

- I. Excursus: A Tale of Two Cities Part 2
  - a. Purpose: In this lesson we shall see continue to see the theme of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation about a tale of two cities so that we can learn more about God's glory in building a city for Himself and destroying His enemies which will move us to be more at awe with His glory.
  - b. The historic war between the two city
    - i. The compromise city of God: Jerusalem's sins.
      1. Recall from the last session that Jerusalem is meant to be the City of God with the Temple. Sadly it turns out Jerusalem during Old Testament times had enemies of God from within: Jerusalem had many sinful kings.
      2. Because of the sins of the kings of Jerusalem and its people, God uses nations such as the Babylonians to militarily punish Jerusalem and those in Judah.
      3. This compromise can also be seen physically and literally in the case of king Hezekiah with the Babylonians in **2 Kings 20:12-19**
        - a. It began when the king of Babylon sent messengers inquiring about king Hezekiah's health: *"At that time Berodach-baladan a son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that Hezekiah had been sick."* (**2 Kings 20:12**)
          - i. Earlier in the chapter God has just healed Hezekiah from a very dangerous illness in **2 Kings 20:1-11**.
          - ii. Remember we must read the following story in light of the bigger picture of Babylon as the City of Man against God.
        - b. King's Hezekiah's response was one of compromise: *"Hezekiah listened to them, and showed them all his treasure house, the silver and the gold and the spices and the precious oil and the house of his armor and all that was found in his treasuries. There was nothing in his house nor in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them."* (**2 Kings 20:13**)→The sin is very likely pleasing men and also trusting in one's own strength and riches since it is contrasting God's grace and mercy earlier with the healing.
        - c. God then sent Isaiah to question Hezekiah in **2 Kings 20:14-15** concerning the identity of the Babylonian envoy.
        - d. Following this Isaiah declared God's prophetic word of God's punishment for this act: *"Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, 'Hear the word of the Lord. 17 'Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and all that your fathers have laid up in store to this day will be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the Lord. 18 'Some of your sons who shall issue from you, whom you will beget, will be taken away; and they will become officials in the palace of the king of Babylon.'"* (**2 Kings 20:16-18**)

- i. There here is prophecy that Hezekiah's household will be entering into exile and taken to Babylon.
    - ii. This prophecy of course would be fulfilled historically.
  - ii. Babylon's military campaigns against Jerusalem
    - 1. During the reign of king Jehoiakim in Jerusalem Babylon had a military campaign that resulted in their control over Judah: *"In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant for three years; then he turned and rebelled against him."* (2 Kings 24:1)
      - a. According to 2 Kings 24:2a this military force was sent by the Lord: *"The Lord sent against him bands of Chaldeans, bands of Arameans, bands of Moabites, and bands of Ammonites."*
      - b. Two reasons are given for why the Lord did this
        - i. To fulfill God's previous prophecy that this would happen: *"So He sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the Lord which He had spoken through His servants the prophets."* (2 Kings 24:2b)
        - ii. To punish Jerusalem and Judah for their sins: *"Surely at the command of the Lord it came upon Judah, to remove them from His sight because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, 4 and also for the innocent blood which he shed, for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; and the Lord would not forgive."* (2 Kings 24:3-4)
    - 2. Other military campaigns by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon followed.
      - a. Babylon's military campaign against Jerusalem during the reign of Jehoiachin is recorded in 2 Kings 24:10-16 which resulted in the action of those living in Jerusalem being exiled according to verse 14.
      - b. Another Babylonian military campaign was sent against Jerusalem during the reign of the next king Zedekiah as recorded in 2 Kings 24:17-25:30 which resulted in a siege against Jerusalem and the Temple's destruction.
  - iii. The destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon
    - 1. The Temple was eventually destroyed due to the sins of Israel including the priests who maintain the Temple by the Babylonians as recorded in 2 Chronicles 36:11-19. This is devastating in light of the focus on the Temple.
    - 2. Further description is also recorded in 2 Kings 25:8-21.
  - iv. God's promise restoration of Jerusalem
    - 1. Many prophets in the Old Testament predicted the restoration of Jerusalem. In what follows are survey of some of these verses.

2. Jeremiah predicted this before the Exile happened: *““For thus says the Lord, ‘When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place. 11 For I know the plans that I [h]ave for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:10-11)*
  - a. Here Jeremiah predicted the Exile in **verse 10**.
  - b. But there is also a prophecy of a return from exile **verse 10**.
  - c. This is described as part of God’s plan in **verse 11**.
  - d. Where is “this place” that Jeremiah speak of in **verse 10** when it says *“to bring you back to this place?”* It is Jerusalem according to **verse 1** since Jeremiah was writing from there to the exiles in Babylon.
  - e. They will return to Jerusalem a remnant!
3. **Isaiah 2:2-5** also predicted with details of a future Jerusalem *“in the last days” (v.2)*
4. After the Exile happened the prophet Daniel read Jeremiah’s prophecy (**Daniel 9:2**) and led him to pray for Jerusalem (**Daniel 9:16-19**) which then follow with the Angel Gabriel giving additional future revelation about Jerusalem and the Messiah in **Daniel 9:24-27**: *““Seventy [t]weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to [u]finish the transgression, to [v]make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and [w]prophecy and to anoint the most holy place. 25 So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a [x]decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until [y]Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with [z]plaza and moat, even in times of distress. 26 Then after the sixty-two weeks the [aa]Messiah will be cut off and have [ab]nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And [ac]its end will come with a flood; even to the end [ad]there will be war; desolations are determined. 27 And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of [ae]abominations will come one who [af]makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who [ag]makes desolate.””*
  - a. Space does not allow to go over everything but we see the Messiah being cut off is predicted here.
  - b. We also see Jerusalem being still in existence even after the time of the exile!
5. The return to Jerusalem was fulfilled in some sense in the book of Ezra and Nehemiah though of course more will be fulfilled long after the history of both books.

- v. At the same time **Zechariah 5** also prophesied Babylon becoming the center for an attempt to spread wickedness worldwide, which of course sets it up for a future clash with God, the Messiah and Jerusalem
  1. God sends down a curse over the whole earth (**v.3**)
  2. Talking about the whole earth again in **v.6** Zechariah sees a vision of a woman put in an ephah (**v.6-9**).
  3. This woman was named “*Wickedness*” (**v.8**)
  4. She is placed in “*land of Shinar*” (**v.10-11**) which of course is where Babylon is at.
  5. This shows that Babylon will have some kind of evil spirit that brings a curse to the whole land.
  6. We are thus not surprised then to find Babylon described as a woman in the book of Revelation at war against God.
- c. The Victory of the City of God
  - i. The future destruction of Babylon (**Revelation 18**)
  - ii. The future New Jerusalem (**Revelation 21:10-27**)
  - iii. Of course this would not be possible if it wasn't for God and if it wasn't for the Messiah. Sandwiched between these two episodes is the return of the King: Jesus Christ our Messiah (**Revelation 19:11-16**)!