

HISTORY OF REDEMPTION

BY

Dave Shirley

Lesson 7 God Scatters the Nation

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Let's pray.

Father, I just thank You so much for today. Thank You for the life we have, the awareness and consciousness of You. To just be still and know that You are God and that in eternity past, so to speak, You had us in Your mind and decided to create us and make us in Your image. So Lord, we grieve about the whole situation and the world in general, because we know it is not what it ought to be. And we know it is not what it is going to be, because You have promised that there will be at least a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness. So we look for that. We hope for that. So Lord, keep us from going astray. Just keep us on the path of discipleship, of being conformed to the image of Christ and walking in fellowship with You and enjoying You now, as well as forever.

So as we look, Lord, at the history of what You did, it just, it reaffirms and solidifies our commitment to have hope, to be patient, because we see that You worked. And we have hope that not one of Your promises will fail. They will, in good time, all be accomplished. So Lord, we just acknowledge You as the sovereign God. So just enable us as we go through Your Word, Lord and see some of the big things in terms of history, that we would look into it but we would see You and see Your hand there and know that nothing has really changed. Things are pretty much the

same. You are still just marching out Your orders and Your command and Your will shall be done. Lord, let us find where we fit in it and be part of it. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

Act Two

God Scatters the Nation

(1 Kings 11 - 2 Chronicles 36)

Well, we saw God set the stage in Genesis 1 through 11. And He began the drama of redemption, you might say, in chapter 12 of Genesis. Act One is from chapter 12 of Genesis all the way to 1 Kings 10; that is Act One. And Act One was the building of the nation. Did God build the nation? Yes, a glorious nation. It ended you might say, as a glorious nation at least externally, but there were some problems internally.

And now we move on to Act Two. And Act Two begins in 1 Kings 12 and goes through to the last book of the Old Testament, which is 2 Chronicles 36. Now it is not the last chapter in your Bible, but that is the last chapter in the Jewish Bible, because that thus ends the history, you know, as far as they read it.

So Act Two will carry us from the time God scatters the nation until the time that, really, it is rebuilt, you might say. We are going to look at that, which includes 1 Kings 11 to 2 Chronicles 36. It begins with Solomon's downfall.

Solomon's Downfall - Decline

**Spending much time on his home and
little time on the house of God...**

(1 Kings 6:37-7:51)

Collecting horses and wealth...

(1 Kings 10:26-38)

Marrying foreign wives...

(1 Kings 11:1-6)

*God gave an early warning by Moses
regarding this potential problem.*

Solomon begins to decline. Solomon spends more time on his own house than he does on God's house in 1 Kings 6. And that is often an indication of where our heart is, if we are spending more time on our things than God's things. "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, then the other things will be added" (cf. Matthew 6:33). Even in 1 Timothy 6:9-10 we are warned about getting our hearts set on riches and what it can do. And Solomon began to focus on himself, take care of his own situation. And then he went on and said, "Oh, okay, I guess I had better build God's house too." But he really spent more time on his own than on God's. He collected horses and wealth. He took many foreign wives in and loved them, and they divided his heart.

So God comes and he gives an early warning by Moses, you might say, on this potential problem. And God is like that. He is always warning us about what is going to happen in the future if we do not change. We see it in history. But I can guarantee that there are

God's children today who have received warnings from the Holy Spirit, that have received promptings from the Holy Spirit or from the Word of God, and you just kind of know it as a check in your spirit. If you do not change—it is like God just warns you. If you do not turn around then you are going to have a downfall. And you have probably been there in the past, where you have had those kinds of warnings, you have not heeded those kinds of warnings and then—boom—you fell.

I was talking to a girl yesterday that had to leave school yesterday. It was like the same thing. She had a warning. She said, "I had a couple warnings. It was like, don't go that way. Don't go that route." But it is like, she said, "I just did not listen." And the next thing you know, boom. You are down.

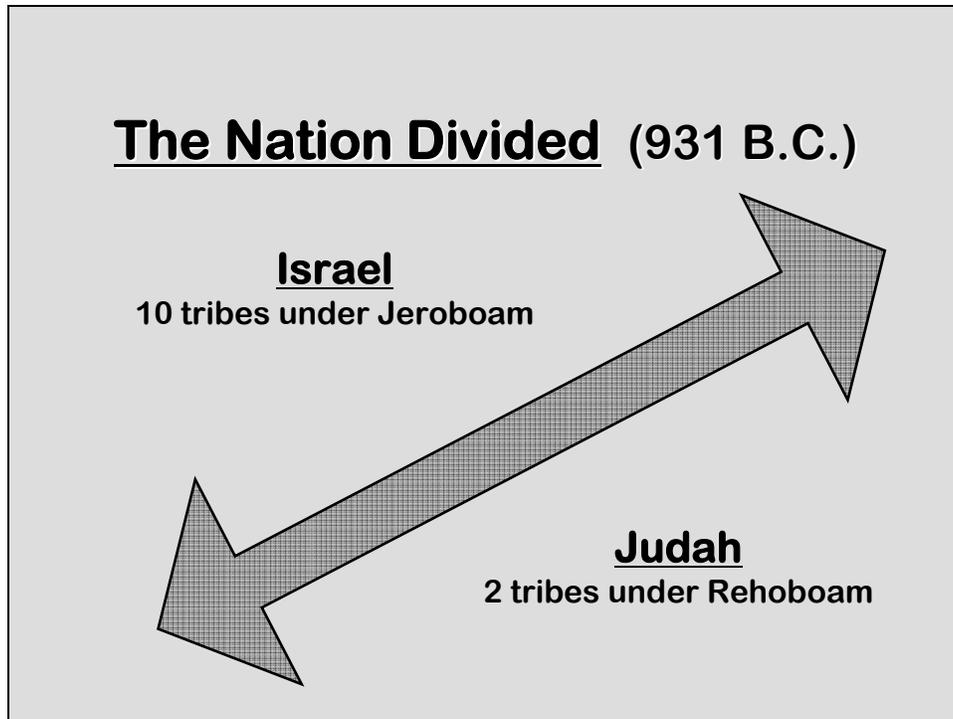
Well, 1 Kings 5 says, "Then King Solomon raised up a labor force out of all of Israel. And the labor force was 30,000 men, ten thousand a month in shifts. One month in Lebanon, two months at home. 70,000 who carried burdens. And 80,000 who quarried stone. 3,300 from the chiefs of Solomon's deputies who supervised the people who labored in the work" (cf. 1 Kings 5:14-16). So he built this huge labor force and said, "You have got to go out and work for two months and then you can come home." Or, "You have got to go out and work for one month and then you can come home and stay for two months. But then you have got to go back out again and work another month." And so he was always disrupting the family, sending the guys out for a month at a time. Then he would bring them back. Then he would send them out for a month at a time. You know, because he wanted to keep his building programs going.

And the people did not like that and you would not like it either. 1 Kings 9, this is the reason for the labor force which King Solomon raised: "Whatever Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion, he did." In other words, he built whatever he wanted to, wherever he wanted to. But he was on this huge—he just wanted to build and expand and have more. He could not be satisfied with what he had. And he was, in a sense, glorifying the nation, but he went beyond. It sounds like he was excessive in it.

And 1 Kings 11 says, “But King Solomon loved many foreign women and he had 700 wives, princes, 300 concubines. And his wives turned his heart away; for it was so, when Solomon was old that his wives turned his heart after other gods. And his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God as was the heart of his father David. And he did likewise for all his foreign wives who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods” (cf. 1 Kings 11:1-8). So the Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel who had appeared to him twice. You would like, man, you would certainly remember that.

So, what happens is, God says, “I have got to turn away from My people because now I do not have a guy who is ruling for Me any longer. He is not like his father David. He started out okay. I appeared to Him twice, but he has not heeded Me. And if he is not going to rule for Me then I do not have a theocracy.” It is just total hypocrisy. It is just a form, an external shell.

So, he gets turned away from the Lord. So, when you look at the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon, each reigning for forty years—we have a total of 120 years where the nation was united. I mean, after that time of judges and everything where they were so dissipated and scattered and things were horrible, we have had a wonderful time where the nation has been united together under rulership, and all the other nations have feared this nation. It has been 120 years of really bliss, in many ways.



But because of this situation with Solomon and his heart, the nation is divided in 931. God takes the ten tribes of Israel and He moves them north. And He leaves the two tribes of Judah south in Jerusalem. The ten tribes of Israel go under Jeroboam. And the two tribes of Judah stay under Rehoboam there. So it is just interesting to see what God does.

Now God says He is going to do something about the deterioration. He tells Solomon He is going to divide the nation. He warned him. And God tells Jeroboam He going to give him ten tribes of the divided kingdom, or the divided nation. How does God do it? Well, He does it through a prophet. And God tells Solomon first that, “You are going to lose the nation.” So the Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel who appeared to him twice. And God had commanded him concerning this thing that he should not go after all gods. But he did not keep what the Lord had commanded.

Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, “Because you have done this and you have not kept My commandment and My statutes which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the

kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. Nevertheless, I will not do it in your days for the sake of your father David. But I will tear it out of the hand of your son. [You know, that is Rehoboam. He says, “I am going to tear it out of the hand of your son Rehoboam.] However, I will not tear away the whole kingdom. I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen. (cf. 1 Kings 11:11-13)

So God says, “I have to discipline. I do not have a choice, really. But I am not going to totally wipe you out. And the reason is because of a covenant and a promise that I made to My servant David.” And it is like, “You had better be glad I made a promise to him, because if I had not made the promise to him, Solomon, you would be wiped out.”

So God comes and He gives Jeroboam ten of the tribes. And He did it through a prophet, Ahijah. It says,

Now it happened, at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite came and met him on the way. And he had clothed himself with a new garment and the two were alone in the field. Then Ahijah took hold of the new garment that was on him and tore it into twelve pieces, and he said to Jeroboam, “Take for yourself ten pieces. For thus says the Lord the God of Israel, ‘Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and I will give ten tribes to you. But he shall have one tribe for the sake of My servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel. However, I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand because I have made him ruler all the days

of his life for the sake of My servant David whom I chose because he kept My commandments and My statutes. But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand and give it to you. [Ten tribes] And to his son I will give one tribe that My servant David may always have a lamp before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen for Myself to put My name there.'" (cf. 1 Kings 11:29-36)

So, this prophet comes and he comes in a dramatic way. He gives the prophecy. He wears a new coat, or a cloak, comes up to Jeroboam, takes his cloak off. Of course, it says there was not anybody around. They were alone in the field. He just rips his thing off. And he is standing there basically naked and he just like, tears the whole thing up into twelve pieces. And then he gives ten of the pieces to Jeroboam and says, "This is what God is doing. He is tearing it out of the hand of Solomon. He is giving you ten and he is going to keep two."

God Executes Judgment
He divides the Kingdom (931 B.C.)

Strife between Jeroboam and Rehoboam
(1 Kings 12:19-24)

Jeroboam is cut off because of sin
(1 Kings 13:33-34)

So God says, “I am going to execute judgment.” And He divides the kingdom. This happens in the year 931. Strife begins to develop between Jeroboam and Rehoboam. Rehoboam is the son of Solomon. And Jeroboam is cut off, though, because of sin. He has to leave.

Now, here is the way the revolt went. You know the story, probably well. 1 Kings 12:1. Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all of Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king. You know, he is Solomon’s son. Solomon has died and they are going to crown Rehoboam king. Then Jeroboam—because he had been down in Egypt—he had fled because he knew Solomon was trying to kill him. But now Solomon is dead and he comes back. And he says, “Okay.” Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel came and they spoke to Rehoboam saying: “Your father made our yoke heavy. You remember he sent us out. He worked us like dogs. I mean, the yoke was too heavy. We did not like it. The taxes were too much. Now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you” (cf. 1 Kings 12:3-4).

That was actually a pretty good deal because Jeroboam had a following. And he was coming and saying, “You know, we will follow you if you will just lighten up. You know, we cannot keep doing what your father did. We want to know what is going to happen.”

In verse 5 he said to them, “Well, depart for three days then come back to me.” You know he wanted to check it out. And the people departed. Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he was still alive. But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him. And what had they told him? They said, “Look, they are right. Lighten up. If you will lighten up, these people will serve you and everything will be fine.”

But he rejected it and he consulted the young men who had grown up with him who stood before him. You know, peer pressure.

And the young men, who had grown up with him, spoke to him saying: “Thus shall you speak to the people who have spoken to you saying, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy but you make it lighter on us.’ Thus you shall say to them: ‘My little finger shall be thicker than my father’s waist. And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke. My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges or scorpions.’” Then the king answered the people roughly and rejected the advice which the elders had given him and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men. So the king did not listen to the people for the turn of events was from the Lord, that He might fulfill His word which the Lord had spoken by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat. (1 Kings 12:10-15)

It is amazing, isn’t it? Now, doesn’t it say in Proverbs 21:1 that the king’s heart is actually in the hand of the Lord and the Lord can turn the king’s heart just like water courses are turned? Although we do not understand the mystery of everything, history bears it out over and over again. The Lord actually turns the hearts of kings. He says, “For the turn of events was from the Lord.”

I mean, anybody with any sense should have taken the advice of the elders, particularly when you see ten of your twelve tribes coming against you saying: “If you don’t lighten our load, you know this is going to create a problem.” And he should have lightened their load. But the Lord just hardened his heart. Or, the Lord cooperated in some form with hardening his heart. However you want to explain it, the result is the same. The turn of events was from the Lord and it was to fulfill Scripture.

Everything the Lord has promised in Scripture will happen. If He has to turn the heart of a king to make it happen, it will still happen.

Verse 16 says:

When all of Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered: “What portion have we in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Now, see to your own house, O David.” (cf. 1 Kings 12:16)

It is like they said, “We are going back, the ten of us (ten tribes), we are going back and you guys just build your own stuff from now on. You two little tribes left, Judah and Benjamin, you can build all you want. We are not helping. We are going back and we are starting our own thing. We have got ten tribes; you have got two. Have fun!”

Well the two tribes could not even afford to keep the place painted. So, I mean, they could not even keep the place clean. So they were left by themselves there.

So Israel departed to their tents. But Rehoboam reigned over the children of Israel who dwelled in the cities of Judah. Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was in charge of the revenue, but all Israel stoned him. [That is, Adoram was stoned.] And he died. Therefore King Rehoboam mounted his chariot in haste to flee to Jerusalem. (cf. 1 Kings 12:16-18)

So he realized he had to leave or they would problem kill him too. And so he took off.

So here is this strife between Jeroboam and Rehoboam. So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day. You have got the ten northern tribes of Israel and they are against the two tribes of Judah. There has been a division ever since 931 B.C. when this took place. So from 931 B.C. it says, till this day...

Now, it came to pass when all of Israel had heard that Jeroboam had come back, they sent to him, called him to the congregation, made him king over all Israel. There was none that followed the house of David but the tribe of Judah only. [And of course, Benjamin] And when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem he assembled all the house of Judah with the tribe of Benjamin, 180,000 chosen men who were warriors to fight against the house of Israel that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. But the word of God came to Shemaiah, the man of God, saying, “Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon king of Judah, to all the house of Judah and Benjamin and to the rest of the people saying: ‘Thus says the Lord, “You shall not go up nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel. Let every man return to his house. For this thing is from Me.’” Therefore, they obeyed the word of the Lord and they turned back according to the word of the Lord. (cf. 1 Kings 12:20-24)

Well, I do not know what he was thinking. You know, that he was going to go out and the two tribes were going to defeat the ten tribes, but I guess because he had some measure of an army. But as he heads out, a prophet comes and says, “You cannot do it.”

Does that remind you of anything in the New Testament? Do we have the same principle applied to the church that was applied to Israel? Yeah, we do, don't we?—same exact principle. You are not supposed to do what? Not hate your brother. But not only that, do what? What do we not do in the New Testament? We don't take vengeance. But specifically, how does the New Testament say we don't do these things? We don't even do what? “You are not even to take your brother to court—don't take your brother to court and that before unbelievers” (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:6).

You know, these guys are getting ready to go out and fight their own people, their own brethren. And God says, “Stop! You cannot do that. I won’t allow it—can’t have that.” And He says the same thing in the New Testament. It can’t happen. There is a unity under the headship of Jesus Christ. And He says, “It is for that reason you are not to take your brother to court.” He says, “Why wouldn’t you rather suffer loss than to take your brother or sister to court before unbelievers and let the world look on and say there is no unity in Christ.” And Paul goes on and says, “What I would prefer is just take the least member of the body of Christ and have him judge the situation.” He said, “That would be better. If you went to your church and said, let me find the least little Christian in the church. Oh that guy. He is the most unspiritual in the church. Let’s get him or her. And let them be the judge. That would be better,” he said, “than going to court before unbelievers and showing to the world the disunity under the headship of Jesus Christ.”

Interesting that the same kinds of things He commands in the Old Testament—He hasn’t changed in His view of how things ought to work. God has given us the same thing in the New Testament.

So Jeroboam is cut off, obviously because of his sin. It says,

After this event, Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way but he [again] he made priests from every class of people for the high places, whoever wished, he consecrated him. And he became one of the priests of the high places. And this thing was the sin of the house of Jeroboam, so as to exterminate and destroy it from the face of the earth. (1 Kings 13:33-34)

So it is like he said, “Oh, everybody can be a priest.” You want to be a priest? Sure. And then he said, “Well, I think I will be one too.” And people were offering sacrifices in high places. And God had specifically set up a place because He was trying to unite the nation and said, “This is where the sacrifices will take place. Not out there, right here.”

And so they were in disobedience and not under the headship of God. Many today are not under the headship maybe of Jesus Christ, or the lordship of Christ and things don't work so smoothly because of it.

So, what happens then, in Scene Three, is that the ten northern tribes are removed and they are scattered. God said He would do it, didn't He? I mean, He promised it and God did it in 722 B.C. So in 931 they are split. But in 722 God brings a nation against them, Assyria. And so Sennacherib actually captures Israel. And we see the reason for the judgment and the beginning of the Samaritans.

Now this took place over 200 years after God told Jeroboam it would happen. So God takes His time to fulfill His promise, but He still fulfills His promise. So, God is doing it, but how is He doing it? God is performing His will through a pagan nation. God raises up a pagan nation to judge His people because they are not listening to Him.

And sometimes we forget. Would God allow, if the United States throws off our inheritance, despises our birthright as a nation, and we continue that way, would God allow of foreign, evil nation to rise up against us? Sure He would. He would not have a problem with that. He did not have a problem with it in the Old Testament. He was always using things like this to discipline and to chastise and judge His people. And that is just the way it happens in life.

So God tells Jeroboam in 1 Kings 14 what is going to happen. He says,

Moreover, the Lord will raise up for Himself a king over Israel who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam. (1 Kings 14:14)

He says, "I will get someone who wants to serve Me. I will just have to raise him up Myself."

For the Lord will strike Israel as a reed shaken in the water. He will uproot Israel from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the river because they have made their wooden images, provoking the Lord to anger. And He will give up Israel because of the sins of Jeroboam who sinned and who made Israel to sin. (1 Kings 14:15-16)

So He says, "It is going to happen, Jeroboam." So they get carried away in 2 Kings 17 and God does it.

5 Now the king of Assyria [that is Sennacherib] went throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria and besieged it for three years.

6 In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

7 For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and they had feared other gods,

8 and had walked in the statutes of the nations whom the LORD had cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made.

9 Also the children of Israel secretly did against the LORD their God things that were not right, and they built for themselves high places in all their cities, from watchtower to fortified city.

10 They set up for themselves sacred pillars and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree.

11 There they burned incense on all the high places, like the nations whom the LORD had carried away before them; and they did wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger,

12 for they served idols, of which the LORD had said to them, “You shall not do this thing.” (2 Kings 17:5-12)

So God is judging them because, as we will see when we go through the prophets, God warned them over and over and over again, but they would not listen. And so God says, “I will judge you.”

And that is always the way. We get a prompting from the Holy Spirit. We get another brother or sister telling us something. We hear something in a church service or a chapel or in our devotions or just reading the Word, and we get promptings all the time, warnings. And if we do not heed those warnings then eventually judgment has to come.

The reason for the judgment, He says in verse 13—

13 Yet the LORD testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of His prophets, every seer, saying, “Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets.”

14 Nevertheless they would not hear, but stiffened their necks, like the necks of their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God.

15 And they rejected His statutes and His covenant that He had made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He had testified against them; they followed idols, became idolaters, and went after the nations who were all around

them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them that they should not do like them.

16 So they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, made for themselves a molten image and two calves, made a wooden image and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.

17 And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and soothsaying, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger.

18 Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight; there was none left but the tribe of Judah alone. (2 Kings 17:13-18)

So the Lord allowed Assyria to come down against His people because they just totally rejected the Lord. They did not want to walk with God and they proved it. And God said, “Okay.” And He disciplines them and takes them away by Sennacherib.

Now, some of you have read some of the history of that. It is quite interesting because everybody feared the Assyrians because of their torturous ways. You know, they were the people that were known to often times go into a place and they would cut your hands off. And then they would string you, like you string fish on a string. They would run a string up through your jaw. So they would take everybody in this room, they would cut our hands off. They would string those that lived—they’d string all together. They would start over there and they would run a string through my jaw, out my tongue, and run it right through yours, out your tongue to the next person. And they would string us like you string fish on a line. And then they would walk you back to Assyria, those that survived. And then they would kill you later in front of the rest of the people, so you had something great to look forward to—but that is just the way they were. Then they would just burn everything. And they would—they didn’t just take over places—they tortured people and so they were a very feared people.

And you think, “How could God allow such an evil people like that to come and take over His people and discipline them?” But God does. He allows that kind of thing to take place. And of course, Judah is thinking at this time—it is 722 B.C. and Judah is thinking: “Well, they got what they deserved. They are a bunch of rebellious tribes. They should have been down here with us all along. They should not have gone up there. God has judged them.” Have you ever thought that about somebody else? “Oh yes, they got what they deserved.”

But here is Judah, down in the south, and their heart’s really no different. And God takes another few years, until 586, to prove to Judah that she is no different than her sister. Her heart is just as wicked.

So Judah is removed and scattered. And in Scene Four, Judah walks in Israel’s footsteps. And God informs Manasseh and then we see God’s view.

In Jeremiah 32, what is God’s view about Jerusalem? Do you remember what it says there in Jeremiah 32:31? It says—and this is God’s view. It is chapter 32:31. God says,

Indeed this city has been to Me a provocation of My anger
and My wrath from the day that they built it, even to this
day, that it should be removed from before My face.

So God is so angry at this point, even with Judah, He says, “Jerusalem, that they are taking their rest in, and their refuge in,” He says, “I have not liked this city since the first day they built this city. Because when they built this city, they were not really building it to Me. They were doing it for themselves. And they have done every kind of evil here.” But they trusted in the city. They trusted in Jerusalem and we will see that in a minute. They knew Psalm 125 like you know John 3:16.

And so Judah sinned like Israel sinned. And the Lord spoke by His servants the prophets and He said:

11 Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations [he has acted more wickedly than all the Amorites who were before him, and has also made Judah sin with idols]

12 Therefore, thus says the Lord God of Israel, “Behold, I am bringing such calamity upon Jerusalem and Judah that whoever hears of it, both his ears will tingle.

13 And I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab and I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down.

[I mean, “I am going to clean this place right off the face of the earth.]

14 So I will forsake the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies. And they shall become victims of plunder to all their enemies

15 because they have done evil in My sight and provoked Me to anger since the day their fathers came out of Egypt, even to this day. (cf. 2 Kings 21:11–15)

I mean, God is ticked off and He is going to wipe them out because they have done worse than the foreign nations. I mean, it is like, sometimes we even see this in the church in the New Testament, don't we? I mean, we are reading in 1 Corinthians 5, and Paul has to write to the church in Corinth and he said: “Excuse me. There is a guy in your church that has his father's wife? What? I mean, people even out in the world have enough sense to know that you don't sleep with your father's wife.” You know, he says, “But that is in the church!” And so, things have not changed that much from how bad they were in the Old Testament until what still continues to go on, often times, in the church today.

So in 586 God has warned them. He uses Babylon to come down against them. And He destroys the only theocratic nation that we have had. And it is a very significant historical event.

However, it ends on a note of hope and we read in 2 Chronicles 36:23,

Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up!

That is how the Old Testament ends. It ends on a note of hope of going up to build God a house. And no doubt that is why the Jews ended their period of history there with 2 Chronicles 36. And they have been under discipline ever since.

But let me ask you this, when will God's discipline be lifted from the people? He says, when they turn and repent. And it is confirmed in Acts 3:19, right? When there will be seasons of refreshing that will come from the presence of God, when they return and remember, Peter was preaching that, wasn't he? And he said, "If you guys would just repent the Lord would come right now." And Peter was hoping that would happen in the early church. But the nation, as a whole, just went, "Nah, forget about it." Though there were many Jews that were receiving the Lord. But there will come a day when the nation as a whole does repent. And as Deuteronomy 30 promises, at that point, the discipline will be lifted. It may take the Great Tribulation period—I am sure it will—to get them to a point where they are actually willing to repent.

So, here they are, the fall of Jerusalem.

And the Lord God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. But they mocked the messengers of God.
(2 Chronicles 36:15-16)

I mean, the Lord has compassion. He says, “I am sending messengers to tell you that you have another chance. I will take you back. I will still take you back after all that has happened in our relationship. I will still take you back.” But when He sent the messengers, they mocked the messengers—

16 ...despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people till there was no remedy.

[There is just “no way” these people are coming back.]

17 Therefore, He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with a sword in the house of their sanctuary and had no compassion on young man or virgin, on the aged or the weak. He gave them all into his hand.

18 And all the articles of the house of God, great and small, the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king and of his leaders, all these he took to Babylon.

19 Then they burned the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire and destroyed all its precious possessions.

20 And those who escaped from the sword, he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia,

21 to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay

desolate, she kept Sabbath to fulfill seventy years. (2
Chronicles 36:16-21)

So they had desecrated the Sabbath for 490 years. God came and said, “Look, you will go into seventy years of captivity.” And they were carried off for those seventy years.

**If Babylon was so evil,
why is it called:**

“The Jewish Miracle?”

Psalm 137:8

So why is Babylon called the Jewish miracle? Because what was Babylon the center of? And we all know it has been the center of it from the beginning. Even back in the plains of Shinar, in the book of Genesis, we know that Babylon has always been the center of idolatry.

And so, what does God do? What is the problem with His people? They became idolatrous. They had other gods before the true and living God. How did God cure the people from idolatry? Where did God cure the people from idolatry? He took them to the center of idolatry in order to work on them and cure them from idolatry. It is sort of almost like fight fire with fire.

But Babylon has been called the Jewish miracle because their problem was idolatry and God took them off to Babylon, the center of idolatry from the whole world, and He began to cure them from idolatry, so that at least a remnant and a group would want to come back and follow the true and the living God.

And that is what we read in the imprecatory Psalm 137:1-9, it says,

1 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion.

[They are like 700 miles away from their homeland and they are by this river and they are weeping.]

2 We hung our harps upon the willows in the midst of it.

3 For there those who carried us away captive asked of us a song, and those who plundered us requested mirth, saying, “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”

4 How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a foreign land?

5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill!

6 If I do not remember you, let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth-- if I do not exalt Jerusalem above my chief joy.

7 Remember, O LORD, against the sons of Edom the day of Jerusalem, who said, “Raze it, raze it, to its very foundation!”

8 O daughter of Babylon, who are to be destroyed, happy the one who repays you as you have served us!

9 Happy the one who takes and dashes your little ones against the rock!

Which implies—that is one of the things that the Babylonians did as they came in—they took the babies of the Jews and they took the little babies and they busted their heads open on rocks. So, I mean, it was just a horrible experience.

But there are consequences for sin. And if you do not see anything else in this story, you need to begin to see that as far as God is concerned, there are always consequences for sin. And the consequences are severe. And they are terrible. And it is like the sooner we begin to realize that as a reality then maybe the fear of the Lord will be the beginning of some wisdom.

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You can email us at: BLBi@BlueLetterBible.org

And our mailing address is:

Blue Letter Bible

22431 Antonio Parkway, Suite B160-618

Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688 USA