

## **Bibles???**

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

Turn your bibles with me to 2 Kings 25

We are coming to an end of our study in this wonderful book that the Lord has given to us.

This was a journey that we began two days after Christmas.

And for some of you, this may have been the first time that you actually sat through a study in 2 Kings.

- And after seven months of preparing and delivering these studies on Sunday morning - studying the ministry of Elisha
- Looking at the ups and downs of the kings and the people of Judah and Israel
- Studying about God extending His grace upon His people

We can see how important it is to study and meditate on these historical books that God has given to us.

I told you all from the beginning – I love the Old Testament, I am not going to shy away from OT books on Sunday Morning –

There are many churches today that don't teach from the Old Testament.

I have heard some stress that we are “New Covenant Believers” – They will say that there is no need for the OT

Church,

We are New Covenant Believers – However, there is No new covenant without the Old Covenant.

There is no meaning to the New Covenant – there is no understanding of who Messiah is and all the prophecies and predictions spoken about Him – there is no context without the OT.

The Old Testament is a very practical book – these were examples that were written for us to learn from.

It has been said that “Experience is the best teacher” – and that is true.

However, it doesn't necessarily have to be our own experience where we learn our lessons from.

That is why we share our experiences with our children – because we want to make sure that they don't experience the same hardships as we did.

“Don't do it – because I know the pain and suffering/ I have experienced the consequences of that sin”

Our Heavenly Father is so good to us that He let other people learn lessons so that we could gain understanding from studying their lives.

So this morning, that example will come from King Zedekiah – the last king of Judah.

Let's pray...

**[2Ki 25:1-30 NKJV] 1 Now it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth [day] of the month, [that] Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and encamped against it; and they built a siege wall against it all around. 2 So the city was besieged until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. 3 By the ninth [day] of the [fourth] month the famine had become so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land.**

In our study last week, we began to see God's righteous judgment come upon Judah.

Just like God had used the Assyrians to bring judgment upon the Kingdom of Israel, He used Babylon and all the nations that it had conquered to bring judgment upon Judah.

And so Babylon used three sieges against Judah – we saw two of them in the last chapter.

In the first one, Nebuchadnezzar took a few captives along with him (including Daniel), then during the second siege, he gutted the temple and the palace of all the valuables.

Here at the beginning of chapter 25, we have siege #3.

The year is 588 BC

And this final siege will last for two years.

As I mentioned before, when a country would invade another country – they would build a siege wall – not a physical wall – but a military wall that would surround the entire country. They wouldn't allow anything to come in or go out and the purpose of it was to weaken the people and starve them to the point where they wouldn't be able to put up a resistance when they finally invaded.

Back in chapter 6 – you may remember that Elisha was in Samaria when the Syrian besieged the city and we read how the people were starving and how two women agreed to cook their children and then the one woman backed out when it was her turn to cook her child.

So the same thing is happening in Judah – because Jeremiah tells us in Lamentations

10:4

**[Lam 4:10 NKJV] 10 The hands of the compassionate women Have cooked their own children; They became food for them In the destruction of the daughter of my people.**

Now, here is where King Zedekiah failed.

## Lesson #1

- In the life of Zedekiah, we see the dangers of waffling in response to God's word. Multiple times in the book of Jeremiah, we see Zedekiah seeking Jeremiah because he wanted him to speak what God had to say. And every time Jeremiah spoke – he didn't listen.

Instead he listened to the advice from false prophets, from friends and advisors. He would rather continue living the way he wanted to instead of repenting and walking in obedience to the Lord.

- Turn with me to the gospel of Mark 6, I want to show you a NT individual who Zedekiah reminded me of.

**[Mar 6:20 NKJV] 20 for Herod feared John, knowing that he [was] a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.**

Now, King Herod enjoyed listening to what John had to say. However, Herod was living in a sinful and unlawful relationship with another man's wife – Herodias.

John the Baptist confronted Herod about it – but Herod refused to repent.

And in the end, when it became a radical choice between staying with his sinful lusts or getting rid of this preacher, John the Baptist, the result was John's head was cut off, and Herod continued in his sins.

Zedekiah was a wicked king – and he too also made the decision to imprison Jeremiah or put him in the dungeon instead of listening to what God had to say.

**4 Then the city wall was broken through, and all the men of war [fled] at night by way of the gate between two walls, which was by the king's garden, even though the Chaldeans [were] still encamped all around against the city. And [the king] went by way of the plain. 5 But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and they overtook him in the plains of Jericho. All his army was scattered from him. 6 So they took the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they pronounced judgment on him. 7 Then they killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, **put out the eyes of Zedekiah**, bound him with bronze fetters (these are shackles), and took him to Babylon.**

So it happen that King Zedekiah and whatever army that was left – they tried to make a run for it.

They get as far as Jericho – which is about 18 miles from Jerusalem and then King Zedekiah is captured by the Chaldeans, they kill his sons in front of him and then they gouge out his eyes and chain him up where he will spend the rest of his life.

## **Lesson #2**

**There is no escape when God comes in final judgment and you are still a rebel before Him.**

## Turn with me to Ezekiel 12

Now, Ezekiel during this time – he has been in exile in Babylon (he was taken during the second siege) when He receives this prophesy regarding Judah

**[Eze 12:10-13 NKJV] 10 "Say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "This burden [concerns] the prince (this refers to Zedekiah – if you ever read the book of Ezekiel, Ezekiel never refers to Zedekiah as king – always as prince – as the king of Babylon had appointed him king – Jehoiachin is referred to as king) in Jerusalem and all the house of Israel who are among them." ' 11 "Say, 'I [am] a sign to you. As I have done, so shall it be done to them; they shall be carried away into captivity.' 12 "And the prince who [is] among them shall bear [his belongings] on [his] shoulder at twilight and go out. (speaking about him trying to escape) They shall dig through the wall to carry [them] out through it. He shall cover his face, so that he cannot see the ground with [his] eyes. 13 "I will also spread My net over him, and he shall be caught in My snare. I will bring him to Babylon, [to] the land of the Chaldeans; yet he shall not see it, though he shall die there.**

So Zedekiah tries to escape God's judgment – and judgment came upon him – just like God said it would.

And just like Zedekiah was not able to escape judgment – so it will be for those that reject Him as the only way to salvation.

No one will escape being brought before the judgment seat of the King of Kings and coming under His righteous judgment.

**8 And in the fifth month, on the seventh [day] of the month (which [was] the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. 9 He burned the house of the LORD and the king's house; all the houses of Jerusalem, that is, all the houses of the great, he burned with fire. 10 And all the army of the Chaldeans who [were with] the captain of the guard broke down the walls of Jerusalem all around.**

The name Nebuzaradan means – the chief executioner or the chief butcher.

He is the one selected by Nebuchadnezzar to completely destroy Jerusalem.

Here we have the destruction of the Temple that King Solomon had built along with the king's palace.

The temple stood for 424 years – and it will not be until after the 70 years that Ezra and Zerubbabel return to Jerusalem and begins to lay the foundation of the New Temple.

We also see the walls of Jerusalem coming down.

This is what protected an ancient city from its enemies.

This is the same wall that Nehemiah would one day rebuild.

They are removing Jerusalem's protection, making it more difficult for anyone to live there in peace.

**One of the lessons to always remember is that sin removes defenses.**

Judah had been in rebellion against the Lord, and now their defenses are all gone.

One of Satan's tactics is to tell us that if we just give in this one time to sin, that the pressure will be over, God will forgive us, and we can go on with life.

But what he doesn't tell us is that a little more of our wall has just been torn down.

And the next time that Satan attacks us, we will have even less resistance against him.

**(Jas 4:7 NKJV) Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**

**11 Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive the rest of the people [who] remained in the city and the defectors who had deserted to the king of Babylon, with the rest of the multitude. 12 But the captain of the guard left [some] of the poor of the land as vinedressers and farmers.**

So there is a small remnant that is left so that the land will not be ruined.

**13 The bronze pillars that [were] in the house of the LORD, and the carts and the bronze Sea that [were] in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans broke in pieces, and carried their bronze to Babylon. 14 They also took away the pots, the**

shovels, the trimmers, the spoons, and all the bronze utensils with which the priests ministered. 15 The firepans and the basins, the things of solid gold and solid silver, the captain of the guard took away. 16 The two pillars, one Sea, and the carts, which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD, the bronze of all these articles was beyond measure. 17 The height of one pillar [was] eighteen cubits, and the capital on it [was] of bronze. The height of the capital was three cubits, and the network and pomegranates all around the capital were all of bronze. The second pillar was the same, with a network.

Here we have the looting of the temple –

The small things they kept intact – however, the much larger items were cut up in pieces so that they could be transported to Babylon.

Just to give you a perspective of how huge these items were – the Sea was a 10,000 gallon above ground pool made of bronze – six inches thick. 45' X 15' X 7.5'

The two pillars – were 27' tall – each one had a name. Jachin (Yahweh will establish) and Boaz (in Him is strength) (1 Kings 7)

**18 And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the second priest, and the three doorkeepers. 19 He also took out of the city an officer who had charge of the men of war, five men of the king's close associates who were found in the city, the chief recruiting officer of the army, who mustered**

the people of the land, and sixty men of the people of the land [who were] found in the city. 20 So Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, took these and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. 21 Then the king of Babylon struck them and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was carried away captive from its own land.

Here we have the capture and removal of the remaining prominent individuals in Judah.

They are taken to Babylon where they are executed.

They get rid of the officers and advisors to the king – to minimize rebellion among the people.

They execute those found in the temple – for the purpose of removing spiritual instruction to the people.

However, God had already sent Daniel and Ezekiel to Babylon – they were going to continue to minister to people there.

22 Then he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, governor over the people who remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left. 23 Now when all the captains of the armies, they and [their] men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah--Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, Johanan the son of Careah,

**Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men. 24 And Gedaliah took an oath before them and their men, and said to them, "Do not be afraid of the servants of the Chaldeans. Dwell in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you."**

Gedaliah is made governor of Judah –

His grandfather served alongside Josiah.

Gedaliah was a God fearing governor.

He listened to the words that God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah –

The same words that Jeremiah had for Zedekiah – to not resist the chastisement of the Lord, do not rebel against Babylon and everything will be ok.

**25 But it happened in the seventh month that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal family, came with ten men and struck and killed Gedaliah, the Jews, as well as the Chaldeans who were with him at Mizpah. 26 And all the people, small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose and went to Egypt; for they were afraid of the Chaldeans.**

Here in verse 25-26, we see the people revolt against Gedaliah – they view him as a traitor to the resistance and they kill him.

And they flee to Egypt – thinking they will be ok – and they force Jeremiah to go with them.

Yet, God's righteous judgment awaited them there.

**27 Now it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh [day] of the month, [that] Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison. 28 He spoke kindly to him, and gave him a more prominent seat than those of the kings who [were] with him in Babylon. 29 So Jehoiachin changed from his prison garments, and he ate bread regularly before the king all the days of his life. 30 And as for his provisions, [there was] a regular ration given him by the king, a portion for each day, **all the days of his life.****

Now, last week – I covered this portion detailing the grace and mercy that this new king of Babylon had shown to King Jehoiachin.

And I mentioned that the grace shown to Jehoiachin by this king typifies the grace shown to the believer by the Lord.

I find it fitting that 2 Kings ends with this event.

Because it gives the glimpse of hope.

Because the same grace and mercy that was displayed upon Jehoiachin will be displayed upon God's people.

I had you make a note of all the days of his life –

You see, this is the process of restoration.

The story doesn't end when all the people are taken to Babylon.

Here is probably the most important lesson today -

The goal of God's plan is always restoration, not to destroy God's people.

There may be times in life where we feel that we are on the road to Babylon – but in God's eyes, we're on our way to restoration.

And we need to remember that we are all part of God's plan:

**[Gal 6:1 NKJV] 1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who [are] spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.**

If we see someone fallen – don't count them out church. Pray for them.

There may be a time when they are ready for God's work of restoration.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 'May the LORD bless you and protect you. 25 May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you. 26 May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'