that shun sin's vain and wicked ways.  
For them has Christ salvation won; He loves them all their days.

God's Word is their delight; they prosper in its truth.  
In it they dwell both day and night to flourish and bear fruit.

Firm planted on the banks of God's great stream of grace,  
They raise unending praise and thanks to His great glorious face.

The wicked are not so, but, driven by the winds,  
they fall and perish, weighed with woe, when once God's wrath begins.

### 3 The Scroll Read

*Pray Psalm 33.4, 5.*

For the word of the LORD *is* right,  
And all His work is *done* in truth.  
He loves righteousness and justice;  
The earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.

*Sing Psalm 33.4, 5.*

(Truro: [\*Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns\*](#))

Joyfully shout! His Word is true;  
He does His work in faithfulness.  
His love prevails the whole world through;  
the Lord loves truth and righteousness.

*Read and meditate on Jeremiah 36.1-19.*

*Prepare.*

1. What was Jeremiah instructed to write? Why?
2. How did the princes respond to the reading of this book?

*Meditate.*

The book of Jeremiah does not unfold in a strictly chronological manner. Here is another “flashback”, to the days of Jehoiakim, who followed Shallum to the throne (both were sons of Josiah) and preceded Jeconiah and Zedekiah. Jeremiah is recalling the time when he wrote the words which we have read today in the book that bears his name.

We get a glimpse of the process of divine revelation in these verses. God spoke to Jeremiah certain words. Jeremiah recited these to Baruch, and Baruch wrote them in a scroll – the ancient equivalent of a book. The purpose of this was so that Baruch could read the Word of God in many places, and so that the Word would have permanence beyond the lifetime of Jeremiah. Jeremiah was in confinement at the time (v. 5 and would be released, vv. 19, 26), but God did not choose to have His Word in confinement. Hence, the writing of the scroll.

The purpose of the reading was to bring the people of Judah to their senses, to provoke them to fear and repentance in response to what God was threatening because of their sin (vv. 4-8). This seems to have gone on for a year or so (cf. vv. 1, 9), until Jehoiakim called a fast before the LORD for all the people in Judah and Jerusalem. At that time, Baruch again read from Jeremiah’s book to the people gathered in Jerusalem (v. 10).

The princes of Judah who heard these words were startled (vv. 11-19), and they felt like they needed to tell the words to King Jehoiakim. He had no doubt heard them already (hence, the fast), but apparently, he had not fully considered the gravity of the words. The princes were determined to tell the king, but they knew him to be hard of heart, so they urged Baruch and Jeremiah to go into hiding.

The Word of God is living and powerful. It can reach to the soul, where God does whatever work He has determined to do in any person. Our calling, like that of Baruch, is to receive the Word and to proclaim it, and especially to declare its central message, that Jesus has paid the price for our redemption. But we’d better be ready, because not everyone to whom we proclaim this Good News will be happy to hear it.

*Reflect.*

1. What do we mean when we say that the words of Scripture are “inspired”? Why should that matter to us?
2. We note that Baruch merely *read* the Word of God. He did not “preach” it. What does this suggest about the place of reading God’s Word, privately and in worship?
3. Should we fear some of what we read in God’s Word? Explain.

*Jeremiah then stood, as it were, between God and Baruch; for God, by his Spirit, presided over and guided the mind and tongue of the Prophet. Now the Prophet, the Spirit being his guide and teacher, recited what God had commanded; and Baruch wrote down, and then proclaimed the whole summary of what the Prophet had taught. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Jeremiah* 36.4*

*Thank You for Your Word, O Lord. Help me to live it out as I...*

*Pray Psalm 33.1-3, 7-9.*

Our God is sovereign still. Praise Him for His unchanging Word and His great faithfulness. Ask Him for an opportunity to talk with someone about Jesus today.

*Sing Psalm 33.1-3, 7-9.*

**Psalm 33.1-3, 7-9** (Truro: [\*Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns\*](#))

Sing with rejoicing in the Lord,  
for praise becomes His righteous ones!  
With harps and songs raise grateful words,  
and let new songs of praise be sung!

God spoke and heaven came to be,  
and all its hosts His Spirit wrought.  
He heaps the waters of the sea;  
the deeps their dwelling place are taught.

Let all below now fear the Lord;  
let all in awe of Him abide!  
The worlds exist by Jesus’ Word;  
let all on earth in Him confide.

## 4 The Scroll Burned and Rewritten

*Pray Psalm 12.6, 7.*

The words of the LORD *are* pure words,  
Like silver tried in a furnace of earth,  
Purified seven times.  
You shall keep them, O LORD,  
You shall preserve them from this generation forever.

*Sing Psalm 12.6, 7.*

(Hamburg: [When I Survey](#))

Your words are pure and proven true,  
like silver seven times refined;  
You will preserve Your Word ever new,  
and keep the heart to You inclined.

*Read and meditate on Jeremiah 36.20-32.*

*Prepare.*

1. Why did Jehoiakim burn Jeremiah's scroll?
2. How did the Lord respond to this act?

*Meditate.*

Having heard the reading of the scroll, and struck with fear at what they heard, the princes of Judah went straight to King Jehoiakim to report what they had heard; but they did not bring the scroll with them (v. 20).

The king sent an aide to fetch the scroll and have it read before him (vv. 21, 22). In a fit of rage, Jehoiakim slashed the scroll with a knife and threw it into the fire (v. 23). If there was any doubt in anyone's mind concerning how Jehoiakim felt about the Word of God, this action removed it. Jehoiakim hated the Word. He would not hear it, and he would make sure no one else did, either.

Like the secularists of our day, who fervently believe that any public square – schools, courts, legislatures, universities – is no place for the Word of God, Jehoiakim sought to silence and be done with God's Word. Which is yet just one more measure of his hubris and stupidity.

The people did not fear to see the Word of God destroyed before their eyes, anymore than unbelievers today fear to have it removed from the public square (v. 24). The few who tried to stop this outrage (v. 25) were ignored. And just for good measure, Jehoiakim ordered that Jeremiah and Baruch be detained. However, the Lord had hidden them from him (v. 26).

God's Word is unchanged, even though it is ignored, scorned, and even destroyed. He reiterated His Word of judgment against Jehoiakim, and He instructed Jeremiah and Baruch to prepare another scroll, containing everything that had been written before and then some (vv. 27-32).

If your Bible were to be confiscated today, how much of it could you recall or reproduce? Enough to feed your soul for an indefinite period? Enough to encourage and comfort your Christian friends? We need to feed with delight on God's Word (Jer. 15.16), hide it in our hearts daily (Ps. 119.9-11), and let it dwell richly within us (Col. 3.16). Because when push comes to shove in our lives – whether in some personal trial or by dint of

some government action – we'll need to have that Word to comfort, equip, embolden, and encourage us.

*Reflect.*

1. Why did Jehoiakim try to destroy God's Word? Why do people do so today?
2. Why is it important that we feed on God's Word daily?
3. What can you do to hide more of God's Word in your heart? Why should you do so?

*The God of all orders Jeremiah to write the former words in another book. The sheet of paper was burned, but the divine law remained unharmed. So also when the body assumed by the Word suffered, the Word remained free from suffering. Theodoret of Cyr (393-466), On Jeremiah 7.36*

*Thank You for Your Word, O Lord! Help me daily to feed on it, so that I...*

*Pray Psalm 12.1-5, 8.*

Pray for our times, when the Word of God is regarded with contempt and indifference. Pray that God will renew His people in His Word.

*Sing Psalm 12.1-5, 8.*

**Psalm 12.1-5, 8** (Hamburg: [When I Survey](#))

Help, Lord! The godly cease to be.  
They who believe in Christ are few.  
Falsely the wicked confidently  
flatter, deceive, and mock Your truth.

Stop, Lord, the lips that utter lies,  
all those who speak with boasting tongue!  
See how Your holy Word they despise,  
while their own praises they have sung.

Rise up, O Lord, and rescue all  
Your precious children sore distressed.  
Save those who faithfully on You call;  
grant them deliv'rance, peace, and rest.

Proudly the wicked strut and stand;  
Your indignation builds on high;  
Men may exalt their wicked plans,  
but You will judge them by and by.

## 5 House Arrest

*Pray Psalm 75.1-3.*

We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks!  
For Your wondrous works declare *that* Your name is near.  
“When I choose the proper time,  
I will judge uprightly.  
The earth and all its inhabitants are dissolved;  
I set up its pillars firmly.

*Sing Psalm 75.1-3.*

(Galilee: [Jesus Calls Us](#))

We give thanks, Lord, we give thanks for Your all-glorious Name is near!  
Men Your wondrous works declare, Lord; let all living creatures hear!

When you choose the time of judgment, You will judge with equity.  
Then the earth and all within it by Your hand no more shall be.

*Read and meditate on Jeremiah 37.1-21.*

*Prepare.*

1. Why was Jeremiah leaving Jerusalem? Was he justly detained?
2. How did Zedekiah ease Jeremiah’s situation?

*Meditate.*

Jeremiah had purchased a piece of land back in his home in Anathoth of Benjamin. When the Babylonians withdrew from Jerusalem for a season – because the armies of Egypt had arrived from the south – he thought he should go and secure the land he’d bought. A perfectly reasonable thing to do.

Zedekiah hoped this might be the deliverance the false prophets had been promising. But God’s message to him through Jeremiah was, “No.” Jerusalem’s destruction was certain, just as Jeremiah had been prophesying since the days of Josiah (vv. 1-10).

By now, we can be certain that Jeremiah was something of a marked man. He was the sole voice proclaiming the judgment of God. Everyone had heard him at one time or another, and most would have known him by sight. So when he showed up trying to exit the city, he was arrested and charged with defecting to the Babylonians (vv. 11-14). Now even the princes – who had previously listened to and protected Jeremiah (Jer. 26.10ff.) – had had enough. In their anger they struck the prophet, then threw him into a dungeon; but Zedekiah brought him out, still hoping for a reassuring word from God (vv. 16, 17).

Imagine the temptation Jeremiah faced at that moment: “Go on, tell him what he wants to hear. You can get along to Anathoth, and you won’t have to watch all the grisly events which are to follow.” But Jeremiah did not serve himself; he served God. He could only speak what God had given him: “You shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon!” (v. 17)

Then he pled with Zedekiah not send him back to the dungeon. He had only been saying what God had given him to say, after all (vv. 18-20). Then, in some wonderful movement of God’s grace, Zedekiah remanded Jeremiah to house arrest, allowing him to roam the court of the prison, rather than to endure its cells, and providing bread for him, as long as it lasted (v. 21).

Life as a bearer of God's Word is not always easy or pleasant. However, the grace of God is always with us. Jesus will never fail us nor forsake us. We must keep our eyes on Him, and be faithful to His Word, just as Jeremiah was. God will take care of us, come what may.

*Reflect.*

1. How was Jeremiah able to remain faithful to the Word of God, even in the face of adversity?
2. How can you prepare each day so that you won't back down or remain silent when it's time to bear witness to the Lord?
3. Does God still judge nations like He did in Jeremiah's day? Explain.

*The Prophet tells us, that God regarded the miseries to which he had been unjustly exposed: and the king no doubt became humane towards Jeremiah, because God turned his heart towards what was just and right. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Jeremiah 37.21*

*Thank You for the promise that You will always be with me, Lord. Thank You, and let me know You near today, as I...*

*Pray Psalm 75.4-10.*

Pray that God's people will come to repentance for our sins, and that God will delay judging His Church, and bring us to revival instead.

*Sing Psalm 75.4-10.*

**Psalm 75.4-10** (Galilee: [Jesus Calls Us](#))

Warn the boastful, warn the wicked: "Do not boast or raise your horn!  
Do not raise your boastful voices; do not speak with pride and scorn!"

Neither east nor west nor desert shall exalting bring to man.  
God is Judge, He puts one down and makes another one to stand.

For the cup of judgment foams in Jesus' sovereign, holy hand.  
He has mixed it and will pour it out on every wicked man.

As for me, I will declare it: Evermore to God be praise!  
He abases all the wicked, but His righteous ones He saves!

## 6 Hard Words

*Pray Psalm 77.1-3.*

I cried out to God with my voice—  
To God with my voice;  
And He gave ear to me.  
In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord;  
My hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing;  
My soul refused to be comforted.  
I remembered God, and was troubled;  
I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.

*Sing Psalm 77.1-3.*

(Leoni: [\*The God of Abraham Praise\*](#))

My voice to God shall rise; I seek Him on His throne.  
In days and nights of trouble I seek God alone!  
When I remember Him, then am I sore distressed!  
My spirit faints and longs to find in Him its rest.

*Read and meditate on Jeremiah 38.1-28.*

*Prepare.*

1. How would you describe King Zedekiah at this point?
2. How did Zedekiah seek to protect Jeremiah?

*Meditate.*

The situation in Jerusalem was desperate, and some in high places were looking for a scapegoat. Jeremiah would do fine. The princes, who had previously helped Jeremiah, now called for his head (v. 1-4). King Zedekiah, hapless and helpless, gave him up to their hand. The princes promptly threw him back into the dungeon (vv. 5, 6).

But the grace of God was with Jeremiah. He would have died in that pit, sinking into the mire; but God moved an Ethiopian eunuch to beseech the king on Jeremiah's behalf (vv. 7-9). Zedekiah commanded him to take thirty men and get Jeremiah out of that pit, which they did (vv. 10-13).

All the food in the city was gone (v. 9), and the Babylonians had returned – just as Jeremiah said they would. Zedekiah was a pathetic creature, afraid both of his people and his enemies (vv. 14-19). At the end of the day, he was the only person he was thinking about. If he had obeyed years ago, none of this would be happening. Zedekiah wanted a word from the Lord, and he assured Jeremiah he would not kill him if he told him the truth (vv. 14-16). And the truth was as harsh and unyielding as ever (vv. 20-23).

It's not what Zedekiah hoped to hear; nevertheless, he had this much decency left – a measure of God's grace to a king called to serve His people for good (Rom. 13.1-4) – that he gave Jeremiah words to say to the princes to keep them from throwing him back into the dungeon (vv. 24-28). As the city fell, Jeremiah remained under house arrest in the prison courtyard.

In various places around the world today, faithful believers like Jeremiah are suffering for their faith in Jesus. They will not deny Him, and they will not be silent about His demands. Pray for God to protect and encourage them. And pray for yourself, that He will embolden you in your witness for Christ like He did

Jeremiah.

*Reflect.*

1. Why did it make sense that Zedekiah would show some kindness to Jeremiah?
2. Jeremiah suffered for his faith and his calling. Should we as believers today expect to suffer for our faith and our calling? Explain.
3. How should we pray for believers around the world who are suffering for their faith?

*Jeremiah did not only prudently persuade the people to do what he deemed necessary, but he also discharged faithfully his office as a Prophet: nor did he give any other counsel than what he had been commanded to give: nay, he commanded them, by authority, to pass over to the Chaldeans, for it was according to God's will. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Jeremiah 38.1*

*Help me to be faithful and bold in my witness for You, Lord, as I...*

*Pray Psalm 77.4-20.*

Pray that God will revive His people and lead us forth in witness for Christ once again.

*Sing Psalm 77.4-20.*

**Psalm 77.4-20** (Leoni: [\*The God of Abraham Praise\*](#))

I scarce a word can speak, so troubled is my soul;  
yet I recall Your grace to Israel long ago.  
I sing Your praise by night; my heart will meditate;  
my spirit ponders all Your grace and wonders great.

O Lord, will You reject Your people without end?  
Has favor ceased, are You no more our heav'nly Friend?  
Your promise and Your love in anger are obscured;  
my sin has turned Your hand away, Your beauty blurred.

Now let us call to mind Your deeds and wonders, Lord,  
and meditate on all Your works and praise Your Word.  
Full holy is Your way, great God of earth and heav'n,  
to You, O God of strength and pow'r all praise be giv'n!

The waters and the deeps all tremble 'neath Your hand.  
The clouds give forth, the sky resounds across the land.  
Your lightning flashes forth and lights the earth around;  
we feel beneath our feet the trembling of the ground.

Your way leads through the sea; Your path the waters parts.  
Your footprints are to us deep mysteries in our hearts.  
As then by Moses' hand and Aaron's law-filled voice,  
You led Your sheep, lead us that we may all rejoice!

## 7 Living toward the Promises

*Pray Psalm 86.10-12.*

For You *are* great, and do wondrous things;  
You alone *are* God.  
Teach me Your way, O LORD;  
I will walk in Your truth;  
Unite my heart to fear Your name.  
I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart,  
And I will glorify Your name forevermore.

*Sing Psalm 86.10-12.*

(Andrews: *Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven*)

For You are great, You wondrous deeds do;  
You are the only and sovereign Lord.  
Teach me Your way, let me give heed to,  
with all my heart, Savior, all Your Word!  
Lord, be gracious to me, Lord, be gracious to me,  
praise Your Name forever, Lord!

*Review Jeremiah chapters 34-38; meditate on Jeremiah 36.27, 28, 32*

*Prepare.*

1. Why did God instruct Jeremiah to commit His Word to writing?
2. What do we learn about the process of Scripture's inspiration from these chapters?

*Meditate.*

The focus of Jeremiah 34-38 is the Word of God, and how it serves as a watershed for people. Those who obey the Word of God – like Jeremiah and the Rechabites – dwell on the safe and fruitful side of God's Word, enjoying blessings even in the midst of adversity. Those who despise God's Word – whether by refusing to obey it or substituting their own ideas or other teachings for it – consign themselves to the promised threats and judgments of His covenant.

The kings of Judah, from Shallum to Zedekiah, disobeyed the Word of God. They listened to false prophets who kept saying that all would be well, and they put Jeremiah in jail for preaching the Word of God. When Jeremiah committed God's Word to writing, Jehoiakim burned it in the fire. But the Word of God is indestructible. God commanded Jeremiah to prepare another scroll of what God had revealed to him; and he added much more to that scroll of the continuing Word of God. The Word of God is a living thing, and no amount of neglect, rage, or violence of men can keep it from accomplishing the purposes for which God sends it forth.

People may ignore God's Word, deny it, despise it, try to destroy it, or simply refuse to read and meditate on it, thinking that by such actions they will discover a better way for themselves. But everything short of the clear teaching of the Word of God is a slippery slope, leading to disappointment, sin, and ruin. Jeremiah had previously told us how good and delightful it is to "eat" the Word of God (Jer. 15.16) – to feed our souls on its teaching, and bring our lives into its green pastures and beside its still waters. The Rechabites honored the Law of God and were blessed. Jeremiah honored the Word of God and was protected. Those who would not hear and submit to God's Word set themselves up for disaster at the hands of God's servant,

Nebuchadnezzar.

The lesson is clear: We can ignore the Word of God if we choose. However, the Word of God remains; its promises never fail, and its threats will all be realized. We who claim to be followers of Jesus look to the Scriptures to see and know Him, increase in love for Him, and serve Him faithfully, even in a world that despises the Good News of forgiveness and eternal life. We may be scorned and ill-treated for our convictions, but as long as we hold fast to the sure and unchanging Word of God, we will be blessed.

*Reflect.*

1. What does God expect of us with respect to His Word?
2. What can keep us from feeding on and delighting in God's Word?
3. How can you encourage other believers to read and meditate in the Scriptures?

*The Prophet, no doubt, trembled, but as he felt bound to obey God's command, he disregarded his own life, when he had to make the choice, whether to refuse the burden laid on him, or to provide for his own safety... Let us then learn simply to obey God, though the labor he requires from us may seem to be useless.* John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Jeremiah 36.32, 22*

*Let Your Word take deep root in me, O Lord, and use me today to...*

*Pray Psalm 86.1-9.*

Look to the Lord to show you how you ought to follow His Word today – to love, bear witness, and grow in grace in everything you do.

*Sing Psalm 86.1-9.*

**Psalm 86.1-9** (Andrews: [\*Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven\*](#))

Bow down Your ear, O Lord and hear me;  
I am afflicted and much in need!  
Rescue my godly soul, be near me;  
save me, O God, all my crying heed!  
Lord, be gracious to me, Lord, be gracious to me,  
all day long I pray and plead.

Lift up my soul, fill me with gladness;  
Lord You are good, You will soon forgive.  
Show me abundant lovingkindness;  
let all who call on You ever live.  
Lord, be gracious to me, Lord, be gracious to me,  
heed to my poor pleading give.

When in my trouble, Lord, I call You,  
You answer me; there is none like You!  
There are no works like Yours, and all whom  
You have created shall worship You.  
Lord, be gracious to me, Lord, be gracious to me,  
all shall glory give to You!

*The Indestructible Word: Jeremiah 34-38*

*Questions for reflection or discussion*

1. What lesson should we learn from the story of the Rechabites?
2. Why did God have Jeremiah commit His Word to writing?
3. What does God expect of us regarding His Word?
4. What can you do to improve the time you spend reading and meditating on God's Word?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from Jeremiah 34-38? How are you putting that lesson to work in your life?

*For prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

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Thank you.