

## Dr. Gary Yates, Jeremiah, Session 21, Jeremiah 34-35.

### Death to a Nation

### Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

#### 1. Abstract of Yates, Jeremiah, Session 21, Jeremiah 34-35. Death to a Nation, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture by Dr. Gary Yates **examines Jeremiah chapters 34-35**, focusing on the **disobedience of Judah** and the resulting **divine judgment**. The lecture uses the **example of the Rechabites**, a group who remained faithful to their ancestor's traditions, to highlight the contrast between their obedience and Judah's rejection of God's word. This disobedience, exemplified by their breaking of a covenant to free slaves, led to the nation's downfall. **Despite the nation's demise**, the lecture emphasizes that a **faithful remnant**, including the Rechabites and Baruch, found salvation through their obedience.

**2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Yates, Jeremiah, Session 21 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Major Prophets → Jeremiah).**



**Yates\_Jeremiah\_Ses  
sion21.mp3**

### 3. Yates, Jeremiah, Session 21, Jeremiah 34-35, Death to a Nation

#### Jeremiah: Death to the Nation and Life to the Remnant Study Guide

#### Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. How does Dr. Yates describe the overall structure of Jeremiah 26-45 and what is the significance of the Jehoiakim narratives?
2. What is the theological message that emerges from the book of Jeremiah?
3. What does the word "ulai" signify in relation to God's intentions toward the people of Judah?
4. What are the three vows that Jonadab commanded his descendants to follow, and what was the probable purpose of these vows?
5. What is the significance of Jeremiah's bringing the Rechabites into the temple and asking them to drink wine?
6. What point is the Lord making when comparing the Rechabites' faithfulness to their family tradition with Judah's unfaithfulness to God?
7. What event in Jeremiah 34 demonstrates the people of Judah's disobedience?
8. What was the original instruction from God regarding the enslavement of fellow Israelites?
9. What is the significance of the phrase "I will give your life as a prize of war" to Baruch?
10. How do the responses of the Jewish refugees in Egypt and the people of Judah in Chapter 34 highlight the theme of obedience and disobedience?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. Dr. Yates describes Jeremiah 26-45 as having two panels (26-35 and 36-45) framed by Jehoiakim narratives. These narratives emphasize that Judah repeatedly missed opportunities to be spared from judgment by rejecting God's word.

2. The main theological message is that God brought judgment upon Judah through exile because they did not obey the word spoken through Jeremiah. This is validated by the fall of Jerusalem, which confirmed Jeremiah's warnings and his status as a true prophet.
3. The word "ulai," meaning "perhaps," signifies God's willingness to relent from judgment if the people repent and turn from their evil ways; these opportunities are present at the beginning of each panel of the book.
4. Jonadab commanded his descendants not to drink wine, build houses, or plant crops. This was likely done to keep them isolated from the corrupting influences of Israelite and Canaanite society and preserve their faithfulness to the Lord.
5. Jeremiah bringing the Rechabites to the temple and asking them to drink wine is an object lesson designed to highlight Judah's disobedience. It demonstrates the Rechabites' faithfulness to a human tradition, in stark contrast to Judah's refusal to obey God's direct commandments.
6. The Lord is contrasting the Rechabites' consistent obedience to a human command with Judah's consistent disobedience to God's word. If the Rechabites can remain loyal to a human tradition, then Judah, with a direct covenant with God, should have listened more intently.
7. In Jeremiah 34, the people of Judah initially release their Hebrew slaves, obeying the law of Moses. However, after a reprieve, they take back those slaves, demonstrating a lack of genuine repentance and a manipulation of God's law, which results in punishment.
8. God instructed that fellow Israelites were not to be permanently enslaved; they were only to serve for six years and then be released in the seventh year, with provision for their new life, reflecting God's desire that there not be permanent social and economic inequality.
9. The phrase "I will give your life as a prize of war" to Baruch is an assurance that God will preserve him amidst the judgment and hardship. It emphasizes that his reward is escaping with his life, not a great blessing or earthly reward.
10. The people of Judah in chapter 34 broke a vow they made to follow God's law, and the refugees in Egypt in chapter 44 made a vow to ignore God's word. In both situations, their acts of disobedience reflect a consistent rejection of God's authority and demonstrate a hardening of their hearts against Him.

## Essay Questions

1. Analyze the significance of the Rechabites as an example of the "remnant" in Jeremiah, and discuss the implications of this example for understanding God's judgment and mercy.
2. Compare and contrast the beginning and ending of both panels of Jeremiah 26-45 (i.e. the situations present in chapters 26 & 35; and 36 & 45), examining the themes of opportunity, disobedience, and judgment.
3. Discuss the role of covenants in the book of Jeremiah, using the example of the covenant in chapter 34 and the response of the people, and evaluate how these covenants reveal the nature of God and the unfaithfulness of Judah.
4. Explore the theme of "life and death" as it appears in Jeremiah 34-35 in relation to the choices made by both the nation as a whole and the individual or group that is saved. Consider how this message is delivered by Dr. Yates and its implications for a contemporary reader.
5. Evaluate the significance of the use of the word "shub" (to turn/return) in the book of Jeremiah, and discuss its connection to the theme of repentance, both national and individual. How do instances of turning toward and turning away demonstrate God's desire for relationship with his people?

## Glossary

- **Apostasy:** The abandonment or renunciation of a religious or political belief or principle.
- **Baal:** A Canaanite deity associated with fertility and often worshipped in opposition to Yahweh.
- **Chaldeans:** Another name for the Babylonians, the empire that conquered Judah.
- **Covenant:** A sacred agreement or pact, often between God and his people, that establishes terms of relationship and responsibility.
- **Exile:** The state of being barred from one's native country, typically for political or punitive reasons. In the context of Jeremiah, this refers to the Babylonian exile.
- **Jehoiakim:** A king of Judah who reigned during the time of Jeremiah; his reign was marked by disobedience to God.

- **Jonadab:** The ancestor of the Rechabites, known for establishing a set of lifestyle rules for his descendants.
- **Lachish and Azekah:** Fortified cities of Judah that were among the last to fall to the Babylonians.
- **Nazarite:** A person in the Old Testament who took a vow to separate themselves to God for a period of time; this vow involved abstaining from wine and other things.
- **Prophet:** A person who speaks on behalf of God, conveying messages of warning, guidance, and hope.
- **Queen of Heaven:** A pagan goddess associated with fertility and often worshipped by the idolatrous people of Judah.
- **Rechabites:** A nomadic clan that lived in Judah, known for their obedience to their ancestor Jonadab's commands.
- **Remnant:** A small group of people who remain faithful to God despite widespread disobedience and judgment.
- **Repentance:** A turning away from sin and turning toward God, often involving a change in behavior and attitude.
- **Shema:** Hebrew for "hear" or "listen," often used to emphasize the importance of obeying God's word.
- **Shub:** Hebrew for "to turn" or "to return;" often used in the context of repentance and changing one's course of action.
- **Ulai:** Hebrew for "perhaps," expressing a conditional possibility, especially in relation to God's intentions to relent from punishment.
- **Zedekiah:** The last king of Judah, whose reign saw the final destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians.

## 4. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided lecture by Dr. Gary Yates on Jeremiah 34-35, focusing on the concepts of "Death to the Nation and Life to the Remnant":

### **Briefing Document: Jeremiah 34-35 - Death to the Nation and Life to the Remnant**

#### **Overview:**

Dr. Yates analyzes Jeremiah 26-45, dividing it into two panels (26-35 and 36-45), each demonstrating Judah's failure to heed God's word. He argues that this section of Jeremiah presents a clear message: disobedience leads to national judgment and death, while faithful response, even by a small remnant, leads to life. The lecture emphasizes the repeated opportunities given to Judah to repent and the tragic consequences of their consistent refusal. The stories of the Rechabites (first panel) and Baruch (second panel) serve as crucial examples of the "remnant" receiving life.

#### **Key Themes and Ideas:**

- **Disobedience and Judgment:** The central theological message is that God judged Judah with exile due to their persistent disobedience to His word, delivered through prophets like Jeremiah. "The theological message that emerges out of this is that God brought judgment upon the people of Judah... because of the fact that the people did not listen." This judgment is validated by the actual fall of Jerusalem, proving Jeremiah's warnings were true.
- **Recurring Opportunities, Closing Doors:** God repeatedly sent prophets, offering opportunities for repentance. The use of the word "ulai" ("perhaps") in chapters 26 and 36 demonstrates God's willingness to relent. However, with each rejection, the possibility of avoiding judgment diminishes, becoming "irrevocable" by the time of Jerusalem's fall. "What both of these sections are going to show...is the closing down of those opportunities to be spared from judgment."
- **Watershed Moment:** The time of Jehoiakim's reign is seen as a critical turning point. The rejection of God's word during this time solidifies the path toward judgment. "The time of Jehoiakim's reign in Judah was a watershed moment. There's still the opportunity to be spared from this judgment."
- **Life and Death:** The core message hinges on the choice between life and death, tied directly to obedience to God's word. This echoes Moses's earlier plea to the people: "choose for yourself, either life or death. Life will come from following

God's word. Death and cursing will come from those who choose to disobey his commands." The nation as a whole chooses death by rejecting God.

- **The Faithful Remnant:** Despite the national apostasy, God always preserves a faithful remnant. These individuals or groups responded positively to God and were spared. "But what we also have in the concluding chapters...is that there are limited examples of either individuals or groups that responded positively to the word of God, and they are going to be spared from the judgment." This contrasts with the overall judgment of the nation.
- **The Rechabites (Jeremiah 35):**
  - **Background:** A nomadic clan that honored a 200-year-old vow by their forefather, Jonadab (friend of Jehu's reforms). They vowed to: not plant crops, not live in houses (dwelling in tents), and not drink wine. This vow was intended to keep them separate from the corruption of Israelite society.
  - **Test and Significance:** Jeremiah brings the Rechabites into the temple and offers them wine. They refuse, honoring their family tradition. This highlights Judah's disobedience to God, which was far more significant. The Rechabites' faithfulness to a human tradition serves as a stinging rebuke to Judah, who rejected God's explicit commands. "If the Rechabites have been this loyal and faithful to a family tradition that was not directly commanded by God, then why have the people of Judah not listened to the words of the Lord that were commanded to them by God himself?"
  - **Promise:** As a result of their faithfulness, they are promised that they "shall never lack a man to stand before [God]." This blessing, though limited compared to national promises, underscores their unique position.
- **National Disobedience (Jeremiah 34):**
  - **Setting:** During Zedekiah's reign, with Babylonian forces pressing in.
  - **Initial Obedience:** King Zedekiah and the people make a covenant to release their Hebrew slaves, as God's law commanded. They obey initially, hoping to gain favor with God.
  - **Repentance of Repentance:** After a temporary reprieve, they re-enslave their former slaves. This reveals their superficial repentance and ultimate rejection of God's law, and brings a final judgment of death.

- **Consequence:** God declares "liberty" for them to die by the sword, pestilence, and famine, emphasizing the poetic justice of their actions. They are judged like the cut-up calf they walked between during their covenant-making ceremony, "I will make them like the calf that they cut in two."
- **Baruch (Jeremiah 45):**
- **Background:** Jeremiah's faithful scribe.
- **Promise:** God assures Baruch that while disaster is coming upon all, "I will give your life as a prize of war." This means he will escape with his life despite the trials, a symbolic "prize" in a time of devastation. His faithfulness is rewarded with the gift of life. "Baruch experiences the blessing of life that is offered to the people at the beginning of Jeremiah's ministry, but was rejected by them."
- **Jewish Refugees in Egypt (Jeremiah 44):**
- **Defiance:** These refugees declare they will *not* listen to God's word. They actively choose idolatry, emphasizing their commitment to the "Queen of Heaven."
- **Judgment:** God declares their destruction and consumption by sword and famine. They serve as another example of rejecting God's word and experiencing judgment. Only a tiny minority will escape the sword.
- **Theological Significance of the Remnant:** The promise to the Rechabites is similar to the promises made to the Levites and Davidic line, but while these promises have great national significance, the Rechabite promise, while important to the tribe, has no such national significance. This serves to show the profound and complete rejection of the nation as a whole, "This is an incredible condemnation of the nation of Judah as a whole." The contrast further emphasizes the complete failure of the nation to respond to God and embrace life.

#### **Rhetorical Devices and Irony:**

- **Use of the Obscure:** God uses an obscure group, the Rechabites, to shame the nation of Judah, who should have been models of obedience. "The mere fact that the Lord has to use this obscure tribe...to begin with, the fact that he has to use them as his example of obedience."
- **Irony of Blessings:** The Rechabites, who deprived themselves of covenantal blessings, are the ones blessed, while Judah, who received those blessings, are condemned.



- **Disobedience to a Prophet:** The Rechabites disobey Jeremiah's instruction, yet are blessed for their loyalty to their tradition. This is in stark contrast to the fact that Judah rejects God's explicit commands through Jeremiah. This creates a deeply ironic and impactful contrast.

**Conclusion:**

The lecture concludes by reiterating the central message: the response to God's word is a matter of life and death. Judah's rejection of God's word leads to national devastation, while a tiny remnant, represented by the Rechabites and Baruch, experiences the blessings of life. The lecture emphasizes the importance of listening to and obeying God's word for all people, both then and now. The hope for the future lies in the exiles in Babylon, not the remnants in Judah or Egypt, highlighting the importance of understanding historical and prophetic context when approaching these texts.

## 5. FAQs on Yates, Jeremiah, Session 21, Jeremiah 34-35. Death to a Nation, [Biblicalelearning.org](http://Biblicalelearning.org) (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions about Jeremiah 34-35 and 26-45

1. **What is the main theological message emphasized in Jeremiah chapters 26-45?**
2. The core message is that God brought judgment upon Judah, specifically the exile of Jerusalem, because the people repeatedly refused to listen and obey God's word as delivered through the prophet Jeremiah. The text emphasizes that God sent prophets persistently, but the people ignored their warnings. The destruction of Jerusalem was seen as validation of Jeremiah's prophecies and confirmation that he was a true prophet of God.
3. **How are the sections of Jeremiah chapters 26-45 structured, and what is significant about this structure?**
4. The chapters are structured into two panels, chapters 26-35 and chapters 36-45. Each panel is framed by stories involving Jehoiakim, highlighting the possibility that the people could repent and be spared from judgment. Both sections demonstrate that the people of Judah ultimately rejected God's word, solidifying the inevitability of the judgment prophesied by Jeremiah. Each panel begins with a possibility of avoiding disaster, but ends with a statement of national judgment.
5. **What role do the Rechabites play in Jeremiah chapter 35, and why are they significant?**
6. The Rechabites, a nomadic clan, were faithful to a vow their ancestor Jonadab made, which included abstaining from wine, living in tents, and not planting crops. God uses them as an example because they were faithful to a human tradition, while Judah was unfaithful to the commands of God. Their obedience to their father's command serves as a sharp contrast to the nation of Judah's disobedience to God, underscoring the importance of heeding God's word. Despite not being directly commanded by God to keep this vow, the Rechabites are blessed for their faithfulness, while Judah is judged for its unfaithfulness to God's direct commands.

7. **What is the meaning behind Jeremiah's instruction for the Rechabites to drink wine, and why do they refuse?**
8. Jeremiah's instruction to the Rechabites to drink wine is a test, intentionally ironic given their historical avoidance of it as part of their vow. The Rechabites' refusal is not a failure, but rather an illustration to the people of Judah. They were faithful to a tradition not directly from God. This underscores the contrast between their faithfulness to their forefather and Judah's unfaithfulness to God's direct commands. The Rechabites' faithfulness is not to Jeremiah but to the command of their forefather, which highlights the greater lack of faithfulness in Judah.
9. **What does the story of the Rechabites reveal about God's view of the remnant and his judgment against Judah?** The Rechabites, though an obscure and somewhat isolated group, represent the idea of a "remnant" of people who are faithful to their convictions and are spared from God's judgment. While the nation of Judah is condemned for its disobedience, the Rechabites are promised a future presence before God because of their loyalty to their family tradition. Their example serves as a powerful indictment of Judah's national disobedience and shows that even in times of widespread apostasy, God always preserves a faithful few.
10. **What was the significance of the covenant made by King Zedekiah and the people of Jerusalem concerning their Hebrew slaves?**
11. King Zedekiah and the people of Jerusalem made a covenant to release their Hebrew slaves, aligning with God's law. This act, initially, seemed like a positive response to God's word. It may have been an attempt to earn God's favor during the siege by the Babylonian army. However, they soon broke this covenant and re-enslaved the freed people after the immediate danger receded. This act of reneging on their covenant, an act of repenting from their repentance, highlights their fickle nature and sealed their fate, bringing forth God's judgment for their blatant manipulation of God's laws.

**12. How does the story of Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe, illustrate the theme of life to the remnant in the second panel?**

13. In the second panel, Baruch receives a promise of life, much like the Rechabites in the first panel. Baruch had been a constant, faithful companion of Jeremiah during difficult periods of opposition. While the nation was experiencing destruction, Baruch, because of his faithfulness and courage, is promised that he will survive the coming disaster, showing that God rewards individual obedience even in the face of widespread disobedience and national judgment.

**14. What is the final message regarding the consequences of obedience and disobedience presented in Jeremiah 26-45?**

15. The primary message is that listening to and obeying God's word is a matter of life and death, both on a national and individual level. While the nation of Judah, including the Jewish refugees in Egypt, faced devastating judgment for their persistent disobedience and rejection of God's word, a small remnant of individuals like the Rechabites and Baruch were spared and blessed. The book of Jeremiah ultimately urges readers, then and now, to consider their own responses to God's word, as they will ultimately determine one's own fate.