

“RUIN, REDEMPTION, AND RESTORATION”

Studies in the Book of Jeremiah

Jeremiah 52:1-34

“Lessons from a Fallen Kingdom”

Introduction: Imagine if your deepest darkest sins were recorded in the bestselling book in human history. We must check our hearts and adjust our attitudes away from a lofty place of self-righteousness as we reflect on the sins of ancient Israel. The destruction of ancient Jerusalem by the Babylonians was a cataclysmic event in world history. As we journeyed through Jeremiah, we experienced an intimate and detailed account of the last days of the ancient kingdom of Judah.

I. Zedekiah was appointed by election and removed by his evil works (Jeremiah 52:1-11)

- Verses 1-3: Zedekiah did not earn his position or prove himself more capable than his predecessors. Zedekiah was accountable for his sin and the people had violated the conditional Mosaic covenant that contained provisions of eviction from the land.
- Verses 4-6. Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon which sparked the siege. After about 18 months the food ran out in the city.
- Verses 7-11 is a recap of Jeremiah 39:1-10. Zedekiah is captured, his sons are put to death, his eyes are put out, and he is taken to Babylon and dies in prison.
- What lessons can we learn from this fallen king?
 - Obey God – Zedekiah chose to reject the word of God.
 - Reject pride and embrace humility – Zedekiah failed to humble himself before the Lord when confronted by godly people.
 - It is better to learn from an example than to learn as the example – Zedekiah failed to learn from the godly example of his father Josiah and the bad example of his brothers.
 - The Most High rules in the kingdom of men – kings and people in authority are subject to God’s ultimate authority – God is not a respecter of persons – the soul that sins will die (Ezekiel 18)
 - Zedekiah has the shame of being the last king of the kingdom of Judah. He failed in his assignment which resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

II. What were the disastrous results of disobedient leadership and an unprotected platform? (Jeremiah 52:12-27)

- Read verse 12-14. Nebuzaradan oversaw the destruction of the city and the temple. The temple was to be a house of prayer for all people. Everything God commanded Israel to do regarding the priesthood and

temple had intentional ministry significance. God had His own house burned down because it was defiled by the sin of idolatry (Ezekiel 8).

- Verses 15-23: Most of the people were taken captive to Babylon but some were left behind to tend the land. Why is there so much detail about the items that were taken to Babylon from the temple? The people would eventually be released from captivity along with the items from the temple (Ezra 1:7-11).
- Verses 24-27: The chief priest and the 2nd priest were guilty of allowing the defilement of the temple (Malachi 2:7). These failed leaders were executed by Nebuchadnezzar.
- What are the takeaways?
 - Take your assignment seriously – Levites were appointed by birth into a particular tribe and family – yet they were still accountable for their behavior – election does not negate responsibility.
 - Ancient Israel could have served as a kingdom of priests presenting the glory of God to the nations – how are you representing as a royal priesthood in Christ?
 - The temple and related rituals served to communicate truth and facilitate fellowship with God – are we utilizing the property and resources God has entrusted to us in a way that honors Him?
 - Consequences don't equal condemnation – the ministry went on pause for the purpose of cleansing the hearts of the remnant and emphasizing the seriousness of the holiness of God. Ezra is proof that God ended the captivity and allowed the rebuilding of the temple – what has God paused in your life that He may be calling you to restart with a revitalized sense of focus.
 - Don't take God's longsuffering for granted – judgement must first begin at the house of God – our rhythm of life as individuals, families, and a local church should be confess, repent and believe – confess when there is sin (individual or organizational), repent (stop doing it, turn from it, change), believe (trust that God forgives and restores).

III. Who is the Seed of hope in the Davidic covenant? (Jeremiah 52:28-34)

- Verse 28-30: This is a census of the people taken into captivity. The prophecies of Jeremiah predicted that some people would die by the sword, famine, and pestilence.
- Verses 31-34: Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim, and grandson of king Josiah was imprisoned in Babylon after 3 months on the throne of Judah. After 37 years of imprisonment Evil-Merodach or Amel-Marduk (man of Marduk) the son of Nebuchadnezzar released him.

- Why is this significant? The Abrahamic covenant and the Davidic covenant are unconditional. This was a dark and seemingly hopeless season in the history of ancient Israel. Yet, God is faithful to His promise. The release of Jehoiachin serves as a glimpse of hope amid despair.
- The Lord Jesus Christ is a biological descendant of David through Mary (Romans 1:3) and adopted by Joseph who was a biological descendent of David through Jehoiachin. He is the Seed of hope in the Davidic covenant
- In conclusion, it is from the vantage point of the New Testament that we can look back on the book of Jeremiah and see the foreshadow of the Gospel in the prediction of the king who will reign in righteousness, the New Covenant, and the faithfulness to the Davidic covenant through the release of Jehoiachin.

“But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption” (Hebrews 9:11-12).

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