

# A Family's Example

Jer 35:5-11

SS Lesson for 10/19/2025

**Devotional Scriptures:** Prov 1:8-10

## OUTLINE

### LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

*Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary*

*Key Verse: Jer 35:14*

### MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

#### ACKNOWLEDGING FATHER'S COMMANDS (JER 35:5-6)

##### *Offering of wine (5)*

- Offering of wine can be unlawful (Amos 2:11-12)
- Offering of wine as part of temptation (Jer 35:2)
- Offering of wine to improve health (1 Tim 5:23)
- Offering of wine as part of dining (Eccl 9:7)

##### *Rejection because of father's warning (6)*

- Warning about refusing to listen (Jer 13:10)
- Warning about being non-responsive (Jer 17:23)
- Warning about wanting to continue with own plans (Jer 18:12)
- Warning about resisting the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51)

#### OBEYING FATHER'S COMMANDS (JER 35:7-10)

##### *Obedience of use of land (7)*

- Land that produces food (Isa 30:23)
- Land that is to be cultivated (Gen 3:23)
- Land that belongs to God (Ps 24:1)

##### *Obedience of family (8-9)*

- A family obedient to becoming mature in Christ (Deut 4:9)
- A family that praises and is committed to each other (Prov 31:27-28)
- A family that respects and is obedient to its head (1 Tim 3:4)
- A family that is obedient to being in unity (Ps 133:1)

##### *Obedience to parents (10)*

- Children that honor the father and mother (Eph 6:2)
- Children that obey their parents (Eph 6:1)
- Families that love and are self-controlled (Titus 2:4-5)

#### RELOCATION OF THE FAMILY (JER 35:11)

##### *Relocation because of fear (11)*

- Fear of God sending armies to destroy (2 Kings 24:2)
- Fear of being besieged (Dan 1:1-2)
- Fear of being devoured and destroyed (Deut 28:49-51)
- Fear of enemies sent as part of God's wrath (Isa 13:5)

##### *Relocation seeking safety (11)*

- Safety in Zion (Jer 4:6)
- Safety in a fortified city (Jer 8:14)
- Safety in the mountains (Luke 21:21-22)

### CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM THOMAS CONSTABLE

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY

# Lesson Background and Key Verse

## Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Today's lesson is the third in a series of five from the book of Jeremiah. The overall context is the same as those: Jeremiah's 40-year prophetic ministry was to warn the people of Judah of God's judgment to come at the hands of the Babylonians. This was to happen because of the Judeans' sinfulness and rebellion against the Lord. Our Scripture text for today's lesson records events that took place "during the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah," which is the period 609-598 BC (Jeremiah 35:1). To understand the significance of this time frame, we should view it against the larger backdrop of three chronological pressure points of Babylonian dominance in Palestine. Those three are the years 605, 597, and 586 BC; they are the years the Judeans were carried into exile in successive stages (2 Kings 24:1, 12; 25:1-21). The reference in Jeremiah 35:11 to a family's relocation to Jerusalem due to Babylonian incursion indicates that the invasion of 605 BC is in view. Those were indeed turbulent times. In an earthly sense, there were power struggles between the world powers of Assyria and Babylon. Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, fell in 612 BC. Babylon's victory at the epic Battle of Carchemish in 605 BC (Jeremiah 46:2) meant the passing of one oppressor only to be replaced by a new one. Is it any wonder that Jeremiah felt inadequate for his task (1:6)? The incident in today's text occurred at roughly the halfway point in Jeremiah's 40-year efforts to convince God's people to repent of their wrongdoing and return to the Lord. These efforts included use of some rather striking visual aids as teaching tools, all commanded by God: a soiled linen "belt" or sash (Jeremiah 13:1-11), a visit to a potter's house (18:1-11), and the wearing of a makeshift yoke to symbolize submission to Babylon (27:1-7). Today's Scripture text records yet another visual aid by which Jeremiah tried to appeal to an increasingly wayward people. A footnote: Jeremiah 35:3 mentions "Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah," but he is a different Jeremiah than the prophet (compare Jeremiah 1:1 with 35:3).

## Key Verse: Jer 35:14

*"The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, which he commanded his sons, not to drink wine, are performed; for to this day they drink none, and obey their father's commandment. But although I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, you did not obey Me.*

## Major Theme Analysis

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

### **Acknowledging Father's Commands (Jer 35:5-6)**

5 Then I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites bowls full of wine, and cups; and I said to them, "Drink wine."

6 But they said, "We will drink no wine, for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, 'You shall drink no wine, you nor your sons, forever.'

### **Offering of wine (5)**

*Offering of wine can be unlawful (Amos 2:11-12)*

11 I also raised up prophets from among your sons and Nazirites from among your young men. Is this not true, people of Israel?" declares the Lord. 12 "But you made the Nazirites drink wine and commanded the prophets not to prophesy.

*Offering of wine as part of temptation (Jer 35:2)*

2 "Go to the Recabite family and invite them to come to one of the side rooms of the house of the Lord and give them wine to drink."

*Offering of wine to improve health (1 Tim 5:23)*

23 No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities.

*Offering of wine as part of dining (Eccl 9:7)*

7 Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for it is now that God favors what you do.

### **Rejection because of father's warning (6)**

*Warning about refusing to listen (Jer 13:10)*

10 These wicked people, who refuse to listen to my words, who follow the stubbornness of their hearts and go after other gods to serve and worship them, will be like this belt — completely useless!

*Warning about being non-responsive (Jer 17:23)*

23 Yet they did not listen or pay attention; they were stiff-necked and would not listen or respond to discipline.

*Warning about wanting to continue with own plans (Jer 18:12)*

12 But they will reply, 'It's no use. We will continue with our own plans; each of us will follow the stubbornness of his evil heart.'

*Warning about resisting the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51)*

51 "You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!

### **Obeying Father's Commands (Jer 35:7-10)**

7 You shall not build a house, sow seed, plant a vineyard, nor have any of these; but all your days you shall dwell in tents, that you may live many days in the land where you are sojourners.'

8 Thus we have obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, in all that he charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, or our daughters,

9 nor to build ourselves houses to dwell in; nor do we have vineyard, field, or seed.

10 But we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us.

### **Obedience of use of land (7)**

*Land that produces food (Isa 30:23)*

23 He will also send you rain for the seed you sow in the ground, and the food that comes from the land will be rich and plentiful. In that day your cattle will graze in broad meadows.

*Land that is to be cultivated (Gen 3:23)*

23 So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.

*Land that belongs to God (Ps 24:1)*

1 The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;

### **Obedience of family (8-9)**

*A family obedient to becoming mature in Christ (Deut 4:9)*

9 Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.

*A family that praises and is committed to each other (Prov 31:27-28)*

27 She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. 28 Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:

*A family that respects and is obedient to its head (1 Tim 3:4)*

4 He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect.

*A family that is obedient to being in unity (Ps 133:1)*

1 How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!

### **Obedience to parents (10)**

*Children that honor the father and mother (Eph 6:2)*

2 "Honor your father and mother"-which is the first commandment with a promise—

*Children that obey their parents (Eph 6:1)*

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

*Families that love and are self-controlled (Titus 2:4-5)*

4 Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

### **Relocation of the Family (Jer 35:11)**

11 But it came to pass, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up into the land, that we said, 'Come, let us go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the Chaldeans and for fear of the army of the Syrians.' So we dwell at Jerusalem."

### **Relocation because of fear (11)**

*Fear of God sending armies to destroy (2 Kings 24:2)*

2 The Lord sent Babylonian, Aramean, Moabite and Ammonite raiders against him. He sent them to destroy Judah, in accordance with the word of the Lord proclaimed by his servants the prophets.

*Fear of being besieged (Dan 1:1-2)*

1 In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god.

*Fear of being devoured and destroyed (Deut 28:49-51)*

49 The Lord will bring a nation against you from far away, from the ends of the earth, like an eagle swooping down, a nation whose language you will not understand, 50 a fierce-looking nation without respect for the old or pity for the young. 51 They will devour the young of your livestock and the crops of your land until you are destroyed. They will leave you no grain, new wine or oil, nor any calves of your herds or lambs of your flocks until you are ruined.

*Fear of enemies sent as part of God's wrath (Isa 13:5)*

5 They come from faraway lands, from the ends of the heavens, the Lord and the weapons of his wrath, to destroy the whole country.

### **Relocation seeking safety (11)**

*Safety in Zion (Jer 4:6)*

6 Raise the signal to go to Zion! Flee for safety without delay! For I am bringing disaster from the north, even terrible destruction."

*Safety in a fortified city (Jer 8:14)*

14 "Why are we sitting here? Gather together! Let us flee to the fortified cities and perish there! For the Lord our God has doomed us to perish and given us poisoned water to drink, because we have sinned against him.

*Safety in the mountains (Luke 21:21-22)*

21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. 22 For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written.

## Conclusion and Other Thoughts

### **Commentary Thoughts from Thomas Constable**

#### **Verse 1**

This oracle came to Jeremiah during King Jehoiakim's reign (609-598 B.C.) after the Babylonians had begun to invade Judah (Jeremiah 35:11). 2 Kings 24:1-2 reads, "In his [Jehoiakim's] days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up and Jehoiakim became his servant for three years; then he turned and rebelled against him [in 602 B.C]. And the LORD sent against him bands of Chaldeans, bands of Syrians, bands of Moabites, and bands of Ammonites. So He sent them against Judah to destroy it . . ." This seems to be the setting for what follows. The year was probably 602 or 601 B.C. (cf. Jeremiah 12:7-13).

#### **Verse 2**

Jeremiah was to visit the Rechabite family and to bring them to the temple. In one of the rooms that surrounded the temple proper, Jeremiah was to give them wine to drink.

The Rechabites were a branch of the Kenite clan that descended from Jethro, Moses' father-in-law (cf. Judges 1:16; 1 Chronicles 2:55). [Note: Gerald L. Keown, *Jeremiah 26-52*, pp. 195-96, wrote an extended excursus on the identity of the Rechabites. Keown wrote the commentary on chapters 35-45 and 52 for this volume.] They had previously settled in northern Israel (Judges 4:17; Judges 5:24) and in southern Judah (1 Samuel 15:6). Evidently Jonadab's branch of the family had moved from the north into the Southern Kingdom following the Assyrian invasion of 722 B.C. (cf. Jeremiah 35:6).

#### **Verses 3-4**

The prophet did as the Lord had commanded him. He brought the whole extended family of the Rechabites into one of the large rooms on the second floor of the temple (cf. 1 Kings 6:5; 1 Chronicles 28:12; 2 Chronicles 31:11). The specific description of the location of the room in which this event took place contributes to the authenticity of the story.

Jaazaniah was evidently the leader of the clan at this time. The reference to Hanan ben Igdaliah as "the man of God" probably identifies him as a prophet, though it could simply mean that he was a godly man. His "sons" may have been his disciples. He appears to have been an ally of Jeremiah. Maaseiah was probably the father of Zephaniah the priest (cf. Jeremiah 21:1; Jeremiah 29:25; Jeremiah 37:3). His position as doorkeeper of the temple, of which there were three, was an important one; those who held it received special punishment when the Babylonians took Jerusalem (cf. Jeremiah 52:24-27; 2 Kings 25:18-21).

#### **Verse 5**

Jeremiah also set before the Rechabites pitchers of wine and cups to drink it, and he told them to drink the wine. He did not just ask them if they would like some wine to drink, but He made it very easy for them to drink it. His position as a true prophet of Yahweh would have encouraged them all the more to drink.

## **Verse 6**

The Rechabites refused Jeremiah's offer, explaining that one of their ancestors, Jonadab ben Rechab, had commanded his descendants never to drink wine. Abstinence was not a requirement of the Mosaic Law; it was simply a requirement that Jonadab imposed on his family. Faithful Nazirites also abstained from wine and grape products (cf. Numbers 6; Judges 13:4-7; 1 Samuel 1:11), though the Rechabites do not seem to have been Nazirites. The Nazirite vow was normally for a brief time, but the Rechabites had abstained from wine for generations.

Jonadab lived in the Northern Kingdom during the reign of King Jehu (841-814 B.C.). He helped Jehu purge Israel of Baal worship about 840 B.C. (cf. 2 Kings 10:15-27).

## **Verse 7**

Jonadab had also commanded his family not to build a house, or plant crops or grapevines, or to own a vineyard. They were to live in tents as semi-nomads, rejecting all aspects of settled living. We do not know why Jonadab had imposed these restrictions, but he may have felt that settled living in a Canaanite culture involved some temptations that a nomadic existence guarded against. [Note: Thompson, pp. 617-18.]

## **Verses 8-10**

The Rechabites explained that they had obeyed their ancestor's commands faithfully since the time he gave them (cf. Exodus 20:12). For over 200 years they had been faithful and obedient (cf. 2 Kings 10:15-27).

## **Verse 11**

The only time they lived in a city was when Nebuchadnezzar's vassals invaded the Judean countryside. Then they moved into the city for protection out of necessity, for survival, not because they had abandoned their principles. Jerusalem was not under siege at this time, but the surrounding countryside was being invaded.

## **Verses 12-13**

After this experience, the Lord instructed Jeremiah to speak to the people of Jerusalem and Judah. He was to ask them if they would not receive instruction from Him. Jeremiah may well have expected that when the Lord sent him a message it would have been one censuring the Rechabites for their eccentric lifestyle, legalism, and refusal to drink wine. But the Rechabites' chosen lifestyle was no problem to Yahweh. [Note: Kidner, p. 118.]

The rebuke of the Judahites 35:12-17

## **Verse 14**

The Rechabites had faithfully obeyed their ancestor, but the people of Judah and Jerusalem had not obeyed the Lord's instructions even though He had spoken to them repeatedly. Jeremiah was not expressing approval for the nomadic life and ascetic convictions of the Rechabites, but only their faithful obedience to their forefather.

"Nor is it [this story] per se a temperance lesson, despite its use for that purpose by some Sunday school quarterlies." [Note: Feinberg, "Jeremiah," p. 600.]

## **Verse 15**

The Lord had also sent His servants the prophets to His people-again and again-urging them to repent, to change their thoughts and actions, and to stop worshipping idols. If they did, they could continue to dwell in the land the Lord had given their forefathers. But the people had refused to listen.

## **Verse 16**

The Rechabites had obeyed Jonadab's instructions, but the Judahites had not listened to Yahweh (cf. Jeremiah 7:24-28; Jeremiah 11:1-17; Jeremiah 13:10; Jeremiah 25:4-8; Jeremiah 26:2-6; Jeremiah 29:17-29). The Lord used the Rechabites as a clinching argument in His "trial" against Judah.

## **Verse 17**

Therefore, the Lord was going to bring upon the people all the disaster that He had previously warned them about. They had not listened to Him when He spoke to them, or answered Him when He called to them.

"Notice the telling contrasts between the Rechabites and Judah.

"1. The Rechabites obeyed a fallible leader (Jeremiah 35:14); Judah's leader was the eternal God (cf. Malachi 1:6).

"2. Jonadab gave his commands to the Rechabites only once; God repeatedly sent his messages to his people (Jeremiah 35:15).

"3. The restrictions that bound the Recabites did not deal with eternal issues; God's messages to his people had eternal as well as temporal implications.

"4. The Recabites obeyed the commands of Jonadab for about three hundred years; the Lord's people constantly disobeyed (Jeremiah 35:16).

"5. The loyalty of the Recabites would be rewarded; for their disloyalty God's people would be punished (Jeremiah 35:17)." [Note: Ibid., p. 602.]

*(Adapted from URL:<https://www.studydrive.net/commentaries/eng/dcc/jeremiah-35.html>)*

### **Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

Traditions are a double-edged sword. Often the very word tradition carries a negative connotation. It can be associated with an old-fashioned, out-of-date practice that people adhere to with little, if any, thought about its significance. We do something a certain way because "that's the way we've always done it." In a positive sense, traditions can help us not repeat mistakes of the past as we walk in faithful obedience to the Lord's commands. While the Recabites' traditions are not necessary for us to follow today—nor were they for all people of that time—their example of faithfulness ought to serve as an inspiration. In sharp contrast to the Israelites, who lived in sin and failed to repent of their wicked ways, the Recabites lived in obedience to the ways set down by their father, Jehonadab: ways that did not conflict with God's Word. May we follow their example when it comes to heeding God's Word, walking in faithful obedience to how he has called us to live.