

Week Thirty-four: The Last King of Judah - Deuteronomy 28, Jeremiah 52



Overview

In the early days of the nation of Israel Moses spoke of Israel's captivity, "Now it shall come to pass when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you"(Deut. 30:1).

Grave and continued disobedience over hundreds of years have ushered in the day that Moses had described in Deuteronomy. Under Zedekiah, Judah's final king, God's people experience the ultimate curse of disobedience. This lesson compares Moses' description of Israel's final days with her final twenty-three month period before the Babylonians take her into captivity.

Lesson Objective:

At the conclusion of this lesson, students will appreciate God's warning of judgment and captivity as they reconcile Moses' prediction of the captivity with what later occurred.

Key Truths

God warns His people of the consequences of disobedience far in advance, in hopes that they will return to Him and experience His blessing instead of judgment.

Judgment finally does come to those who harden their hearts and continue in their sin.

God is both longsuffering and just.

Lesson Outline

Jeremiah faithfully proclaims God's Word in the eleven final years of Judah's existence.

He warns Zedekiah, his priests, and his high officials repeatedly of imminent captivity. Zedekiah listens to his officials and corrupt priests instead of Jeremiah. He simply refuses to believe that the LORD will allow the destruction of His temple and the captivity of His people. He spends his final twenty-three months in Jerusalem under Babylonian siege, and he experiences both the destruction of the temple and the captivity of the people.

1. **Moses describes the siege of Israel a thousand years before it happens - Deuteronomy 28:49-63**

- The LORD will bring a nation of fierce countenance from afar (49-50a)
- No respect will be shown to the elderly (50b)
- No compassion will be given to the young (50c)
- The enemy will totally consume all crops and livestock (51)
- No high and fortified wall will protect them (52)
- Out of dire hunger people will eat their own children (53)
- Men will become barbaric toward family members (54-55)
- Women will deliver babies only to eat them (56-57)
- Extraordinary diseases will plague and destroy many, until few remain (59-62)
- The LORD who rejoiced to do them good will rejoice in their destruction (63a)
- They shall be plucked off from the land of promise (63b)

2. **Judah experiences the fulfillment of Moses' warning - Jeremiah 52:4-27**

- The siege lasts for twenty-three months (4-6a)
- The famine becomes so severe that there is no food within the city (verse 6)
- The city walls are broken through (7a)
- The men of war flee (along with King Zedekiah) through a breach in the wall (7b)
- The king and his army are brought to the king of Babylon in Riblah (verse 8)
- The king of Babylon kills Zedekiah's sons before his eyes (10a)
- All the princes of Judah are killed (10b)
- Zedekiah's eyes are put out, and he is bound and taken to Babylon until he dies in prison (11)
- Fire consumes the temple, the king's house, and all other great houses in Jerusalem (12-13)
- All the walls around Jerusalem are broken down (14)
- Some of the poor are carried away captive (15-16)

- The treasures of the temple are stripped, packed, and shipped to Babylon (17-23)
- The priests, an officer, associates of the king, a scribe, and sixty other men are brought to the king of Babylon and put to death (24-27a)

Sad words summarize the end of Judah and her people, “Thus Judah was carried away captive from its own land” (27)—exactly as Moses had described a thousand years earlier.

Application - What does this lesson teach about God? Man? Sin? Redemption? *Stubborn and proud people resist God Himself when they ignore those whom God raises up to proclaim His Word and invite His judgment.*

Men under the judgment of God are capable of the most heinous crimes against humanity

God is better to man than man deserves; man is more wicked than he imagines.

God warns His people about future consequences of their disobedience, yet His own people often refuse to heed His warnings.

Summary

God speaks in advance to warn people of the consequences of continued disobedience.

God acts by raising up both prophets to warn His people and willing opponents to carry out His promise of judgment.

God reveals His faithfulness to keep His promises of judgment to people who continue in their disobedience.

Discussion Questions

We live in a day where grace is exalted to such a place that even those who profess to know Christ live in open sin. How should the message of judgment affect individuals? What is the church’s role in society? How should churches prepare for judgment, and how should they communicate that judgment to those around them?