

From this point in Jeremiah's letter we see the fall of Jerusalem and his continued work in bringing God's message to Judah.

Jeremiah 39:1-2 ^{NAU} Now when Jerusalem was captured in the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came to Jerusalem and laid siege to it; ² in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, in the ninth *day* of the month, the city *wall* was breached.

And so, it appears that the army of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem for a period of a year and a half before they take control of the city.

That's a long time to be under siege and a long time to think about the judgment that God is bringing upon them because of their sin against a holy God.

At some point, probably sooner than later, the sons of Judah were crying out to God for deliverance but God would not answer except to remind them of their rebellion and the consequences to the promise of God to enact this judgment.

Remember, that prior to this, Jeremiah had been put under house arrest by the authorities in Judah, but then the Babylonians would set him free.

Jeremiah 40:1 ^{NAU} The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD after Nebuzaradan captain of the bodyguard had released him from Ramah, when he had taken him bound in chains among all the exiles of Jerusalem and Judah who were being exiled to Babylon.

What is interesting about Jeremiah being released is that the Babylonians seem to have a sense that he was instrumental in the fall of Jerusalem, which may be the reason they release him. Notice what the captain of the guard says to Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 40:2-5 ² Now the captain of the bodyguard had taken Jeremiah and said to him, "The LORD your God promised this calamity against this place; ³ and the LORD has brought *it* on and done just as He promised. Because you *people* sinned against the LORD and did not listen to His voice, therefore this thing has happened to you. ⁴ "But now, behold, I am freeing you today from

the chains which are on your hands. If you would prefer to come with me to Babylon, come *along*, and I will look after you; but if you would prefer not to come with me to Babylon, never mind. Look, the whole land is before you; go wherever it seems good and right for you to go." ⁵ As Jeremiah was still not going back, *he said*, "Go on back then to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon has appointed over the cities of Judah, and stay with him among the people; or else go anywhere it seems right for you to go." So the captain of the bodyguard gave him a ration and a gift and let him go.

How do you suppose that the Babylonians knew that Jeremiah had received revelation from God concerning this judgment?

It is reasonable that the Babylonians may have been made aware of this at least from the time of the siege which lasted a year and a half as during this time they were assuredly taking prisoners from Jerusalem and interrogating them.

Just as likely God, possibly through these means, wanted the Babylonians to know that it was His judgment on Judah that allowed the Babylonians to have success in carrying out God's will.

Jeremiah 22:8-9 ⁸ "Many nations will pass by this city; and they will say to one another, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this great city?' ⁹ "Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the covenant of the LORD their God and bowed down to other gods and served them.'"

In whatever way God would reveal this to the nations, the point is that it is God who has allowed this as part of His plan as He encourages the Babylonians to accomplish this victory, thus taking the glory for Himself and not sharing it with the Babylonians.

And the Babylonians seem to have recognized this as the captain of the guard essentially gives the glory to God. But in so doing the captain of the guard bears witness to the greatness of God and the holiness of God as he acknowledges that it was the sin of Judah not listening to the voice of God.

What I find interesting about this is that the captain of the guard only gives half the story. He does say that Judah did not listen to the voice of the Lord.

But what was it specifically that they did not listen to?

Jeremiah 1:16 ¹⁶ "I will pronounce My judgments on them concerning all their wickedness, whereby they have forsaken Me and have offered sacrifices to other gods, and worshiped the works of their own hands.

Why do you suppose the captain of the guard omits this aspect of what the Lord spoke to Judah?

Because he belongs to a people who also serve false gods. To acknowledge this would place him in a similar situation. And of course we will see that the Babylonians will also be confronted by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob at a later time because of their idolatrous ways.

What does this tell us about God and the nations of the world?

No one is exempt despite the fact that Israel had a greater revelation from God. All men everywhere will be held accountable before a holy God with the revelation they do have.

Romans 1:18-25 ¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. ²¹ For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. ²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. ²⁵ For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

But back to the exiled Jews in Judah. They were taken to Babylon, but not all Jews were exiled. Many were allowed to stay in the land.

Jeremiah 40:6-7 ⁶ Then Jeremiah went to Mizpah to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam and stayed with him among the people who were left in the land. ⁷ Now all the commanders of the forces that were

in the field, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah the son of Ahikam over the land and that he had put him in charge of the men, women and children, those of the poorest of the land who had not been exiled to Babylon.

So we see that Jeremiah would stay in Judah along with those of the poorest of the land.

By the way, why would the poorest of the land be allowed to stay behind?

Whenever a people are conquered and you take possession of their land it is not to your advantage to have to repopulate the land with your own people whom you have to transport great distances.

Leaving a remnant in the land, especially the poorest, keeps those people still subjugated to the master, in this case, Babylon. But it also gives the poor an opportunity to better themselves which in turn keeps them much more docile toward their conquerors.

But even these people still need leadership and so Gedaliah the son of Ahikam stayed in the land to rule over the remnant.

Why would the Babylonians do this?

It's just smart business. To choose one from among the ranks of those you conquered helps in the transition because they know the language and customs and history of their own people and can act as the go-between to help keep the peace.

Many conquering nations have done this for centuries. Rome would be the classic example where they would conquer a land and encourage those they conquered to manage their own people while Rome would send in a magistrate to support those indigenous leaders as they kept a watchful eye over them along with Rome's army to help keep the peace.

This is why the Jews during Christ's time were still allowed to worship in the temple and hold court over their own people with Rome's authority over it.

And so, when the Jews condemned Jesus Christ within their own judicial courts they were still bound by a higher Roman law which is why they appealed to Caesar to carry out the death penalty.

We did the same thing after WWII. Both Germany and Japan were conquered by the allies and yet we allowed both groups to govern

themselves under the watchful and directional eye of the conquerors.

However, whenever war has ravaged a country, even when the conquerors allow self-government, there is often times a power struggle among the conquered to jockey for power positions within that new government and sometimes it is gained through force. This was no different in Judah after the exile.

And so, there were factions who fought against each other and many Jews were killed by other Jews. But some of those oppressed peoples approached Jeremiah to gain help from God.

Jeremiah 42:1-3 ^{NAU} Then all the commanders of the forces, Johanan the son of Kareah, Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiiah, and all the people both small and great approached ² and said to Jeremiah the prophet, "Please let our petition come before you, and pray for us to the LORD your God, *that is* for all this remnant; because we are left *but* a few out of many, as your own eyes *now* see us, ³ that the LORD your God may tell us the way in which we should walk and the thing that we should do."

After 10 days the Lord gave an answer to Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 42:9-16 "Thus says the LORD the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your petition before Him: ¹⁰ 'If you will indeed stay in this land, then I will build you up and not tear you down, and I will plant you and not uproot you; for I will relent concerning the calamity that I have inflicted on you. ¹¹ 'Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, whom you are *now* fearing; do not be afraid of him,' declares the LORD, 'for I am with you to save you and deliver you from his hand. ¹² 'I will also show you compassion, so that he will have compassion on you and restore you to your own soil. ¹³ 'But if you are going to say, "We will not stay in this land," so as not to listen to the voice of the LORD your God, ¹⁴ saying, "No, but we will go to the land of Egypt, where we will not see war or hear the sound of a trumpet or hunger for bread, and we will stay there"; ¹⁵ then in that case listen to the word of the LORD, O remnant of Judah. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, "If you really set your mind to enter Egypt and go in to reside there, ¹⁶ then the sword, which you are afraid of, will overtake you there in the land of Egypt; and the famine, about which you are anxious, will follow closely after you there *in* Egypt, and you will die there.

And so, once again, it comes down to listening to the voice of the Lord. And you would think that after all that Judah has experienced where God's word has come to pass that no one would dare venture into Egypt.

Any guesses as to what they did?

Jeremiah 43:1-4 ^{NAU} But as soon as Jeremiah, whom the LORD their God had sent, had finished telling all the people all the words of the LORD their God-- that is, all these words-- ² Azariah the son of Hoshaiah, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the arrogant men said to Jeremiah, "You are telling a lie! The LORD our God has not sent you to say, 'You are not to enter Egypt to reside there'; ³ but Baruch the son of Neriah is inciting you against us to give us over into the hand of the Chaldeans, so they will put us to death or exile us to Babylon." ⁴ So Johanan the son of Kareah and all the commanders of the forces, and all the people, did not obey the voice of the LORD to stay in the land of Judah.

All of chapter 44 is God's response to their disobedience and His judgment on them in Egypt as the Lord sends the king of Babylon to bring war to Egypt.

And in the next few chapters we see God's judgment on the surrounding nations including Egypt, the Philistines, the Moabites, the Ammorites, the Edomites, Damascus, Kedar and Hazor, Elam and then in chapter 50 God speaks to the judgment on Babylon.

In the midst of these judgments God then extends a promise to Israel and Judah.

Jeremiah 50:1-5 ^{NAU} The word which the LORD spoke concerning Babylon, the land of the Chaldeans, through Jeremiah the prophet: ² "Declare and proclaim among the nations. Proclaim it and lift up a standard. Do not conceal *it but* say, 'Babylon has been captured, Bel has been put to shame, Marduk has been shattered; Her images have been put to shame, her idols have been shattered.' ³ "For a nation has come up against her out of the north; it will make her land an object of horror, and there will be no inhabitant in it. Both man and beast have wandered off, they have gone away! ⁴ "In those days and at that time," declares the LORD, "the sons of Israel will come, *both* they and the sons of Judah as well; they will go along weeping as they go, and it will be the LORD their God they will seek. ⁵ "They will ask for the way to Zion, *turning* their faces in its direction; they will come that they

may join themselves to the LORD *in* an everlasting covenant that will not be forgotten.

We know that the O.T. is a glimpse into the New and we know that those things spoken of in the Old will be fulfilled in the New in Christ Jesus.

What is the picture we have here in Jeremiah 50:1-5 where we have the judgment of the nations, along with Babylon, and the deliverance of Israel in an everlasting new covenant?

All of the nations that Jeremiah mentions are representative of the known world and will come under God's judgment on that day of wrath. But in judging the world God will redeem and bring to Himself the Israel of God who come under the blood of the Lamb in the New Covenant. This is what we read of in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 16:19-21 ¹⁹ The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. ²⁰ And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. ²¹ And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe.

Babylon came to represent the entire world system that rejects the one true God and it is this Babylon that John addresses in the book of Revelation that God will judge with the sword of His mouth.

Revelation 19:15-16 ¹⁵ From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. ¹⁶ And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

This is the picture that Jeremiah paints for us under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Jeremiah 51:55-58 ⁵⁵ For the LORD is going to destroy Babylon, And He will make *her* loud noise vanish from her. And their waves will roar like many waters; The tumult of their voices sounds forth. ⁵⁶ For the destroyer is coming against her, against Babylon, And her mighty men will be captured, Their bows are shattered; For the LORD is a God of recompense, He will fully repay. ⁵⁷ "I will make her princes and her wise men drunk, Her governors, her

prefects and her mighty men, That they may sleep a perpetual sleep and not wake up," Declares the King, whose name is the LORD of hosts. ⁵⁸ Thus says the LORD of hosts, "The broad wall of Babylon will be completely razed And her high gates will be set on fire; So the peoples will toil for nothing, And the nations become exhausted *only* for fire."

All of this judgment will happen on the last day at the last trumpet, the day of God's wrath.

But it also on this last day that the promises for Israel of the New Covenant, the Israel of God, both Jew and Gentile, will come to pass in an everlasting covenant in the presence of our King of kings and Lord of lords.

1 Corinthians 15:50-57 ⁵⁰ Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. ⁵⁵ "O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; ⁵⁷ but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the day we long for. This is the day where we will be given the inheritance in Christ in which righteousness dwells.

2 Peter 3:10-14 ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. ¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, ¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! ¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. ¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,