

Journey through Jeremiah Part 27 Captivity

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney, Th.D. – Wednesday, June 21, 2017

† Jeremiah 25:1-38

(1) The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; (2) The which Jeremiah the prophet spake unto all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying,

This marks the 16th prophecy given to Jeremiah that we read about in this book. It was delivered around the year 604 B.C. The events described happened around the same time period that Daniel and his friends were taken into Babylonian captivity. It marks a very important turning point in the lives of the inhabitants of Judah.

(3) From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day, that is the three and twentieth year, the word of the LORD hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened.

Jeremiah is preaching to the people and states that he has been doing this for 23-years. He began prophesying in the 13th year of King Josiah, who reigned thirty-one years, so he prophesied about eighteen or nineteen years in his reign, then in the reign of Jehoahaz, and now four years of Jehoiakim's reign.

He had been preaching early in the morning to the people yet as he stated, they have not hearkened. Can you imagine, preaching 23-years and no success at all???

(4) And the LORD hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear.

Here we see that the LORD had sent more prophets than just Jeremiah to preach the truth to them. We know a few of them; Micah, Nahum, and Habakkuk, were a little before Jeremiah's time, and Zephaniah prophesied in the same time period. There was, no doubt, many others that are not mentioned in the Bible, yet the people would not listen to any of them.

(5) They said, Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that the LORD hath given unto you and to your fathers for ever and ever: (6) And go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke me not to anger with the works of your hands; and I will do you no hurt.

Just like Jeremiah the other prophets preached what God told them to preach;

1. Turn from your evil ways (repent)
2. Do not worship other gods – **Ex. 20:3** Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
3. Do not make false idols to worship – **Ex. 20:4a** Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image,

The Prophet Ezekiel would preach the same exact message even while in captivity: **Ezekiel 14:6-8:** Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations. **7** For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to enquire of him concerning me; I the LORD will answer him by myself: **8** And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

(7) Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, saith the LORD; that ye might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt.

The people brought everything on themselves by being disobedient and invoking God's wrath. He says that it was to their own hurt. We do the very same thing today. Our disobedience to God's Word always leads to our own hurt. Not only does it displease God but it also robs us of blessings and robs God of His glory.

(8) Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Because ye have not heard my words, (9) Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations.

Here is the proclamation of the LORD to the inhabitants of Judah that He would allow them to be taken into captivity. Pay particular attention to what he calls Nebuchadnezzar, "my servant." In the Book of Jeremiah, he is referred to as that 3 different times, once here in 25:9, then in 27:6, and then in 43:10. God is using Nebuchadnezzar as His agent of punishment. Friends, God can use anybody and anything to fulfill his purpose, even the most unlikely people such as Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus the Great.

(10) Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle.

All of the things mentioned in this verse were things that Judah took great pride in, they were symbols of how blessed they were;

1. **The voice of mirth and gladness** – these would have been heard during all of the festivals and observances that they participated in.
2. **The voice of the bridegroom and the bride** – the merry wedding feasts and celebrations.
3. **Sound of millstones** – the sounds as they would grind the corn and spices to make cakes and bread.
4. **The light of the candle** – Also symbols of their weddings and festivals and also used to light their homes.

The LORD will take all of these things from them.

(11) And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

Here is the prophecy of 70-years of captivity. In the span of 70-years most of them would die in Babylon. Getting an exact date of the beginning of captivity is difficult, however, **Daniel 1:1** In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.

It is believed that this occurred approximately 605 B.C. and ended during the reign of Cyrus approximately 535 B.C. I know there are some people that dispute the dates and claim they were really only in captivity 60-years and such but I choose to believe the Bible and God's Word says that the captivity lasted 70-years. Whether the dates are exactly right or not doesn't matter, what matters is that God's Word is always true. Just be satisfied that the captivity lasted 70-years.

You may wonder why 70-years? What's the significance? Well, fortunately for us the

Bible tells us. First look at **Leviticus 25:1-7**

- (1) And the LORD spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying,
- (2) Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD.
- (3) Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof;
- (4) But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard.
- (5) That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: *for it is a year of rest unto the land.*
- (6) And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee,
- (7) And for thy cattle, and for the beast that *are* in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be meat.

So the command was that they were to observe a sabbath rest year in the 7th year, but they did not observe it for 490 years. There were 70 sabbath years in those 490 years so the 70-years of captivity were to make up for those 70-years they were disobedient. We find that in **2 Chronicles 36:20-21**: And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: (21) To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: *for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.*

Those 70-years belonged to the LORD. Since they disobeyed Him and did not keep His commandment, he finally said, “that’s enough,” and He forced them to take it. My friend, you don’t want to take away from God what is rightfully His. That is one reason it is very important that we observe the Lord’s Day and dedicate it to Him.

(12) And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, *that* I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.

Of course we know that God indeed punished the king of Babylon and the nation of the Chaldeans by allowing Cyrus the Persian to invade and conquer them. God also used Cyrus to fulfill His will. Isaiah prophesied of Cyrus 150-years before he ever became king, and called him “**his anointed**,” which means “Savior, or Messiah.” **Isaiah 45:1** Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;

In fact, Cyrus is still referred to this day as the savior of the Jews.

(13) And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, *even* all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations. (14) For many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them also: and I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the works of their own hands.

When it is all said and done, the Chaldeans will be the ones placed in slavery. They will have to serve kings of other nations.

(15) For thus saith the LORD God of Israel unto me; Take the wine cup of this fury at

my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it. (16) And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them.

That phrase “**wine cup of this fury**,” symbolizes God’s wrath upon sin. The cup refers to bitter suffering, such as Jesus spoke of in the Garden of Gethsemane: **Matthew 26:36-42**: Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

(37) And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

(38) Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

(39) And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

(40) And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

(41) Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.

(42) He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

Jesus also spoke of this to his disciples in **Matthew 20:20-22**: Then came to him the mother of Zebedee’s children with her sons, worshipping *him*, and desiring a certain thing of him. (21) And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. (22) But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.

(17) Then took I the cup at the LORD’S hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the LORD had sent me:

Of course, Jeremiah wouldn’t be able to personally visit each of the nations that are going to be listed in the next verses, but his message will go out to all of them to let them know that they will not escape God’s wrath, that they must drink of the wine cup of His fury.

This “**drinking of the cup**” also represents doing God’s will. It was God’s will that these nations drink of His cup, just as it was God’s will that Jesus drink of the cup.

(18) *To wit*, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof, and the princes thereof, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, an hissing, and a curse; as *it is* this day;

No one will escape. God must visit them all for their iniquity starting with his chosen people in the City of Jerusalem and the inhabitants of Judah.

It is the same today. **1 Peter 4:17** For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it first begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God?

Next a list of all of these Gentile nations that must drink of the cup:

(19) Pharaoh king of Egypt, and his servants, and his princes, and all his people;
(20) And all the mingled people, and all the kings of the land of Uz, and all the kings of the land of the Philistines, and Ashkelon, and Azzah, and Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod,
(21) Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon,
(22) And all the kings of Tyrus, and all the kings of Zidon, and the kings of the isles which *are* beyond the sea,
(23) Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all *that are* in the utmost corners,
(24) And all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the mingled people that dwell in the desert,
(25) And all the kings of Zimri, and all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Medes,
(26) And all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another, and all the kingdoms of the world, which *are* upon the face of the earth: and the king of Sheshach shall drink after them.

There was a list of about 20 nations that would be part of this judgement. Because of their wickedness they must face God's wrath on their sin.

(27) Therefore thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Drink ye, and be drunken, and spue, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you.

God's wrath will be poured out upon each one and they will pay. He compares them to drunks that vomit and fall down, only these will rise no more. He will send the sword among them to destroy them.

(28) And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ye shall certainly drink. (29) For, lo, I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished: for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the LORD of hosts.

These nations will not be able to escape even though they will refuse to listen to the prophecy of Jeremiah and not believe him, but the LORD says that they will not go unpunished.

(30) Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, The LORD shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a shout, as they that tread *the grapes*, against all the inhabitants of the earth. (31) A noise shall come *even* to the ends of the earth; for the LORD hath a controversy with the nations, he will plead with all flesh; he will give them *that are* wicked to the sword, saith the LORD.

Not only will they face the wrath of the LORD but it will be harsh punishment that no one will escape.

(32) Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. (33) And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from *one* end of the earth even unto the *other* end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground.

This is harsher sentence upon God's people. The destruction will be unprecedented. They will be treated as nothing more than garbage, left unburied on top the ground as dung (cow manure).

(34) Howl, ye shepherds, and cry; and wallow yourselves *in the ashes*, ye principal of the flock: for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersions are accomplished; and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel. (35) And the shepherds shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to escape. (36) A voice of the cry of the shepherds, and an howling of the principal of the flock, *shall be heard*: for the LORD hath spoiled their pasture. (37) And the peaceable habitations are cut down because of the fierce anger of the LORD. (38) He hath forsaken his covert, as the lion: for their land is desolate because of the fierceness of the oppressor, and because of his fierce anger.

All of the pastors, the priests, the false prophets will wallow in the misery. They once were considered like fine expensive pottery, but in the destruction they will "fall like a pleasant vessel," in other words like that expensive piece of china that you keep locked away in your china cabinet that the kids are not allowed to touch, it will be smashed into pieces and made worthless.

† All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version of the Bible