

Jeremiah

Lesson 10 – The First Siege Begins
Jeremiah 21-24

The Fruitless Prophet

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1. The Siege Began (Jer 21).

- Nebuchadrezzar approached Jerusalem and King Zedekiah was fearful (21:1-2). He asked Jeremiah to enquire of the Lord for him.
- Jeremiah said that God would work against Judah (21:4)
- God said He Himself would fight against Judah (21:5). He would deliver Zedekiah and the people into Nebuchadrezzar's hand (21:6-7).
- God gave the people a way of life and a way of death (21:8-10).
- Judah must execute judgment or God would punish the according to the fruit of their doings (21:11-14).

One of the worst things that could happen to us is to have God fight against us. This reminds us of God's Words in the book of James. (James 4:6) "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." If we are proud, God will actually resist us.

Josiah 640-608
Jehoahaz 608
Jehoiakim 608-597
1 st Captivity 606
Jehoiachin 597
2 nd Captivity 597
Zedekiah 597-586
3 rd Captivity 586

2. Zedekiah's Warning and Reminder (Jer 22).

- Specifically King Zedekiah must execute judgment (22:1-4).
- If he failed to obey, judgment would certainly follow (22:5-9).
- God reminded Zedekiah of King **Shallum's** [Jehoahaz] (22:10-12).
- God then reminded him of King **Jehoiakim's** fate (22:13-19). He had done many injustices. Jehoiakim was bound to be sent to Babylon (2Ch 36:5-6); however, he likely died before the journey (2Ki 24:6). His end was to die on his way to Babylon and have the burial of an ass.
- Finally, God reminded him of the destination **Jehoiachin** (also called Coniah and Jeconiah) (22:20-30). King Coniah reigned only briefly. After reigning but three months, Nebuchadnezzar deported him to Babylon (2Ch 36:9-10).
- These were reminders were all warnings to Zedekiah and his people that God always keeps His word. Jeremiah was about 50 years old at this time. He had been preaching for 30 years. He had warned them, but they refused to listen.

*We read these words in the book of Romans. (Romans 15:4) "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." The best thing we can learn about history is to **learn from** history. Zedekiah had*

the examples of three previous kings. We have examples recorded throughout the entire Bible.

3. Rebuke to the Pastors and False Prophets (Jer 23)

- The pastors sinned (23:1-2). They destroyed and scattered God's sheep. They led them astray spiritually.
- The pastor's judgment (23:2-8). God said he would replace them with faithful pastors. Here he mixes far future prophecy with near future prophecy. The righteous Branch (Messiah), the LORD our righteousness, would eventually save Israel.
- The false prophets grieved God (23:9-15).
- The false prophets must not be followed (23:16-32). Their counsel is not from the Lord (23:18). God had not sent them (23:21). True prophets turn people away from evil (23:22). They cannot hide from God (23:23-24). God's word burns and breaks man's sinful ways (23:29).
- God condemned the false prophets for talking about a "burden" (i.e., a heavy load) (23:33-40). They viewed God's warnings as a burden. Ryrie states, "Some of the people were mocking Jeremiah for his sobering words by asking him, 'What's the heavy word (burden) from the Lord today?'"

It is our nature to enjoy pleasant words and to repel distasteful words. That is why the people of Judah listened to the corrupt pastors and false prophets and called Jeremiah's warnings a burden. Warnings may seem distasteful, but they are for our good and if we are wise, we will heed them.

4. The Two Baskets of Figs (Jer 24)

- After Nebuchadnezzar carried Jeconiah [Jehoiachin] off to Babylon, God showed Jeremiah two baskets of figs (24:1). One basket was full of very good figs. The other was full of very naughty (i.e., bad, unpleasant) figs, the kind that are full of worms and rotting (24:2).
- The good figs represent those who had already gone into captivity in 606 and in 597. God would bless them and they shall return to God with their whole heart (24:4-7).
- The evil figs represented Zedekiah and all the princes and people that yet remained in Jerusalem. They would soon come to know the stern judgment of the Lord (24:8-10).

We must be like those who have somewhat of a heart for God and who will obey Him and turn closer to Him.