

## **Dr. Allan MacRae: Jeremiah: Lecture 5**

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### **Jeremiah 27:1: Hebrew Text says Jehoiakim but Zedekiah is preferred reading**

**[0:0]**

The assignment for today was on Jeremiah 27. We had already looked at that chapter a little before and do you remember we noticed the problem in the chapter? This was included in the assignment today. The problem in the chapter was the first verse, which in the Hebrew text, as it has been handed down to us, says, "Early in the reign of Zedekiah (or Jehoiakim)," and then goes on and speaks twice in the chapter about Zedekiah. This is an instance of comparatively few, obvious scribal errors in the Bible, which evidently was made by a scribe at a very early time, because we find it in, I believe, all of the Hebrew manuscripts. The fact that this scribal error has been preserved, although it was perfectly obvious that it was an error, is an evidence to us of the remarkable accuracy by which the manuscripts were copied. We can depend upon our present manuscripts that they are very, very close to the original. There is no other ancient writing--no writing from ancient Greece, no writing from ancient Rome--no other ancient writing that has been preserved by being copied and recopied, which we can be anywhere near as sure that we are near to the original writing as the Bible. And the fact that these few errors have not been corrected by the scribes, but simply copied and copied and re-copied--figuring that it's better to copy what they have than to start in changing the text that was given to them--gives us confidence that there are very few errors in the manuscripts as they have been passed down to us.

Now, it is an interesting question of course: how did this come to say, “early in the reign of Johoiakim” rather than “Zedekiah,” because we have Zedekiah mentioned twice just a little later on in the chapter [27:3, 12]? One commentator has made what I think is a very good suggestion. He points out that this verse is just about word for word like the first verse of the previous chapter [26:1], and he suggests that a very early scribe copied that first verse of the previous chapter by mistake, and then having copied that by mistake, perhaps he went off to lunch or something and then when he came back he went right on copying this chapter without realizing the mistake he had made because it’s almost identical with the wording of the beginning of the previous chapter. Now that’s only a guess, but I think a fairly good one.

### **Jer 27: God ‘s power over Creation and History [2:29]**

Now, I asked you to look at the chapter this time and to give me an answer to three questions. I asked you first to list all the names of places and briefly state the location of each. That was quite a simple thing for you to do, but it is good to be sure we have those in line. Second, I asked you what claims this chapter makes about the power of the God of Israel. And most of you pointed out that in verse 5 and following we have the statement that Jeremiah asked the emissaries from various countries who had come to seize Zedekiah to try to discuss with Zedekiah how they could band together to oppose the king of Babylon. Jeremiah had sent a message to all the emissaries and said give a message to your masters and say this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel says: “With my great power and outstretched arm I made the earth and its people and the animals that are on it and I give it to anyone I please.” A great claim of God as the

creator of all things. And then He says in Jer. 27:6: “Now I will hand all your countries over to my servant, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. I will make even the wild beasts subject to him. All nations will serve him and his son and his grandson, until the time for his land comes; then many nations and great kings will subjugate him.” What a tremendous claim of God’s power--both of his power in creation and of his power in history: that he was giving over all these lands to the king of Babylon, that the king of Babylon and his son and his grandson would exert great power, but that afterwards God would cause his power to come to an end, which of course, was literally fulfilled. So that’s a tremendous claim of the power of the God of Israel. He was not merely a God of one small area; He was the God of the whole world.

### **Yahweh not a tribal God [4:13]**

When I was a student at the University of Berlin, I was asked to preach in the American church in Berlin. I was asked to preach at the American church there and I had a fellowship to study at the university. I did not feel I could take the time to preach there all the time, so I told them I’d be glad to preach half the time if they would get someone else. And they got another man who was a student there, a graduate of a different seminary than the one I had studied in, and he would preach. I suggested each of us would preach two Sundays in a row so there’d be a little continuity rather than changing every week. And so he would preach two Sundays and I would preach two Sundays. And when the other one was preaching, the one that wasn’t would sit in the front row and take the collection money. It very soon became evident that his views were very different from mine, and I remember one day when he told how when Jacob went down to the

Jordan river and crossed over and headed north, he left the territory of Yahweh, the God of Israel, and he went into the territory of Chemosh, the god of Moab. He very clearly believed that the God of the Old Testament was a tribal god, a god of one small nation, and of course there were many nations in ancient time who considered that their nation had its own god, but the God of Israel repeatedly makes tremendous claims in the Bible that He was not like that. He was a different sort of God. He was the creator of all of the universe.

This man used to preach on how they believed in a tribal god and the glory of the common place and various subjects like that. I preached on the resurrection of Christ, on salvation through the Lord and so on, and the people liked both of us. It was really sad to see how little real understanding the average congregation does have. And it is easy in most churches if they get the wrong man for pastor or someone to come in and to lead them in the direction very, very different from what the previous pastor led them. You have to repeat the truth and reiterate and stress it in order to really get it into the minds and hearts of people. I trust I got some truth into the hearts of those people there and that the opposite teaching given the other half of the time didn't completely annihilate what I was able to give.

### **Jer 27:22 temple items taken to Babylon [6:21]**

But this chapter doesn't have a great deal about the great power of the God of Israel, but it has some very excellent references to it. Verse 22 again, at the end of the chapter, said that, "All the things in the temple will be taken to Babylon there they will remain until the day I come for them," declares the Lord, "then I will bring them back

and restore them to this place.” I hope that most of you included that in your assignment also, that that is a declaration of the great power of the God of Israel: that He could bring back from Babylon, from that tremendous power that was so much more powerful, from the human viewpoint, than the power of Israel, that he could, in his own time, bring back what he had allowed to be taken to Babylon.

### **Promise and Blessings in Jer 27 [7:06]**

Then the third question in the assignment today was: are there any promises of blessings in this chapter, to whom do they refer, and of what do they consist? And I trust that most of you noticed four verses 7, 11, 12, and 22 that deal specifically with this. In the book of Jeremiah, God’s rebuke of sin and God’s declaration of punishment for sin occupies far more space than promises of blessing, but there are many of them interspersed at many points, and even in this chapter we find these very definite evidences of God’s blessing in these verses. Now in verse 7, we have already noticed the statement of God’s power that Babylon would be overcome, but it shows His blessing to Israel--that Babylon’s control would not be permanent, that within a few generations this land would also be subjugated even as Israel was now.

Then in chapter 27 verse 11, he says that “if any nation will bow its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I will let that nation remain in its own land to till it and to live there,” declares the Lord. There is a conditional promise of blessing, that God will protect the nations that submit to the king of Babylon instead of opposing him at this time. And then in verse 12 he gives the same message to Zedekiah. He says, “bow your neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon. Serve him and his people and

you will live.” That is doubtless the advice that the king in Norway gave to his people when Hitler conquered. He said, “bow to Hitler and we can survive.” But he had no word from the Lord. He was simply using his own human intelligence, which was wrong in that case, but in this case, God gives the promise to Zedekiah, a promise which Zedekiah ignored thinking he could get help from Egypt, or thinking that he would be able to resist the king of Babylon and preserve his life.

And the other promise of blessing, of course, in chapter 27 is in verse 22 where he says that God will bring back and restore to Jerusalem the things from the temple. So just a few definite glimpses of God’s blessing on those who do His will, in the midst of a chapter largely devoted to his declaration of punishment coming for sin.

**Next Assignment: Chapters 11 and 12: Jeremiah’s Personal experiences [9:15]**

Now, I’m not going to post the assignment for next time. I’m going to dictate it to you because it’s very short and very simple. I mean the assignment itself is short, not the doing of it. The assignment is to look over chapters 11 and 12. Look over these two chapters and answer this question: “What do these chapters tell about Jeremiah’s personal activity and experience?” Give references. In this particular assignment, we are not interested in Jeremiah’s message; we’re interested in what Jeremiah did and what he experienced. If that question had been asked about chapter 27, all you could say was that God commissioned him to send a message to these various nations. That is all that is told specifically about Jeremiah in this chapter, and many chapters tell you nothing about him but simply contain part of the message he gave. See whether you have anything that is specifically about Jeremiah’s personal life, personal activities, or relationships of other

people to Jeremiah in chapters 11 and 12. Briefly state what those experiences are and give the references. That is the assignment then for next time.

### **Background Review and Jeremiah's Promised Protection [ 10:21]**

Now we have been looking at Jeremiah's start in the early part of the book. We looked at certain chapters in the latter part earlier in order to get an idea of the background of the general situation in which Jeremiah wrote his book and the very unusual details of the way the book was written: how in the midst of the turbulent situation of those days, sections of it are not always in the order in which they're given, particularly in the latter two thirds of the book. And so we began last time to go through these earlier chapters. We had still earlier looked at chapter 1 that contained the account of Jeremiah's call, in which God gave an idea of the destruction that he was going to predict so specifically in later chapters. He promised to protect Jeremiah. Now Jeremiah may have thought that this protection was mostly against these outside nations that were going to conquer the Jews, and God did protect him from them in a very unusual way, but that's not the main emphasis here though Jeremiah. We don't know how much Jeremiah realized at the time. God said in chapter 1, verse 18, "I've made you a fortified city, an iron pillar, and a bronze wall to stand against the whole land, against the king of Judah, its officials, its priests, and the people of the land. They will fight against you." That was a terrible thing to say to a young man starting his career. It predicted terrible difficulties ahead, and we have seen some of these difficulties toward the end of Zedekiah's reign, in previous assignments, and some of the earlier ones we will notice again as we go through these chapters.

### **Comments on Chapter and Verse Divisions in the Bible [11:51]**

Well, it is hard to divide the book into strictly logical divisions because we notice it was formed by a rather unusual process. It is not a logical order, but a presentation of Jeremiah's message as he gave it at various times and situations in which he gave it. But I'm going to divide just into sections that I will give numbers to which will vary in length. The main thing will be to notice where the important dividing points at the beginning and end of each of these sections are. And these dividing points do not always correspond to chapter divisions. The Lord has caused His Word to be preserved, most wonderfully, but those things that were not original have often been translated in very awkward fashion. There are many peculiarities that have come in various translations of the book. Even the best translations have got peculiarities.

One thing that happened very early was the division into verses. We don't know who divided the Old Testament into verses and I don't know when the a division of the New Testament was made into verses, but whoever made these divisions did an extremely sloppy job of it. You will find cases where two or three words make a verse, and you will find cases where two long sentences are called one verse. And that's not so bad, but the fact that sometimes the end of one section and the beginning of another will be combined into one verse is very confusing, and the fact that a verse division comes often leads one to think there is a separation when actually there isn't any.

I think a very outstanding illustration of that, but by no means the only one of its kind, is in Psalm 19. No doubt most of you are familiar with Psalm 19. It has several stanzas in it. It is a beautiful poem with several stanzas. The first is, "The heavens



declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of His hands; day after day they poured forth speech, night after night they displayed knowledge. There's no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their voices have gone out into all the earth and their words to the end of the world." And the next stanza is, "In the heavens He's pitched a tent for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion, like a champion rejoicing to run his course." Two very distinct stanzas in this wonderful psalm and the man who made the verse divisions must have been very confused when he put them in this chapter because the first stanza ends with the word's "their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world." The next stanza begins with the words "In the heavens He's pitched a tent for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming forth from his pavilion", and so on. He put the last line of one stanza and the first line of the other into one verse and so you have verse 4, that really are two different stanzas as one verse, and we have a number of cases like that. Concerning the verse divisions, we should be careful we don't allow them to become an element in interpretation because they're not. They are often very poorly inserted, and the same is true of chapter divisions.

Some years ago there was a very noted Bible expositor named Cambell Morgan from England, who used to travel through this country. He traveled through this country holding meetings for a week or two in each place attracting great crowds that used to love to hear him. In Los Angeles he had meetings for a week each afternoon and evening. The afternoon meetings started at 2, but by 12 o' clock the place would be jammed with people, so it just gives an idea of how much people respected him as a Bible expositor at

the time. Well, I heard Cambell Morgan say that in his opinion in nine-tenths of the cases the chapter divisions are wrong. I think that's a very extreme statement. I think many of them are very excellently placed, but there are a great many that are very confusing. And so, I always like when I read a chapter of Scripture to start a verse or two earlier and to run a verse or two into the next chapter so that I won't miss the connection if there's not a real division at that point.

**Jer 2:1-3:5 Assyria mentioned [so reign of Josiah] [15:51]**

Now in the case of Jeremiah 1, there is a very definite connection, so we called number 1 of our outline, "Jeremiah's call," which would be chapter 1. Section 2, as I am designating it for our present purpose, I call "Judah's sin against God," a very general title. This next section probably represents very early messages of Jeremiah's, which were based largely on the purpose of pointing out Judah's sins, rebuking them for it, declaring that God's punishment was certain, but also mentioning how God would bless them if they would turn from their sin.

Now, I include in this section chapter 2, verse 1, to chapter 3, verse 5. As I said, I think there is quite a poor chapter division there, chapter 2:1 to 3:5, because I believe there is a much more important division between 3:5 and 6 than there is at the beginning of that chapter. We mention briefly verse 18 of chapter 2, "Why go to Egypt to drink water from the Shihor? Why go to Assyria to drink water from the river?" This is good evidence in this verse that this chapter was written very early in Jeremiah's ministry because Assyria was destroyed soon after the death of Josiah. But before that, the king of Judah thought, "Well, we can play off the two great powers, Egypt and Assyria, against

each other, and if someone bothers us we can look for help from the other.” Well, shortly after the death of Josiah, Assyria was completely overcome and annihilated and never reestablished, and its place was taken by Babylon in 612 B.C., but people didn’t realize that for quite a long time, of course, but this shows that this section was written very early. The central idea of it, however, remains important through most of his ministry because when Babylon became a great power, the kings of Judah were constantly looking toward Egypt--to counterbalance Egypt against Babylon--and Jeremiah was constantly admonishing, “Don’t look to Egypt for protection. Look to God for protection.” And that runs all through the book, even though Assyria does not occur much after this first chapter. The same thing was stressed in verse 36 of the chapter 2 where he said, “You will be disappointed by Egypt as you were by Assyria.”

### **Jer 3:1-5 goes with chapter 2 [18:10]**

The third chapter starts with this word: "If a man divorces his wife," and the archbishop, as he rode on his horse and made the chapter divisions in his lap, perhaps noticed that and said, “Well, we have been talking about the kings and their actions.” Now he says, “Jeremiah is getting into domestic things so there’s a good place to make a chapter division.” But if he’d only read a little bit further--perhaps his Latin was a little rusty, I don’t know--but if he looked a little further he would have seen that Jeremiah is using the evil of divorce as an illustration. He’s not here speaking specifically about divorce, but about people’s attitude toward God. Jeremiah continues the same discussion as in the previous verses, and verses 4 and 5, the last verses in this section, I think are an excellent illustration of a poor verse division.

Verse 4 of chapter 3 starts, “Have you not just called to me, my father, my friend from my youth?” That’s verse 4 of chapter 3 and verse 5 says, “Will you always be angry? Will your wrath continue forever? This is how you talk, but you do all the evil you can.” It is quite obvious that the last half of verse 4 and the first half of verse 5 represent what the people are saying. The previous half of the verse introduces what the people are saying, and the final half of the verse goes on to rebuke them for it. And so, it would be much more reasonable to make the last half of verse 5 a separate verse and put the first half with verse 4.

**Jer 3:6-4:2: Mercy for the People of the Northern Kingdom [ 19:36]**

But then, it seems to me very clearly that the new section begins at that point, which I’m calling number 3: “Mercy for the people of the Northern Kingdom.” You notice it starts in verse 6, “During the reign of Josiah, the Lord said to me.” If the bishop’s mind hadn’t been on his next call or something else, he surely would have noticed that that was an introduction to a discussion much more different than where he made the chapter division. But it goes on then to speak about the Northern Kingdom, “Have you seen what faithless Israel has done?”

You remember that after Solomon’s death, Jeroboam led an insurrection, and ten of the tribes went with Jeroboam, but the people of Judah stayed with Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, and they continued to have two kingdoms for a long time. But over a hundred years before Jeremiah wrote, the Northern Kingdom had been conquered by Assyria and the people taken into exile.

### **Northern Kingdom and God's Mercy not just on Judah [20:34]**

I heard a very well-known Bible teacher a few years ago make this statement: that during the years when the kingdom was divided, all the good people in the Northern Kingdom gradually migrated to the Southern Kingdom and the wicked people in the southern migrated to the Northern Kingdom, so that when the Northern Kingdom was taken into exile, they were just carried off and disappeared among the nations, while the Southern Kingdom was taken into exile and God followed them with his blessing and brought them back. Now this man who gave that statement I've heard give many very fine interpretations of Scripture, but at that point, he was drawing an inference that was completely without scriptural basis. And as you look at this section, number 3, which I'm calling "Mercy for the people of the Northern Kingdom", 3:6 to 4:2, you'll find clear evidence in this section that that was not true. While they were two separate kingdoms, God still considered them as one nation of Israel.

### **Elijah and Elisha to Northern Kingdom [ 21:30]**

Well, I would think a person would just think about the fact that God sent two of his greatest prophets, Elijah and Elisha, to the Northern Kingdom. That would be pretty good evidence that he had not simply cast off the Northern Kingdom. But here, a hundred years after the Northern Kingdom had been taken into exile, God causes Jeremiah to devote this section from 3:6 to 4:2 to pointing out that God says that, "Faithless Israel, I thought she would return to me," in verse 7. "But she did not, and her unfaithful sister Judah saw it. I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries, yet I saw that her unfaithful sister Judah had no fear;

she also went out and committed adultery." But in verse 11, Jeremiah says, "The Lord said to me, 'faithless Israel is more righteous than the unfaithful Judah'." If this Bible teacher I mentioned had happened to notice that verse, he would have lost maybe a fourth of his fine message which is completely contradicted by this verse. God's interest in the Northern Kingdom continued very definitely, even though they had been in exile for a hundred years.

### **God as Northern Kingdom's [Israel's] Husband [22:45]**

And in verse 14, He gives an appeal to the people from the Northern Kingdom: "Return faithless people" declares the Lord "for I am your husband". He spoke about giving them a certificate of divorce. That meant, of course, that He had allowed them to be taken into exile, but He did not consider the bond broken between them: a lifetime bond, an eternal bond, which God had made with the people of Israel. Because He says, "I am your husband. I will choose one of you from every town and two from every clan and bring you to Zion." And we surely have here definite proof that from the Northern Kingdom as well as the Southern Kingdom people returned from the exile; and at the present Jews were not simply from the Southern Kingdom, but that they come from both kingdoms, and that the whole land of Israel God thought of as one people, not as two people of whom one was completely lost.

And then He goes on to give this marvelous promise to the people of the Northern Kingdom. Chapter 3 verse 14 continues, He says, "Return faithless people for I am your husband. I will choose one of you from every town and two from every clan and bring you to Zion. Then I will give you shepherds after My own heart who shall lead you with

knowledge and understanding. In those days when your numbers have increased greatly in the land, declares the Lord, men will no longer say the ark of the covenant of the Lord. It will never enter their minds or be remembered. It will not be missed nor another one be made. At that time they will call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the Lord. No longer will they follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts. In those days the house of Judah will join the house of Israel and together they will come from a northern land to the land I gave your forefathers as an inheritance.”

### **Regathering of both kingdoms [Israel & Judah] –The Return [24:31]**

Here there is a very definite promise of a regathering of the people of both kingdoms, but not a regathering in which the whole nation will be called back because He said, “I will take you one from a family, two from a clan.” It's a regathering of a very substantial group out of both kingdoms to be regathered and to be brought back to Jerusalem. He says that they are to have that land and they are to have God's blessings, and He says all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the Lord. I do not see how one can feel this has been fulfilled in the present return of the Jews to Jerusalem, to Palestine, because most of them are atheists, either in expression of their views or at least in general practical attitude. It seems to me that this looks to a return, which the present one could conceivably turn into, but which would be at least quite different from what it is at present. Whether this return or whether it is a later return, it at least would seem to point to a definite return to Jerusalem of people of whom God says, “No longer will they follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts. They will gather in Jerusalem and

all nations will gather there to honor the name of the Lord.” Certainly this would seem to look forward to some very definite event that is to take place upon us as Christians, or in which descendants of the Northern Kingdom and of the Southern Kingdom will be involved. Now there are many predictions in the Old Testament that point only to great spiritual blessings to be given to people of all nations. There are many such things. But it’s pretty hard to interpret this passage in that way, it seems to me. Now we see that we have here these various pictures of God’s blessings on the people of the Northern Kingdom showing that His mercy has not departed from them, that His promises continue to them as well as to the Southern Kingdom.

#### **Jer 4:3-6:30 Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem [ 26:17]**

Now, rather than look at other interesting things (of which there are quite a number), I feel this semester moving along, so we’ll have to mention section number 4, which I believe starts with the third verse of the fourth chapter. The fourth chapter begins, “If you will return to me, O Israel, return to me. If you will put your detestable idols out of my sight and no longer go astray, and if in a truthful, just, and righteous way you swear, as surely as the Lord lives, then the nations will be blessed by Him and in Him will they glory.” There certainly would seem to be something to look forward to as a definite promise that has not yet come to pass.

But then it says, “this is what the Lord says to the men of Judah and Jerusalem.” He’d just been talking to Israel, now he talks to Judah and to Jerusalem. And so I’m going to call the fourth section, "Judgment on Judah and on Jerusalem," which might be considered as running from chapter 4, verse 3, to chapter 6, verse 30. This section begins



with a very wonderful call, a general call, which I've heard good sermons preached on, which can apply to people at any time. "Break up your unplowed ground, and do not sow among thorns." God, by His wonderful grace, comes and delivers us from sin, shows us our sin and our need for a Savior, and brings us to Christ. But we are commanded to break up our unplowed ground and not to sow among thorns. We are, as the book of Hebrews says, "You have not yet striven unto blood, striving against sin" (Hebrews 12:4). It is the one who is trying and failing to lead the life God wants, then sees his need for a Savior, and turns to God. God commands us to endeavor with our earthly strength, to do all we can, but that only leads us to realize that it is only through His grace that we can succeed. So this is a wonderful verse, very applicable to us today, though here specifically spoken to the people of Judah and Jerusalem.

And then He goes on to speak about the terrible fate that is ahead as a result of the sin of the people, and in verse 9 He reaches something of a climax: "In that day," declares the Lord, 'the king and the officials will lose heart, the priests will be horrified and the prophets will be appalled.'" The prophets will be appalled. Who are these prophets who are going to be appalled? It is quite evident that they are people who are pretending to be prophets. They are not those to whom God is giving His message, but it would seem quite evident from the book that there were many who claim to be God's messengers.

### **God deceiving Israel? [Jer 4:10] –False prophets option [28:55]**

And then we have a verse, verse 10, that has puzzled many people: "Then I said, Oh Sovereign Lord, how completely you have deceived this people and Jerusalem by

saying you will have peace when the sword is at our throat.” This verse has puzzled many people. You’d think that Jeremiah in the midst of his giving this message to the people of the terrible punishment God was bringing upon them, a message that continues steadily through the previous verses and through the following verses, all of a sudden would say, “Then I said, ‘Oh Sovereign Lord, how completely you have deceived this people and Jerusalem by saying you will have peace when the sword is at our throat.’” Why would Jeremiah make a statement like that? I have looked at a dozen commentaries on the subject and found they all disagree with one another on what it means.

I think there are two possible interpretations of it. One interpretation is taking it exactly as it stands: that Jeremiah is thinking of these terrible things ahead and he just mentioned the prophets. He thinks of how the prophets have been giving the false messages and have been giving the people a false hope, but he realizes that God controls all things. That even the wicked acts of wicked men are under His control. And that God has permitted these prophets to speak in the way they have. In fact, we know that, for we read elsewhere in the Scripture that when people turn against the truth, God gives them over that they may believe a lie. Those who turn away from the truth, God permits to fall in utter confusion. And so it would be possible that Jeremiah says, “Oh Lord, how completely you permitted these false prophets to deceive the people and as the false prophets were all saying you will have peace, when actually the sword is at our throats.” Now I think that is a very possible interpretation of the verse, and it keeps the text exactly as it is.

### **God Deceiving Israel [Jer 4:10] – “I say” should read “they will say” [30:42]**

But I incline a little bit toward a different interpretation, an interpretation which does not follow the text as it stands in our English version. I would say this, many of you know, though the new students do not perhaps realize, that the Hebrew was originally written only with consonants. And it was only in the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD that the system was inserted throughout the Old Testament of putting in vowel marks. Now, that doesn't mean that those vowel marks aren't important because the text had been read and read through all the centuries, and doubtless, they remembered how it had been pronounced. But it's much easier in what is orally transmitted for errors to come in than in what is actually written. And if you simply change those vowel points in that first word, which is says “Then I said,” you can get it to say, “And they will say”. “They will say” instead of “Then I said”. Now somebody says, “What a crazy language it is in which changing a few vowel points will make a change like that.” Well, about as crazy as English. If you write the word, “read,” can anybody tell me how that word should be pronounced? Whatever you say, I can put another word next to it that will show that you are wrong. If you say that the word is pronounced 'read' (pronounced 'reed'), well, it could just as well as be 'read' (pronounced 'red'). If I say, "Every morning I read," or "Yesterday I read," we write the word, the exactly the same way. The context shows it was just as clear as if you wrote the word simply as "rd". If you don't know which vowels go with it, the context generally shows.

Now in this case, it may be that the verse division caused that the context should be overlooked, and the statement was taken as the beginning of something new rather

than a continuation. Because if you read it, “In that day” declares the Lord “the king and the officials will lose heart, the priests will be horrified, and the prophets will be appalled and they will say 'Oh Sovereign Lord, how completely you've deceived this people and Jerusalem by saying you will have peace when the sword is at our throats.'" That makes perfect sense, with just a small change of vowel points, which were put in the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD, although they generally do represent a correct tradition that has been carried down.

### **Alexandrinus Manuscript Reading [33:20]**

It's interesting that one copy, a very important copy of the Greek, of the Greek Bible, the manuscript Alexandrinus, which we call Manuscript A, actually says, “And they will say”. Though all other manuscripts of the Greek and of the Hebrew say, “Then I said”. Now if you take that, as I point out, instead of this being an isolated verse without much connection with the context, it is a natural continuation of the previous statement. The priests will be appalled and they will say, “Ah Sovereign Lord, how completely you have deceived this people.” And of course, that's just what you expect false prophets to do. They gave a message out of their own heads for years, what they thought would be the truth, what they thought God would say, greatly affected by what they thought the people would like to hear them say, but when people continue in error, they very soon come to believe that falsehood is true. And when they continue saying, “God says this, God says that,” and they find the people enjoy hearing them say it, they soon come to believe it themselves. Today we call this, "believing one's own propaganda." And so, now when the people see how false what they've been given is, they blame it on God. And they say, “God deceived these people; He gave us these

messages”, which He hadn’t given them at all. They had spoken on their own, out of their own false hearts, but after people do it for a while, God gives them over to believe a lie, and they sincerely believe it. Sincerity does not necessarily bring salvation. One can be sincerely wrong as I believe many of these prophets were who dealt this word.

**Historical Reference to God’s Promised peace [3<sup>rd</sup> option] –unlikely [34:58]**

Response to student question: "I was just wondering if the first interpretation. Could Jeremiah be saying, referring to when God had promised peace for Jerusalem and yet here’s a sword, could he be referring to previous chapters where we read that Jerusalem’s going to have peace."

MacRae’s response: That’s right, one of the commentaries does give that interpretation. It says that he, Jeremiah, says, "Well, look at these prophets in the past who told Josiah that the land would have peace and now you’re giving these prophecies of destruction." I would hesitate to think that that would be true because the whole import of the chapter is that this destruction is quite distant in the future yet, and that Jeremiah would stop at this point to change his message, I would be inclined to question. And also Jeremiah had had enough messages of destruction that I would think it unlikely but it does have the virtue of keeping the text exactly as it is, which I like to do as much as we can; but I do feel that we have to recognize that there are a few errors of transmission that have come in. We have very definite proof of that; for instance, the name Johoiakim in chapter 27 that we discussed.

### **Judgment in Judah and Jerusalem [36:26]**

Well, this section of judgments on Judah and Jerusalem has got some very interesting things in it, but it's very similar to much that we have already looked at in the latter part of the book, so I don't think I'll take time to look at it now. I'll just run over to the end of chapter 6, largely a rebuke of the people for sin and very vivid predictions of the destruction that God is going to bring to them.

### **Jeremiah's Temple Message –Jer 7 [36:49]**

The fifth section is: "The Message at the Temple." The beginning of chapter 7 is very clearly a definite break. "This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, stand at the gate of the Lord's house and there proclaim this message." And then we have the message that he gave at the temple and we continue from there next time.

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