

17-18 Bible Study #6

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The Prophet Ezekiel

1-33 Cont

Ezekiel (Cont)

- **Ezekiel 12:1-6**

- This is all about Ezekiel being called to pack an exile's baggage, pretend to go into exile by day, by moving from one plane to another as one in exile
- God then tells him that if the people do not understand what that means, he is to dig a hole through the wall at night and go through it with his eyes covered
- This is a direct depiction of what is happening to King Zedekiah in Jerusalem

To look at **what happened to the Glory Cloud**, we need to take a quick look at **2nd Maccabees 2:4** *

2nd Maccabees 2:4

- Here we see Jeremiah, who like Ezekiel, was a priest, just before the arrival of the Babylonians went into the Holy of Holies, took the Ark and carried it to Mount Nebo
 - Remember the Ark was the physical representation of the cherubic throne of God
 - Mount Nebo (due east of Jerusalem) was the place where it was believed Moses was buried or where he was assumed from *

Ezekiel (Cont)

- Ezekiel continues to have visions about all sorts of things which basically condemn Jerusalem and Israel for all of their idolatry
 - **Ezekiel 16:1-29** describes Israel as a **beautiful maiden** who, after marrying, becomes a harlot (covenantal adultery)
 - **Ezekiel 23** presents **two sisters who become harlots** (Israel and Judah)

Ezekiel (Cont)

- **Ezekiel 24:15-27** presents the **death of Ezekiel's wife** and God's **prohibition for him to mourn** her as an example for the loss of the temple (the love of Judah's life)
- **Ezekiel 25 - 29** presents God's **condemnation of the nations around Israel** to include:
 - Moab
 - Edom
 - Philistia
 - Tyre and Sidon *

Ezekiel (Cont)

- **Ezekiel 32:7-8** refers to his **condemnation of Egypt** as the darkening of the celestial light
 - We also saw this image in **Isaiah 13:9-10*** where the prophet described the **destruction of a nation** as the **darkening of the sun, moon and stars**
 - This meant that “time” was up
- Jesus will use this same language when talking about the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in **Matthew 24:29-31 ***

Ezekiel (Cont)

- **Ezekiel 33: 21-26**

- Presents the **announcement reaching Babylon** concerning the **destruction of Jerusalem**
- Remember that Ezekiel went into exile during the second Exile (Daniel was a part of the 1st Exile)
- At this point Jerusalem had fallen, and Ezekiel's prophecies were in real time and no longer visions
- Ezekiel is showing those in Babylon why Jerusalem had fallen and why the people in Babylon were not going to be able to return due to their own wickedness

Ezekiel (Cont)

- The first half of the Book of Ezekiel (1-24) contains his:
 - Initial visions and his calling to prophesy to the people of Israel in the Exile
 - He was prophesying to those who were exiled in the first two exiles
 - He was letting them know that they were there due to their own sins and also that God was actually being merciful to them
 - Finally, that they were not going to return to Jerusalem as they had originally thought
- The **rest of the book of Ezekiel (25-48)** is about the **destruction of Jerusalem** due to the practice of idolatry by the people

Ezekiel (Cont)

- But Ezekiel does not say that everyone in Jerusalem will be killed or exiled
- Only the wicked idolaters were to be punished
- Some would be killed in battle and others will go into Exile
- Those to be “left behind” will **have the mark** on their forehead discussed in **Ezekiel 9**

Ezekiel (Cont)

- They are the ones who will inherit the land because they chose to remain loyal to Yahweh
- They prayed to God for help, and He answered their prayers
- We will return to **Ezekiel 33** after a brief look at the conclusion of Jeremiah
- But first, we will return for a historical update from 2nd Kings *

2nd Kings 25

- **2nd Kings 25:1-12**
- This was the **last section in 2nd Kings we looked at last year**
- After **Zedekiah (#4)** rebelled against the *Babylonians*, King *Nebuchadnezzar* laid siege to *Jerusalem* resulting in a severe famine
- A few months later things in *Jerusalem* were so bad that King *Zedekiah* breached in the city wall and he and his military fled in the night toward the Dead Sea (the ***Arabah***)
- They were captured near *Jericho* by *Babylonians* (*Chaldeans*) and taken to the king of *Babylonians* at ***Riblah***

2nd Kings 25

- **Nebuzaradan**, the Captain of the Guard, sent the blinded King Zedekiah and most of the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem (10,000) into the third and final exile (586 BC)
- He oversaw the final destruction of the temple and Jerusalem
- The author also described those left behind as:
 - The poor were left behind because they were to inherit the land
 - They were the “righteous” as they chose to remain loyal to Yahweh and thus were found to have the mark on their foreheads
 - They had done nothing wrong in light of the Law
 - They prayed for mercy, and God responded *

2nd Kings 25 (Cont)

- **2nd Kings 12:13-21**

- **Nebuzaradan**, the Captain of the Guard, sent all the valuable portions of the temple to Babylon
- He then collected the few remaining members of the upper echelon of society and sent them to the King who had them executed at ***Riblah***
- At this point the bulk of Judah was in Exile in Babylon *
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2nd Kings 26 (Cont)

- **2nd Kings 12: 22-26**

- **Nebuchadnezzar**, king of Babylon, appointed ***Gedaliah*** *
governor over the people who remained in the land of Judah
- He invited the people of the remnant to serve Babylon and be safe
- Unfortunately, in the 7th month, *Ishmael*, a member of Judah's royal family along with 10 men, attacked and killed the governor along with the Jews and Chaldeans, who were with the governor at ***Mizpah***
- Then they fled to Egypt out of fear of the Babylonians *

2nd Kings 25 (Cont)

- **2nd Kings 12: 27-30**

- Meanwhile, in the 37th year of the Exile of Jehoiachin, ***Evilmerodach*** the new King of Babylon:

- Freed Jehoiachin from prison
- Gave him a seat at the king's table
- Provided him with an allowance for the rest of his life

- This is the **end of 2nd Kings**

Transition

- We last looked at **Jeremiah 39:1-10** where the prophet lifted the historical context from **2nd Kings 25:1-12**
- We will now return to **Jeremiah 40** *

Jeremiah 40 - 52

Jeremiah 625-580 BC

- Was born in **646 BC**, (approximately a century after *Isaiah*), into a priestly family in *Jerusalem*
- Is better known for his life and character than any other prophet because of his biographical narratives scattered throughout his book
- Was called by God as a **young man** (1:6-8) in **626 BC** (age 20)
- Was forbidden by **God to marry**

Jeremiah (Cont)

- Lived through the tragic years preceding and succeeding the ruin of the kingdom of *Judah*
- Was a man of deep human emotions who actually suffered with his people
- The hopes of the people of *Judah* had been raised by the religious reforms and the rallying of the nation by King *Josiah* (**640-609 BC**) (**2nd Kings 22**)

Jeremiah (Cont)

- These hopes were unfortunately dashed by:
 - The tragic death of King *Josiah* at *Megiddo* in **609 BC**
 - The disruption of the balance of power in the ancient world by the fall of *Nineveh* in **612 BC** and the expansion of power of the *Babylonians*

Jeremiah

- *Jeremiah* speaks of the fall and restoration of *Jerusalem* at the same time *Ezekiel* (**590-571 BC**) was preaching the same thing to those in exile in *Babylon*
 - *Jeremiah* prophesied for 40 years through four of the most turbulent decades in Jewish history:
 - The reigns of five kings and a governor of Judah
 - Periods of optimism (Josiah) to despair and desolation during the fall and aftermath of Jerusalem which he foretold (587 BC)
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Jeremiah (Cont)

- **Jeremiah 40: 1**

- Jeremiah was taken in chains to ***Ramah*** with the other captives
- All of a sudden ***Nebuzaradan***, the Captain of the Guard, recognized and released him
- It is obvious that the Babylonians knew that Jeremiah had been proclaiming not to resist them
- Jeremiah had been telling King Zedekiah over and over that God had called the king to submit to the Babylonians, pay the taxes and remain on the throne

Jeremiah (Cont)

- Jeremiah had told him that this chastisement was from God and if he fights it, things would get much worse
- Zedekiah foolishly tried to rebel (which led to the siege and his eventual capture and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple)
- Most likely Babylonian officials were all over Jerusalem and knew Jeremiah's position
- Look at what **Nebuzaradan** says to Jeremiah *

Jeremiah (Cont)

- **Jeremiah 40:2-5a**

- After exiling King Zedekiah, Nebuchadrezzar (a 2nd form of Nebuchadnezzar) leaves **Gedaliah** as governor in Judah
- It appears that he was appointed even though he was not in the line of David *
- He centered his activities in **Mizpah** (north of Jerusalem)
- As governor his job was to oversee the collection of taxes and make sure that the wine and olive oil made it to Babylon for sale
- So the Captain of the guard asks Jeremiah if he wants to stay in Judah or go under his protection to Babylon
- If he wants to remain, he should support the governor *

Jeremiah (Cont)

- **Jeremiah:41: 5b-10**

- We see these events unfold with a great deal more information here in Jeremiah
- We hear about some of the Jews who had been dispersed earlier in the nations round about Judea and had not been taken into the Babylonian exile
- This means that there are two groups of people left in the land of Judea:
 - The poor of the land under the governorship of Gedaliah and Jeremiah
 - A riffraff of random soldiers who were in hiding in the caves and hill roundabout along with others who will cause trouble
- The returning Jews meet with the governor who promised to protect them

Jeremiah (Cont)

- He offered them the land and promised protection if they served the king of Babylon
- The cities of Judah were empty, Jerusalem was a wasteland, and all the aristocracy, wealthy and royalty were gone
- Imagine, the empty palaces, houses, farms and vineyards
- This should remind us of what the Israelites encountered when they first entered the Promised Land under God's protection
- Look at **Exodus 23:20-33** * when God promises to help them secure the land and even sends hornets before the people of Israel to help force the people off the land

Jeremiah (Cont)

- The pagans were driven out, leaving everything to the people of God who inherited the land and crops
- God warned them about what would happen if they did not follow his Law
- At this point in the Babylonian Exile this remnant was retaking the Promised Land by once again driving out the pagans who at this time were the people of Israel
- Since this was the Napa Valley of the Middle East, they were able to harvest grapes, olives and other fruits *