
Day 225 - August 13

Judah After Israel's Fall (725-585 BCE)

Jeremiah's Prophecies Under Zedekiah

Readings: *Jeremiah 51:59; 50:1-40*

Reflections:

- Jeremiah is now directed by God to prophecy against Babylonia and communicates this dire prediction through a messenger named Seraiah. These words no doubt comforted all those living in exile.
- The first words of this prophecy mirror in many ways what Jesus will later portray in the story of the prodigal son. Jeremiah predicts the day that Israel in her captivity will come to her senses. "...the people of Israel and ...Judah together will go in tears to seek the Lord their God. They will ask the way to Zion and turn their faces towards it. They will come and bind themselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant that will not be broken." Here we see again the prophetic voice pointing towards a new covenant that will be a lasting covenant. As we will see, it will be a covenant that lasts because through God's Spirit he will change people from the inside out and will give his people hearts to remain true to their relationship with him.
- With his promise of deliverance, God also assures forgiveness. "...for I will forgive the remnant I spare." Again this promise foreshadows a time when a whole new way of receiving forgiveness will be lavished on those who seek God in faith.
- The prophecy against Babylonia is frightful. The day of God's vengeance is something to be feared! What was at the root of this nation's evil motivations? "The arrogant one will stumble and fall and no one will help her up." Pride is at the root of their harsh rejection of God and abuse of his people.
- God wants his people who trust him to remain confident in him: "All their captors hold them fast, refusing to let them go." It looks like an impossible situation but God will not abandon them. "Yet their Redeemer is strong; the Lord Almighty is his name. He will vigorously defend their cause so that he may bring rest to their land..." God defends the cause of the weak and poor and vulnerable. His salvation is not just a future-oriented spiritual salvation but one here and now that impacts all of creation. People experience God's peace also means that creation, in this case the land, will experience rest and peace. The effects of the fall will remain but there are degrees to which we live under the bondage of the fall or to

which we live according to God's kingdom principles that help restore at least a taste of what God originally intended.

- We see that the Babylonian land though, after it comes under judgment is left to go wild. This image of abandoned land is not the same as God's people living in the land, at peace with creation and partnering with God to bring out the best in it. Even in this prophecy from thousands of years ago we can see God's vision for restored humanity shining through.