

## Class 6: Jeremiah 21-25

### Prophecy Against Judah and the Nations

May 10, 2017

Our time period now moves ahead from the reign of Josiah to the reign of Zedekiah. The book of Jeremiah is not chronological, as later prophecies will be towards earlier kings. Zedekiah is the last king of Judah, the third son of Josiah and the fourth king after Josiah. This reflects a change of close to 30 years between chapters 1 and 20.

**Babylonian Inquiry:** Chapter 21 is an inquiry sent from the king to Jeremiah regarding the threatening king of Babylon. It is unclear if how early this is in the reign of Zedekiah. According to 2 Chronicles 36:9-13, Zedekiah was placed on the throne over his nephew Jehoiachin by Nebuchadnezzar, assumedly because he was presumed to be more loyal. It seems most in Judah saw Jehoiachin as the rightful king, as his reign is the date used by Jews (Ezekiel 1:2).

Zedekiah's petition is worded with a desire to get the grace of God. Yet Jeremiah's answer must have come with a shock. Not only will Nebuchadnezzar NOT be leaving, God Himself has declared against Judah. God will bring destruction to Judah, and if they hope to survive they need to defect to Babylon, not resist it, because there will be more mercy with this pagan king than with Jehovah. This is the first of many messages directing Israel to surrender.

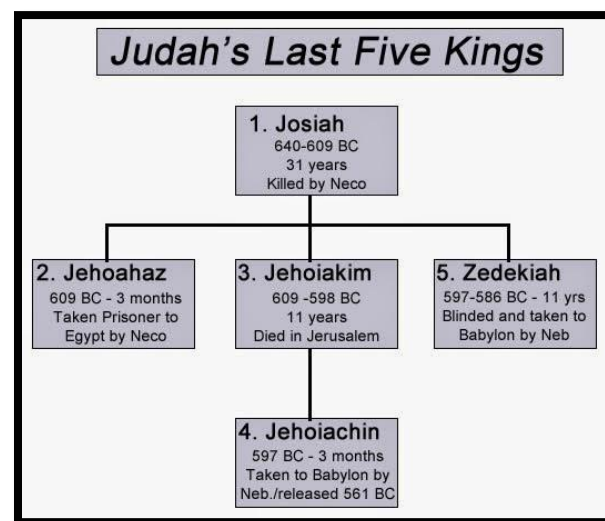
**At the King's House:** Jeremiah is next called to present before the king's house and declare what God expects from the house of David. The first of these sons of Josiah is Jehoahaz (Shallum), who reigned only three months before he "went away" (vs. 11). Pharaoh Neco took him and imprisoned him in the Egyptian city Riblah. The message is that he will die in that land.

The second son to be condemned is Jehoiakim (Eliakim). He reigned eleven years before his death. Jeremiah's message to him is that he will die, and no one will mourn him.

The third son to be condemned is Jehoiakim's son Jehoiachin (Coniah). He is called a signet ring cast off by God. He will be taken away, and a most important prophecy is made regarding his descendants: "*no man of his descendants will prosper sitting on the throne of David or ruling again in Judah*" (Jer. 22:30).

The obligations of the kings before God were set up in the Law of Moses (Deuteronomy 17). Particularly, the purpose of the life of a king to ensure there was justice, and these men failed to execute justice. God through Jeremiah points out that Josiah carried out these things, and it was well with him. Being a righteous king is not about living in a palace, but about loving justice.

**The Bad Shepherds and the Righteous Branch:** Now a condemnation is brought to the elders of Israel. Those who led Israel had permitted them to stray from God, and were doubly guilty. These evil leaders are contrasted with the righteous leader called the Branch.



*The Branch* is a term used of the Messiah (Isa. 4:2, 11:1, Jer. 33:15, Zech. 3:8, 6:12) six times in the Old Testament. It is used in a genealogical sense to identify the Messiah as the Seed of David. The Branch is referred to as the King (Jer. 23:5-6), the Servant (Zech. 3:8-9), the Man (Zech 6:12-13) and the Lord (Isa. 4:2).

**Lying Prophets** – A common theme in Jeremiah has been his frustration with the lying prophets. God says that both prophet and priest are ungodly. In fact, God states that while it was bad enough with the prophets of Baal in the north, these men work evil in the name of Jehovah. The stubborn love them, for their message is simple: *it shall be well with you*.

God makes it clear that His word trumps the prophets. It is like a hammer that breaks rocks to pieces. So God is against these liars, and will deal with them in particular anger. His anger is for those who want signs and messages too, since God has already spoken.

**Good Figs and Bad Figs** – The vision in chapter 24 jumps to the time after the exile of the king Coniah. The image is simple. Israel consists of the good and the bad. The good (consider Daniel and his friends) were sent to Babylon. They will be built up, will return and prosper. While it is not the case that Coniah was good (perhaps too young to be judged), his descendant Zerubbabel certainly was righteous, and he led the return to the land.

The bad are those who remain. Specifically, Zedekiah and his court. They are the most evil, and will suffer the most. They and their seed will not return but be destroyed.

**Seventy Years** – For 23 years Jeremiah has proclaimed to the people the imminent wrath of God. Yet none have listened. Now God through Jeremiah specifically identifies what will happen: A Babylonian Captivity of 70 years. Perhaps one of the most important prophecies in Jeremiah is that which specifies the length of time of the captivity. It is cited by the writer of Chronicles (2 Chron. 36:22), Ezra (1:1) and by Daniel (9:2). It marks the time from the death of Josiah (609 BC) until the proclamation of Cyrus (639BC). An alternative date is given as the time from when the temple was destroyed (586BC) to when it was rebuilt (516BC). However, since Daniel and Ezra saw the end with the reign of Cyrus, the first date is preferred.

### **Making Applications:**

1. In Romans 5 we are told that our peace with God comes through Jesus Christ. What does it mean to have God as our enemy? How does Jesus make peace between man and God?
2. The curse on Coniah (Jer. 22:30) is important to understand in the concept of the kingdom of Jesus. Why is it so important? Why is it that Jeremiah 22:29 emphasizes this concept?
3. What is the New Testament warning about lying prophets (2 Tim. 4:1-4)? What is it that is so similar between the minds of men then and now in regards to false prophets?