

Bibles???

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

Turn your bibles with me to 2 Kings 24

We are down to the two final chapters in this awesome book that the Lord has given to us.

And for the past couple of months, we have seen example after example of His amazing grace and mercy towards His people – and we have also seen example after example on how His people turned their back on the LORD.

We have seen example after examples of His longsuffering –

Despite the people turning their backs on Him – He continued to reach out to them – sending prophets to them, delivering them over and over again, restoring them and blessing them with times of prosperity – God was yearning for them to turn back from their idolatry, yearning for them to turn back from their unauthorized forms of worship and worship Him exclusively – in the manner that He wanted to be worshipped.

For 400 years God showed grace.

And then He brought correction to His people –

First with the Northern Kingdom – as He used the Assyrians to take the people of Israel into exile – and here in chapter 24, He brings correction to Judah.

What we are going to see over the next two chapters, is the fulfillment of God's word.

Also, we will see that He despite this correction / this righteous judgement upon His people, He is still fully at work -

Let's pray...

[2Ki 24:1-20 NKJV] 1 In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his vassal [for] three years. Then he turned and rebelled against him.

So two weeks ago, we saw the reign of King Josiah come to an end.

He was the king that responded to the conviction of hearing the Word of God and that moved him to put in place reforms throughout Judah and even up into Israel.

He got rid of all the idols throughout the land, he removed that altars and wooden image to the pagan gods that his grandfather had erected in the temple, he got rid of all the bad priests and reinstated proper worship in the temple.

For the first time in 400 years, they celebrated the Passover – exactly as how God had commanded them to do so.

But Josiah did something stupid – he decided to join a fight that was not his to fight.

You might remember that as Babylon and Assyria were duking it out to the north to see who was the “big dog of the hood” during this time –

Assyria had made an alliance with Egypt – So Egypt comes up to help Assyria in its fight against Babylon – and Josiah took it upon himself to side with Babylon and he goes to fight against Egypt –

Josiah is killed in battle –

And Judah returned back to wickedness

Egypt now controls Judah – Pharaoh makes Jehoiakim king over Judah – who taxes the people of Judah and hands the money over to Pharaoh.

That was until 605 BC

Because in 605 BC, Babylon takes down the coalition of the Assyrians and the Egyptians at the battle of Carchemish.

Babylon is the “big dog”

So, Nebuchadnezzar goes down to Judah and begins the first of three sieges against Judah.

Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years – meaning Nebuchadnezzar called the shots – Jehoiakim was still just a puppet king.

He was there to make sure that his people would pay taxes to Nebuchadnezzar.

And you might also want to put “Dan 1” next to verse 1 here because, it was during this first siege that Nebuchadnezzar takes Daniel and his friends and others along with some of the articles of the Temple back to Babylon.

So after three years of paying taxes – Jehoiakim takes a stand against Nebuchadnezzar – “enough is enough” and “he stops paying taxes”

What was the reason for the rebellion?

Some biblical scholars believe that perhaps Nebuchadnezzar was preoccupied back home dealing with the death of his father.

He had to take his rightful place on the throne.

Other believe that Jehoiakim rebelled because Egypt was continuing to rebel against Babylon and had already begun to win a few battles against Babylon – and they had promised Jehoiakim that they would give them independence if they would join them.

2 And the LORD sent against him [raiding] bands of Chaldeans, bands of Syrians, bands of Moabites, and bands of the people of Ammon; He sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken by His servants the prophets.

This was the Lord’s response to Jehoiakim’s rebellion.

Notice - the Lord did not bless it –

Why?

Because He knew the heart of the people.

Had Judah won independence, they would have returned back to their old ways.

In rebelling against Nebuchadnezzar – they were rebelling against the correction that the Lord had sent.

It was God who was behind this difficult time.

Turn with me to Hebrews 12

[Heb 12:7-11 NKJV] 7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected [us], and we paid [them] respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened [us] as seemed [best] to them, but He for [our] profit, that [we] may be partakers of His holiness. 11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Church - God is a God of judgment.

He will one day make things right.

God had warned His people that if they ever started disobeying Him, that there would be a gradual increasing set of judgments coming against them (Lev 26), aimed at turning them back to God, but eventually leading to ...

(Le 26:33 NKJV) I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste

Church – judgment is coming.

Peter tells us in 2 Peter 3:10-11

That we should live our lives – knowing that judgment is imminent – that it will come as a thief in the night.

The unfortunate thing is that - many will be caught off guard.

You see it was during this time that false prophets were popping up in Judah and countering what Jeremiah

Jeremiah was warning them that judgment was coming – but there were prophets that were saying the opposite – they were preaching “peace, peace” where there is no “peace”

Jeremiah was like a doctor giving the patient the bad news that they have terminal cancer – and the false prophets were saying “put a band aid – you will be ok”

Many thought that because God had delayed His judgment, it was never going to happen much in the same way as many in the world today.

The truth is that He will indeed come.

3 Surely at the commandment of the LORD [this] came upon Judah, to remove [them] from His sight because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, 4 and also because of the innocent blood that he had shed; for he had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the LORD would not pardon.

Here we have the name of Manasseh come up in scripture.

Church - It has been more than 50 years since he died – but notice that the effects of his sins are still being felt throughout Judah.

Even though the scriptures tell us that Manasseh repented of his sins, and though he found forgiveness from God, his sins were so grievous and so many that they had a snowball effect on the people of Judah, sending them into a spiritual decay from which they would never truly recover.

Turn with me to Exodus 20

[Exo 20:4-6 NKJV] 4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image--any likeness [of anything] that [is] in heaven above, or that [is] in the earth beneath, or that [is] in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, [am] a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of

the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth [generations] of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

Now, I want to make sure to point out that this is not what some perceive to be a generational curse –

God is not punishing the grandchildren and great grandchildren for the sins of their ancestors.

The warning here is regarding the consequences of the sins that the ancestors partook of.

The effects of our sins today will have far reaching repercussions for many years to come.

5 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, [are] they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 6 So Jehoiakim rested with his fathers. Then Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place. 7 And the king of Egypt did not come out of his land anymore, for the king of Babylon had taken all that belonged to the king of Egypt from the Brook of Egypt to the River Euphrates.

Judah was attempting to place their trust in Egypt (the world) to deliver them instead of placing their trust on the LORD –

Jehoakim was no – Hezekiah.

Hezekiah, as we saw a few weeks ago, when he faced the threat from the Assyrians, he spread it before the Lord.

He let God take care of it the way He was going to do it and on His time.

8 Jehoiachin [was] eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. His mother's name [was] Nehushta the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. 9 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done. 10 At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. 11 And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, as his servants were besieging it. 12 Then Jehoiachin king of Judah, his mother, his servants, his princes, and his officers went out to the king of Babylon; and the king of Babylon, in the eighth year of his reign, took him prisoner. 13 And he carried out from there all the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house, and he cut in pieces all the articles of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said. 14 Also he carried into captivity all Jerusalem: all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths. None remained except the poorest people of the land.

Jehoiachin is the next King of Judah –

He is also referred as Coniah in Jeremiah.

He is another king that does evil in the sight of the Lord – in the book of Ezekiel, it tells us that he oppressed his own people – he is described as a young lion who devoured men and ravished the widows of those that he had murdered.

Hoping to appease Nebuchadnezzar, Jehoiachin surrendered to the King of Babylon.

The year is 597 BC – eight years after the first siege

And here we have the second siege against Jerusalem.

In this siege, all the valuables were taken from the land – both in material form - and in people.

Really – the only people who were left behind in Judah were the peasants – the poor people.

The prophet Ezekiel was taken captive during this time – and church – that is encouraging – because it tells us that God was not done with His people.

He used Ezekiel to continue to minister to His people while they were in exile, in the same way that He continued to use Jeremiah in Jerusalem and Daniel within the government of Babylon.

15 And he carried Jehoiachin captive to Babylon. The king's mother, the king's wives, his officers, and the mighty of the land he carried into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. 16 All the valiant men, seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths, one thousand, all [who were] strong [and] fit for war, these the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon.

Part of the condition of surrender – was for Jehoiachin to turn himself in along with the royal court –

And he will be taken to Babylon and be replaced with a puppet king that would do everything that Nebuchadnezzar wants.

The wonderful news is that this is not the final time we will see Jehoiachin –

Because we will see him mentioned again next week when we finish our study in 2 Kings.

Because the last section of chapter 25 talks about Jehoiachin's encounter with a new king 37 years later –

Keep in mind that the scriptures already told us that Jehoiachin was a wicked king.

And we have already seen the consequences of his sins and the sins of Judah – by God using Babylon to bring His righteous judgment upon His children

This king (37 years later) will deal graciously with Jehoiachin

Not only will the new king comfort him – as he releases him from prison, He will give him authority, He will clothes him, He will honor him as part of his own royal family and He will meet all of Jehoiachin's needs for as long as he lives.

Sound familiar???

The grace shown to Jehoiachin by this king typifies the grace shown to the believer by the Lord.

God sets the believer free from the penalty of sin: (Romans 8:2). Release from prison

[Rom 8:2 NKJV] 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

God comforts the believer: (II Corinthians 1:3-4).

[2Co 1:3-4 NKJV] 3 Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

God gives the believer great authority: (John 1:12).

[Jhn 1:12 NKJV] 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

God clothes us with the garment of righteousness: (Revelation 3:18).

God has brought us into His family: (Romans 8:14-17).

[Rom 8:14-17 NKJV] 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with [Him], that we may also be glorified together.

God supplies our need throughout our life: (Philippians 4:19).

[Phi 4:19 NKJV] 19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

17 Then the king of Babylon made Mattaniah, [Jehoiachin's] uncle, king in his place, and changed his name to Zedekiah. 18 Zedekiah [was] twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name [was] Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 19 He also did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. 20 For because of the anger of the LORD [this] happened in Jerusalem and Judah, that He finally cast them out from His presence. Then Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

When Jehoiachin is taken prisoner – Nebuchadnezzar appoints Jehoiachin’s uncle to be king – so we have another puppet king.

So we have the name change from Mattaniah to Zedekiah

“gift of Yahweh” to “Yahweh is Righteous”

He was the last king of Judah – and he was a wicked king.

Now, one of the things that we are going to see next week is how he rejected the warning after warning from the prophet Jeremiah – that judgment was coming.

And instead of repenting and turning to God, Zedekiah simply has Jeremiah arrested and thrown into a dungeon.

Instead – Zedekiah listened to the false prophets who told him that he would be victorious over Babylon –

And we will see how the king of Babylon responds to Zedekiah’s rebellion next week as the third and final siege comes upon Jerusalem – as God’s righteous judgment / His chastisement upon His people is fulfilled just as He said He would.

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.'