

The Holy Family - The Prophet Jeremiah: 13

(0:23 - 9:42)

Shabbat Shalom and welcome to United Israel World Union. This is our Saturday morning scripture study. Shabbat Shalom.

Welcome and thank you very much for joining us. I wanted to give one announcement before I get started this morning. We have coming up April 21st through the 23rd our 80th annual meeting in conference.

We're hosting it in Charlotte, North Carolina that weekend and I hope that some of my friends will post the link on both Facebook and YouTube for you to go to our website unitedisraelworldunion.com. There is a conference tab where you can register. We don't charge anything to come to the conference. People are welcome and encouraged to donate as they are able to help us with the cost of the conference, but it doesn't cost you anything.

There's no registration fee, but registration is required on the website and that way we know who's coming, how many of you are coming, but if you want to spend an incredibly enlightening weekend with me and with many others in United Israel talking late at night around, usually it's around a campfire in a nice courtyard, then you want to be there. So I encourage you to sign up very, very soon. There's also a link.

We have a special reserved rate at the Hilton Doubletree in Charlotte at South Park and so if you go on you can register for the conference. You can also find the link to get one of our special rates at the room there and do it soon. We've got until March the 20th for people to take advantage of that rate at the Hilton Doubletree.

We are trying to extend that, but as of yet, March 20th is the deadline. So sign up now, sign up soon, and be ready to join us April 21st through the 23rd in Charlotte, North Carolina. United Israel World Union's 80th.

I hope to see you there. So this is class number 13. Class number 13 in our ongoing study of the book of Jeremiah.

Our study is called The World and Words of the Prophet Jeremiah. Jehoiakim, or Jehoiakim as he was called in the streets of the day, is the king in the place where we're at in our current study. And at the close of last week's class, in chapter 26 is where we were of Jeremiah, Jehoiakim slew Uriah ben Shammaiah of Kiriath Yairim.

He killed a prophet of God. He did. Now there's a way in Hebrew where you say he had him killed, but this simply says in Jeremiah chapter 26 that Jehoiakim slew Uriah ben Shammaiah of Kiriath Yairim with the sword.

And the reason that he did that is because Uriah had prophesied against Jerusalem and the land of Judea. Not only did he prophesy against Jerusalem in the land of Judea, but he did so according, this is what Jeremiah 26:20 says, according to the words, all the words of Jeremiah. So here you've got a prophet who's speaking in the name of another prophet, declaring the same message that Jerusalem in the land of Judea will be destroyed.

The message was not taken kindly. Uriah had to flee. Word gets out that that the officials, the government officials, are going to kill him.

He flees to Egypt, but Jehoiakim sent Elnatan, Ben-Akbar is his name, Elnatan Ben-Akbar and some others to go from Judea, from the capital, to fetch Uriah from Egypt, which they did. They brought him back, killed him with the sword, Jehoiakim did. Tossed his body, his dead body is what the Hebrew says, tossed his dead body in the graves of the common folk.

A prophet of God just threw his dead body, killed by the king, descendant of David. Now, from the closing passage of Jeremiah chapter 26, the last verse of 26, Jeremiah likely, very likely, would have suffered the same fate had it not been for the courageous intercession of one man. One man stepped in, saved his life.

The man's name is Achikam, which means my brother has arisen, and indeed Achikam stepped up. He rose up and he saved Jeremiah from the same fate as Uriah ben Shemaiah. And what I find striking about this is just how horrible the religious and political establishment of Judea was.

Now, while most miss this point, I'm gonna focus on something that people rarely notice as they study the book of Jeremiah and the world and words of the prophet Jeremiah, this final 40 years, if you will, of the kingdom of Judea, most people miss this, I'm gonna focus on it, that this man, Achikam, his family is ever present during this period. One of the things that, you know, a lot of people might just want to read the words of Jeremiah when they study, study, air quotes Jeremiah, but I want to study the period, I want to know not only Jeremiah and the words of Jeremiah, but I want to know the supporting cast, I want to know who was there, what are some of the people that were part of this world, and it's important because we find archaeological discoveries with some of these people's names, and we're able to validate certain periods of the biblical story and certain elements in the biblical story, we're able to validate because of these finds. We're gonna get into some of those.

I'm gonna share some archaeological discoveries that have been found within the last 10, 20, 50 years that underscore the veracity of events in the book of Jeremiah in this period. But if you don't know who these people are, you might find some of these bulla or find some of these inscriptions and see a name and think, well, you know, who is this? But we're gonna put those people in the book, as we would say. This particular family to which Achikam belongs, I'm gonna share with you today that we have three generations of one family who represent the best of the Judeans in the kingdom's final years.

These people, this family is what I've called, and it's the title of my class today, the Holy Family. Now who they were and what they did is the subject of the teaching today. I want you to go with me this morning to Jeremiah, Jeremiah chapter 26.

We're gonna go to the last verse. We're gonna pick up where we left off last week, Jeremiah chapter 26, and the final verse is verse 24. Now this is after, immediately on the hills of Jeremiah's temple sermon, and it says, nevertheless the hand of Achikam, the son of Shaphan, was with Yirmiyahu that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death.

(9:43 - 11:38)

This particular man, Achikam, saved Jeremiah's life from the hand of the people. In other words, it's not just the king that wants him dead, his sermon really stirred some people up. Let me tell you, the threat to Jeremiah was very real.

Not just like they were upset and they tore their clothes and they were mad, they did all that, but they wanted him dead. Because, remember, the people have been told, you're doing wonderfully, there's a revival in the land. The official press release from the government of Judea says that there's a revival, but Jeremiah doesn't know about the revival.

Jeremiah's job is to tell the people what God has told him to tell them. When Zephaniah prophesied during the reign of Josiah, he and Jeremiah both were speaking about the problems with the Judeans, not the fact that they were doing wonderfully, but Zephaniah is no longer prophesying. We learned from Zephaniah 1.1 that he prophesied during the days of Josiah.

The days of Josiah are over, but Jeremiah continues to prophesy, and according to chapter 26, this is the beginning of the days of Jehoiakim's reign. But when he goes into the temple, Jeremiah chapter 7 and Jeremiah chapter 26 give us elements of this event. When he goes into the house of the Lord, right there at the entrance to the gate in the upper court, and he stands there and he proclaims a message to the people, and it's not favorable.

(11:39 - 13:31)

When he does what he does, when he says what he says, the words that he spoke stirred up the king, the princes of Judah, the priests, the so-called prophets, and many of the people. Now listen to this. I want you to look back at chapter 26 verse 8. Now this is as he's standing in the court, remember.

Chapter 7 is the white space. Chapter 8 says, Now it came to pass when Yirmiyahu, Jeremiah, had made an end of speaking all that the Lord had commanded him to speak to all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people took hold of him, saying, You shall surely die. Let me tell you about this real threat.

They want Jeremiah dead, and don't think they won't kill a prophet of God. This king, remember, had Elnathan, Ben-Akbar, and some others go to Egypt. They didn't let him stay there and live his life in exile.

They went and fetched him and hacked him up with a sword. Now look down at verse 11, and by the way, in verse 8 where it says, This man shall surely die. Let me make sure it's the way it translates in English.

Yeah, you, thou shall surely die. In Hebrew it's mutamut. This is the same language that we meet with in the early part of Genesis, where it says, The day that you eat thereof, dying you will surely die.

(13:31 - 28:50)

It's a repetition of the Hebrew to underscore. The key point is die. Dying you will die.

Mutamut. Very common way in Hebrew to express the superlative. Now look down at verse 11.

Then spoke the priest and the prophets to the princes and to all the people, saying, This man is worthy to die. Now what's his crime? For he has prophesied against this city, as you've heard with your ears. Now in this verse, where it says in verse 11, This man is worthy to die.

In Hebrew it says a judgment of death for this man. In other words, the court, it's a kangaroo court, it's on the spot. You said you prophesied against this city, you're gonna die.

That was the judgment. And look, I don't want people to think, well there's just a few bad priests. Most of the priesthood is holy and righteous and just.

Well, there you go, thinking about that language about this great revival in the land. The biblical narrative, particularly according to the prophets' writings, when we read Jeremiah, when we read Zephaniah, this is not the case. It is a wicked generation.

Now, Ahicham is mentioned 20 times in the Tanakh. Remember, this is the man who kept Jeremiah from suffering the same fate as Uriah that they chased down in Egypt. So 15 times his name appears, most often, 20 times it appears in the Tanakh, but 15 times in connection with the name of his son.

We're gonna talk about his son in a little while, but right now I just want to focus on Ahicham. One time here in Jeremiah 26-24, in the literal translation of that verse where he saves Jeremiah, it says only, only the hand of Ahicham ben Shaphan was with Jeremiah so that he was not given into the hand of the people to kill him. Only the hand of Ahicham.

That means that in that group, remember, Jeremiah is standing right inside the gate of the Lord's house, just sitting like a bad neighborhood. Well, it actually is. It's a den of robbers.

It's a den of violent men. It should be a house of God, a house built to honor and glorify God's name and will on the earth, but it has turned into a pit of vipers. The bad, bad place, probably the most unsafe place for a man of God to be, which is probably why God sent him there.

Now there are four remaining occurrences of Ahicham, two in the book of 2 Kings, two in the book of 2 Chronicles, and both of these, remember Kings and Chronicles are somewhat harmonious, meaning they tell the same story, though they don't always agree in detail, but Kings and Chronicles both give us two other occurrences in what we would call harmonistic readings about Ahicham. We're going to look at those, and these both occurrences in Kings and both occurrences in Chronicles that mirror one another are telling about an event that took place 17 years before Ahicham steps up to save Jeremiah's life from this wicked generation. Now I want you to go with me.

Let's go with the version in Kings. I like it better. 2 Kings chapter 22.

2 Kings chapter 22, and let's start in verse 12. 2 Kings 22. And the king commanded, now this is Josiah, I'm going back in time because I want to go 17 years prior to Ahicham saving Jeremiah's life.

The king commanded, Josiah, king, commanded Hilkiahu, the priest, and Ahicham, the son of Shaphan, this is our man, and Akbar, the son of Micaiah, and Shaphan, the scribe, and Isaiah, the king's servant, saying, Go inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all of Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found. For great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened to the words of this book to do according to all which is written concerning us. And no doubt they have not done according to the words of this book, because the book had been lost.

The book was found by Hilkiahu when he was going about a restoration, a reformation, if you will. He was on a mission to cleanse the house of all the bad that had happened, going back to Manashe. Remember, Chronicles says Manashe repented, and he turned his life around.

You can say repent, whatever, but it says he did make teshuvah, if you will, is the way the Hebrew puts it. That's what Chronicles says. Kings doesn't know anything about that.

The book of Kings has nothing good to say about Manashe. But from Manashe, then you work your way on down, you go down to Ammon. Ammon is bad, Ammon is killed, assassinated, and then little eight-year-old Josiah becomes king.

So when Josiah grows up, this is the 18th year of his reign, so he's 26 years old, he sets out to cleanse the temple, and he sends forward this expedition to do what we're going to study a little bit today. Now, notice what happens here. This, by the way, is also in 2nd Chronicles 34 20, tells this story.

Akikam ben Shefan. Akikam, the guy who saves Jeremiah, the son of Shefan, is a member of a five-person delegation. After the scroll is found, Josiah says, listen, you five go to Huldah the prophetess and bring this book with you.

Now what I want you to notice is that two of this trusted delegation were members of the same family, two of the five. He's got Shefan, he's got Akikam ben Shefan, but father and son, he's got three others. Now the list, by the way, differs slightly if you look at Kings and Chronicles, because Kings has Akbar, and Chronicles has a guy by the name of Avdon, but we're not going to get into that today.

I just want to mention, if you look at them, don't be shocked. The names don't agree, and I know some people will immediately say, well, this is just because this person was called by a different name. Whatever the case may be, it doesn't matter, because in my class today I'm focused on the family of Akikam and Shefan.

So let's look a little bit at Shefan. I want you to back up in 2nd Kings 22, and let's look at verse 3. 2nd Kings 22, verse 3. And it came to pass in the 18th year of King Josiah, that the king sent Shefan, the son of Atzaliahu, the son of Meshulam, the scribe, to the house of the Lord, saying, Go up to Hilkiahu, the high priest, that he may sum up the silver which is brought into the house of the Lord, which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people. Let them deliver it to the doers of the work, etc.

So Josiah calls into his presence a trusted man by the name of Shefan. Shefan has a son. Shefan is a scribe.

Shefan is from a line, according to Kings, we get his father's name. Shefan is Shefan ben Atzaliahu. So Shefan, the scribe's father, Atzaliahu, is the son of Meshulam.

This family is intimate and close with the king. Josiah needs a job done. He has determined, he set his heart to follow after the God of David, to follow after his father's God.

He says, Shefan, come. Shefan, I want you to go to Hilkiyah. I want you to go to the house.

I want this place cleaned up. I want all this idolatry gone. I want the place suitable to worship my God.

Shefan takes off, and Shefan goes, and Shefan reaches this particular place. Now I want you to understand, he's the right-hand man of Josiah. And so he sets forth.

Now what is interesting is that according to Kings, again, we have five names. We have five names of this family line for certain, and only because of Kings. Chronicles does tell us that Shefan's father's name is Atzaliahu, but it doesn't bother to tell us that his father's name was Meshulam.

Remember, Chronicles is written much later, but Kings is, it is written as if it's on the spot. Kings always knows details. Kings knows, and his mother's name was.

Chronicles never includes that. Chronicles is a vest pocket version written for the kingdom of Judea, but Kings is almost like the word on the street. It gives us all these cool details.

I encourage you to watch for that as you look at Kings versus Chronicles. So Chronicles doesn't give us as much detail, but it does sometimes give us detail that's important. In fact, in the Chronicles account that I just read, the Harmonious account in Kings, it does, it gives two more names.

It says that the king, Josiah, not only did he send Shefan to Hilkiyah, he sends two other people. Kings wants us to focus on Shefan, and rightly so, because today I'm going to show you that it's this family that's a holy family, and we should be really paying attention. For the writer of Kings, the focus is on Shefan.

Look at 2nd Kings 22, verse 8. And Hilkiyah, the high priest, said to Shefan the scribe, remember Shefan was sent by the king to head this project up, and Hilkiyah says to Shefan, hey Shefan, I have found a book of the Torah in the house of the Lord. And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shefan, and he read it. This isn't a big, big book, he gives him a scroll, and Shefan reads it.

It's short, it's a smallish document. I call it the Moses scroll, because it's the scroll that Moses wrote. Verse 9, and Shefan the scribe came to the king, so he reads the scroll, and he takes it to the king, and he brought back word to the king and said, your servants have gathered the money that was found in the house and delivered into the hand of them that do the work.

Remember, that was his job. That they that have the oversight of the house of the Lord. And Shefan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah, the priest, has given me a scroll.

This is Shefan. And Shefan read it before the king, so he reads it again. And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the book of the Torah, the scroll of the instruction, he tore his clothes.

And that's when we pick up where I started with. He commissions a five-person delegation, two members of the same family and three others that he trusts, and he sends them to Huldah. So now we know that Shefan, the trusted one of Josiah, has a son named Achikam, who 17 years after this event will save Jeremiah's life.

Shefan and Achikam are both members of the five-person delegation that Josiah trusts to go to Huldah. Now, but that's not all the members of this family. In chapter 36 of Jeremiah, we're going to go there, but I'm going to tell you a little bit about this first.

We have an interesting event. Jeremiah 36 gives us the narrative of a story which takes place in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, the fourth year of Jehoiakim, and we're going to get much more detailed about this story in a future class, but I want to touch on the narrative of Jeremiah 36 in the fourth year of Jehoiakim because I want to cover how it relates to our holy family. I'm just focused on the holy family today.

(28:51 - 31:08)

Now at some point in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, Jehovah tells Jeremiah, Jeremiah, I want you to record all the words that I've spoken to you over the course of the time that I've been talking to you for these 23 years. I want you to put them in a book, in a scroll, all right? So we don't know exactly when in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, but I'm going to get us a little bit closer as we work through the story. He tells him, put it all down, and so we get, we meet another character.

We're going to talk more about him later too, but I want to touch it. Baruch ben Neriah is enlisted by Jeremiah to assist with the writing of the scroll, and by the way, one of the things I want to show you that I think is pretty interesting is that Baruch, we think very highly of Baruch, both our Baruch as well as the Baruch here in the prophet Jeremiah's scribe, but Baruch is, he has to get a stern message. Jeremiah has to tighten him up a little bit during the process of writing his scroll, but we'll talk about that in another class.

Eventually, this takes a little bit of time to write the scroll of Jeremiah's prophecies, but eventually the job is completed after some time, and Baruch is told by Jeremiah that he wants him to read the words of this scroll to the people, and why can't Jeremiah do it himself? Because Jeremiah is detained. He is in custody. He's locked up, or he would do it himself, but he dictates the words, and we get this beautiful narrative in chapter 36 where we get a description of how the book of Jeremiah, the original book of Jeremiah, came to be.

(31:11 - 32:57)

But we get that, we'll get into that later, but what Jeremiah tells him is, I'm locked up, I can't go to read this to the people, so I want you to do it for me, but he gives him a little bit of a

caveat. He tells him that it has to be done at a certain time. In other words, you're not just going to go read it any time, you're going to read it at a certain time.

Look with me at Jeremiah 36 and verse 6. Jeremiah 36 verse 6. Therefore you go and read in the scroll which you have written from my mouth the words of Jehovah in the ears of the people in Jehovah's house upon the fast day. Bayom Tzom. Bayom Tzom.

In a fast day. And it says, he goes on, and you shall also read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities. The goal of this is that they will repent.

He said, perhaps after you read the words of these prophecies which describe in detail the destruction that's coming to Judea, and particularly this house, maybe then they'll repent. Now remember this is a tough message, not only because it's a hard message, but because they're being told that everything is going swell. There's a revival in the land.

(32:57 - 38:30)

We've got the house, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the priesthood is functioning, the sacrificial cult is going, the smoke, the sweet savor is ascending into the clouds. You have to go in there now and tell them that this place is going to go down? It's got to be on a fast day. You might think, huh, is he referring to a specific fast day? Like you might read it and you go, well I know about Yom Kippur, perhaps he means read it on Yom Kippur.

Bayom Tzom, a fast day. But that's not the day he's talking about. I can show you that.

Go with me to verse 9. Now remember, Jeremiah tells, God tells Jeremiah, write a scroll. Jeremiah employs Baruch ben Neriah to write the scroll. He dictates it to Baruch ben Neriah, and he says, now I need you to go read this on a fast day.

I can't go because I'm locked up. So here we go. This was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, and it came to pass, verse 9, Jeremiah 36, in the fifth year of Jehoiakim, the son of Yoshiah who king of Judah, in the ninth month that they proclaimed a fast before the Lord to all the people in Jerusalem and all the people that came from the cities of Judah to Jerusalem.

Then Baruch read in the scroll the words of Jeremiah in the house of the Lord. Now the ninth month, this is interesting, I have questions. What fast is in the ninth month? Was it a standard fast, or is it, or we to take this very literally as I usually do, it says they proclaimed a fast.

This is the ninth month, the fifth year of Jehoiakim. Now remember, the scroll begins to be written in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. We have a date for that, and it's not until the fifth year, the ninth month.

Now some might say, wait a minute, that means the ninth month of Jehoiakim's fifth year, and we have to know the regnal year. Is it beginning Tishri, does it begin it? You don't have to be confused by all that. This is the ninth month, the ninth month.

Now let me tell you how I know that, because the Bible says so. Flip very quickly to verse 22, Jeremiah 36 22. Now the king sat in the winter house in the ninth month, and there was a fire burning before him.

It's cold, the ninth month, it's Kislev, it's December, it's chilly out, it's cold in Jerusalem, and it gets cool in the winter, it's probably damp. But it's the ninth month, so it's not Yom Kippur, which appears in the seventh month. Go back to verse 10 of 36.

Then Baruch read in the scroll the words of Yirmiyahu in the house of the Lord in the chamber of Gamar-Yahu, the son of Shaphan, the scribe, in the higher court at the entry of the new gate of the Lord's house in the ears of all the people. Now wait a minute, this guy, Sonel Baruch, has an inside man. He's got a man on the inside.

You can imagine that behind the scenes, Jeremiah says, listen Baruch, I'm locked up. I'd do it brother, but I can't. I need you to take this scroll.

It's not gonna be nice, but I need you to go into the house of the Lord. Now this is Ross, and as I think through the story, Baruch goes, where should I read it? He said, listen, here's what I want you to do. You're gonna go into the gate, and when you go, remember where I did the temple sermon that everybody really loved so much? That's about where you're gonna go, but I want you to go, you got to get with this family, my inside family.

I want you to go to Gamar-Yahu, and he goes, oh of course, Gamar-Yahu ben Shefhan. Yes, go to Gamar-Yahu ben Shefhan, and this is our family. These people will help us.

You tell them that the Lord sent me from Jeremiah to read the words of the scroll, and so he does. So he's Gamar-Yahu, the son of Shefhan, the scribe. The same Shefhan, the son of Atzal-Yahu, the son of Mishalam, who also has a son named Achikam, who saved Jeremiah's life.

Now let's keep going. Verse 11. When Mekei-Yahu, the son of Gamar-Yahu, the son of Shefhan, heard out of the scroll all the words of the Lord, then he went down into the king's house, into the scribe's chamber, and lo, all the princes sat there.

(38:31 - 49:25)

Elish-Shammah, the scribe, and Dehli-Yahu, the son of Shema-Yahu, and El-Natan, the son of Akbar. Wait a minute, I know that name. El-Natan, the son of Akbar, was the guy that the king sent to Egypt to fetch Uriah ben Shammiah.

You see how all these names? This is like, these are people you need to know. And Gamar-Yahu, the son of Shefhan, and Sid-Kiahu of Hananiah-Yahu, and all the princes. Now let me just take a break here, just for a second.

I want you to get this. You've got Shefhan's son, and you've got Shefhan's grandson. So Gamar-Yahu has been Shefhan.

Gamar-Yahu is the son of Shefhan. It's his place at the Temple Mount that the scroll is read there. It's read at that time.

But it's not just the son of Shefhan who's there, but the grandson. Mek-Yahu. When he hears the words, it says he then goes.

What does he do? He goes to the king's house. Now what does he do? Verse 13. Mek-Yahu declared to them all the words that he had heard.

He's like, hey guys, remember one of these guys was sent by the king to go fetch Uriah ben Shammiah out of Egypt to kill him. So this member of Shefhan's family, grandson, guys, I just heard Jeremiah reading the scroll that... I heard Baruch reading the scroll of Jeremiah that he dictated from the mouth of God, and he... where did this happen, Mek-Yahu? Right there at my grandfather's place on the Temple Mount. On the Temple Mount.

Yeah, you remember right there where Jeremiah got in trouble? Baruch is now reading his scroll right there. Now that's gutsy, right? All right. When Mek-Yahu declared to them all the words that he had heard when Baruch read the scroll in the ears of the people.

Now this is... it's getting more and more intense. Now I can't go into all the details because it's for another class, but what I want you to recognize is that it seems that this family, Shefhan has several sons who are all very... we have a large pro-Jeremiah family is what we have. We've got Shefhan, Akikam, we've got Gamar-Yahu.

So Shefhan, the son of Atzal-Yahu, the son of Mesh-Shalom, his son's Akikam, Gamar-Yahu, and it was in the chamber of Gamar-Yahu at the temple where the scroll was read. It was Gamar-Yahu's son, Mek-Yahu, who is Shefhan's grandson, who alerted the princes that the book was being... the scroll was being read at Paw-Paw's place on the temple mount. But that's not all.

Another member of the family of Shefhan is involved with Jeremiah. This son of Shefhan is mentioned also in our book of Jeremiah. This son of Shefhan was entrusted by Jeremiah to carry a personal letter to Babylon.

Now this is later, it occurs later in the story, but I'm dealing with the family of Shefhan, so I have to tell you now how great this family was. This holy, holy family who was pro-Jeremiah. So this is the event I'm about to tell you about takes place later, even yet later than Jeremiah 36, although it appears earlier in the book, because 36 is describing events that take place in the fourth year of Jehoiakim.

This event is in chapter 29 earlier, but it takes place after Jeconiah and the Queen Mother and many of the officials are taken into captivity into Babylon. Does that make sense? So even though it's in chapter 29, remember I'm showing you, it's like this book was just... they dropped the different fragments and didn't know how they went back together, so they just put them together. Now I know some people say, well that was purposeful.

Yeah, well I don't believe that, but that's the view of some. Chapter 29 of Jeremiah, because it's not like it's hard to put back together, for the most part you just read and it says this was in this year, oh well that goes before that. So chapter 29 verse 1, please go there.

Remember we're looking for the family of Shaphan. Now these are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the residue of the elders who were carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem to Babel, after Jeconiah the king, and the officers, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, and the craftsmen, and the smiths had

departed from Jerusalem. Now that's parenthetical, and then it says, so in other words, Jeremiah sent the letter by the hand, verse 3, of El Asa, El Asa ben Shaphan.

El Asa means God's work. He also, El Asa, is also a son of Shaphan. And then it says, so he sends El Asa, Jeremiah says, hey El Asa, please my friend, the member of my trusted family, the son of Shaphan, El Asa, El Asa, please take this letter to the captives, and bring with you Gamariah.

Now this isn't Gamariah who, Gamariah who is another son of Shaphan. This is Gamariah. This is Gamariah ben Hilkiah, another person all together.

What I want you to realize is that he says, I've got to get this letter, here you go, look, I gotta get this letter, El Asa, please take this to the captives in Babylon. Who else would you give it to? If you're Jeremiah, you have to have people you trust, and it's a tough crowd. A lot of people want Jeremiah dead.

He's got one family he can trust, the ben Shaphan, the sons of Shaphan, they are dear to his heart. He sends Shaphan's son, El Asa, off you go son, go to Babylon. Now the message, by the way, that's written on the note that he sends is this, you people that have been carried away, why don't you go ahead and make yourself comfortable.

Plant gardens, put your kids in school, you're gonna be here a while. That's what the letter said. But we're not finished yet.

After the people of Judah, after the people of Judah were carried captive to Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar appointed a man named Gedaliahu over those that he left in the land of Judea. Gedaliahu. Now Gedaliahu is better known by the name Gedalia, as most English translations have his name, but Gedaliahu was not of the royal house, or I like the way it's worded in 2nd Kings 25:25, instead of royal house, it says the seed of the kingdom.

So Gedaliahu is not a member of the holy seed, or so you thought. Because if you think that the kingdom of the house of David is the holy seed, you're not looking at the same text I'm looking at. I would say that Gedaliahu is of the holy seed.

The seed of David is utterly and hopelessly corrupt, and there's this one family. One family who represents the holiness and the best of the Judeans. Yes, sure, they're not of the seed of the kingdom, but Nebuchadnezzar appoints Gedaliahu.

Now, Nebuchadnezzar took a special interest in Jeremiah's well-being. Go with me to Jeremiah 39. Jeremiah 39, and I want to read beginning in verse 9, after he's taken the people captive.

Jeremiah 39. Then Nebuchadnezzar, the captain of the guard, carried away captive into Babel the remnant of the people that remained in the city, and the deserters who had deserted to him, with the rest of the people that remained. But Nebuchadnezzar, the captain of the guard, left the poor of the guard, left of the poor of the people who had nothing in the land of Yehudah, and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time.

(49:26 - 1:01:52)

Now, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babel, gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuchadnezzar. So I want you to pause there. Nebuchadnezzar says, hey listen, Nebuchadnezzar, when you go there and do what you do, I got this one guy I want you to be real good to.

Take care of this man. Please take care of this man. Be careful to take care of this man.

Listen, he tells him, take him and look well to him. Now, let me start back at 11.

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babel, gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuchadnezzar, the captain of the guard, saying, take him, Jeremiah, look well to him and do him no harm, but do to him as he shall say to you.

So here's what Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babel, says, listen, let me tell you something, Nebuchadnezzar, when you meet Jeremiah, you need to go find Jeremiah, when you do, you say, Jeremiah, what would you have me do for you? Who do you want to stay with? Where do you want to live? Then sent Nebuchadnezzar, verse 13, the captain of the guard, and Nebuchadnezzar, and Rav Saris, and Nergal Saezer, and Rav Mag, and all the princes of the king of Babel, and they sent and they took Jeremiah out of the court of the guard and committed him to Gedalia. So he's gonna stay with Gedalia. Remember, Nebuchadnezzar said, let him stay wherever he wants.

This means that Nebuchadnezzar asked, and Jeremiah said, I'd like to stay with Gedalia. Gedalia who? Gedalia who? The son of Akikam, the son of Shaphan, that he should carry him home, so he dwelt among the people. Jeremiah could stay anywhere he wants, but he's got a family that he knows, that he loves, that he trusts.

Gedalia who? may not have been of the seed of the kingdom, but Gedalia who? represented the best of the people of Judea, and he was of the holy seed. So Jeremiah stays with Gedalia who? The son of Akikam, who had saved Jeremiah's life, the son of Shaphan, who had read the scroll first. Jeremiah lived with a member of the holy family.

Know what? Didn't end well. This man, Gedalia who? appointed over the remnant of Judea, the poor of the land, the one that Jeremiah chose to live with, get this, was assassinated. By members, please understand this, of the seed of the kingdom.

Gedalia who? of the holy seed is murdered by the, honestly, the wicked seed. Now before he's murdered, Gedalia who? who's over the land of Judea is warned by his men. His men come to him, come to Gedalia who? and they say, Gedalia who? we just heard on the street there is a plot to kill you, and the seed of the kingdom, a remnant of the seed of the kingdom is plotting right now to kill you, and he says, no way.

I won't hear it. I don't believe it. They said, listen to me, Gedalia who? I'm telling you, they are planning to kill you, and he said, there's no way.

No way. I won't hear of it. Get out of here with that.

They said, listen, we'll take those guys out. We, this is Gedalia who's men, his cabinet, if you will, they said, let us, just give us the word, but we'll snuff these bad guys out. Gedalia who? wouldn't hear it, and he was killed, thrown into a cistern.

Did you know this? Gedalia who? the son of Akikam, who saved Jeremiah's life when the wicked king wanted to kill him, the people. Akikam, the son of Shephun. Gedalia, the grandson of Shephun who was murdered, is honored to this day on the Jewish calendar.

I remember years ago I read on my calendar the fast of Gedalia. I remember thinking ignorantly, you know, you can be ignorant, doesn't mean I'm stupid, I was ignorant, I didn't know, I said, what is this man-made fast? Not in the Bible. I'm gonna be fasting on the tenth of the month, I'm gonna already be fasting on Yom Kippur, that's hard enough for me, I like to eat, I'm not gonna fast on it.

Who is Gedalia who? The fast of Gedalia. Get out of here. Oh now, you know what I do on the fast of Gedalia? I refrain from, you know why? Because this holy family, this holy family was trusted by Josiah to restore the house.

This holy family, a member of this holy family, was the first, after Hilkiah found it, to hold the Moses scroll and read it. This man, Shephun, then took the scroll, trusted to bring the scroll to King Josiah. He read it again to the king.

Then he and his son Ahikam were trusted to be part of a five-person delegation to take the holy scroll that Moses wrote, the real one, the authentic scroll that Moses wrote, that the Pentateuch tells us about, and he's told, take this to Huldah. Two of the five are members of this family. Then we have Ahikam, the son of Shephun, who steps in to save Jeremiah's life when the people wanted to kill him.

Then we have the family, the holy family provides a space, Gamar-Yahu, the son of this family, provides a space for the scroll, the original scroll of Jeremiah that was destroyed. We'll read about that. It was this family who said, hey, feed it here in my chamber.

And then it was a member of the same family, the grandson, Nekeah, who says, okay, dad, do I go now? Yeah, now go to the king's house, tell him that we're reading the scroll of Jeremiah. Same family. Nekeah, who runs, he tells Elnatan, Akbar is there, my God, man, this is the guy who chases down people that the king doesn't like.

It was a member of this family entrusted by Jeremiah to take a message to the captives in Babylon. The member of this family that Jeremiah chose to stay with in the ruins and rubble of Judea after the Babylonian invasion. As we work through the material of Jeremiah, I want you to pay close attention.

Don't read over these names, like who is Elnatan, Akbar? Because, by the way, we're gonna meet him again. He was there, he was part of the entourage that went to get Uriah, he was there when Jeremiah was saved by someone else, and he's gonna show up again. We have to pay attention to these names, but we have to watch in particular for members of the Shaphan family, the B'nai Shaphan.

Look, it's not the kings and priests of Judah to whom we should give honor, that we should look up to. You know, I mean, anyone who reads the Bible should know that. The worst of the worst are the kings and the priests, for the most part, generally.

There are exceptions, but the rule is, read king or priest and you're gonna find bad. The kings and priests were not, they might have been the seed of the kingdom, but I'm looking for holy families, because that's what God's looking for. Don't impress God by being a member of the royal seed.

God looks to those who are humble and contrite and holy, not because of who your daddy or granddaddy is, unless, like Shaphan, you teach children and they model your ways, and your grandchildren are even involved in it. See, the kings and the priests killed the prophets. They imprisoned the true prophet, Jeremiah.

They will burn his scroll. They didn't honor the Moses scroll that was, as Jeremiah says, over and over and over and over, that was put before it. The scribes used a lying pen to change what they did have.

They didn't honor the real scroll of Moses. Rather, it was one ever-present holy family that deserves our honor. A family who loved and respected holy scrolls, that saved prophets from death, provided safe homes for them to live, even died because of good.

Perhaps this year, seventh month, when the third day comes, and it says on your Jewish calendar, the fast of Gedalia, maybe, like me, won't be ignorant anymore. We'll do this fast. Think about the holy family, final days.

(1:01:57 - 1:02:05)

Shabbat Shalom. Join me next Saturday morning, same time, same channel. Have a beautiful.