

The Great Story

Week 17 – Judah Destroyed

Bible Study

I. Introduction

- a. The exportation of the Israelites from the Northern Kingdom began around 740BC. By 722 BC, Samaria had been captured and the Northern Kingdom completely defeated.
 - i. God allowed this to happen because the Northern Kingdom was idolatrous and served other gods, not honoring the One, True God.
- b. In Judah, King Hezekiah knew that he could not defeat the Assyrian army with military might.
- c. Hezekiah was a good, Godly king. He tore down all the altars to foreign gods and told the people they could only worship God at the temple.
- d. Because of Hezekiah and the people of Judah turning back toward God, God sent an angel to destroy 185,000 Assyrian troops during the night, thus saving Judah from destruction.
- e. Judah was saved, temporarily from destruction, but when they turned from God again, another power was raised up to destroy them.

II. The last Kings of Judah

- a. Manasseh (697-642) – 2 Kings 21:1
 - i. Manasseh was an evil king that returned Judah to idol worship and all manner of evil.
 - ii. He rebuilt the altars to foreign gods, practiced soothsaying, witchcraft, and consulted mediums.
 - iii. He made his sun “pass through the fire” – Molech, god of the Moabites
 - iv. Because of his sins, he provoked the Lord to anger and the Lord promised to destroy Judah
 - v. 2 Kings 21:10-15
- b. Amon (642-640) – 2 Kings 21:19
 - i. Amon became king at 22 years old
 - ii. He was an evil king that performed the same acts as his father
 - iii. His own servants conspired against him and killed him
 - iv. The people of Judah executed all those who had assassinated the king and installed his son as king
 1. This was likely to preserve the Davidic line.
- c. Josiah (640-609) – 2 Kings 22:1
 - i. Josiah was the last good king of Judah prior to the Babylonian captivity.

- ii. He was installed as king when he was 8 years old and ruled for 31 years
- iii. During his 18th year as king, the Book of the Law was found
 - 1. 2 Kings 22:11 – When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes.
 - a. A sign of lamentation and grief
- iv. Josiah tore down all the altars and high places built for foreign god and restored true worship to Israel.
 - 1. 2 Kings 23:25 – “Before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses, nor did any like him arise after him”
 - v. 2 Kings 23:26-27
 - vi. Josiah died in battle against Pharaoh Necho II.
- d. Jehoahaz (609-609) – 2 Kings 23:31
 - i. He became king when he was 23 years old and did evil in the sight of the Lord.
 - ii. Pharaoh Necho II captured Jehoahaz and sent him to prison where he died.
- e. Jehoiakim (609-598) – 2 Kings 23:35
 - i. Originally named “Eliakim” he was also a son of Josiah. Necho II put him on the throne of Judah to ensure that tribute was paid to Egypt
 - 1. He taxed the people heavily for this tribute of Gold and Silver
 - ii. He was 25 when he took the throne and reigned for 11 years.
 - iii. The Babylonians attacked the land of Judah and Jehoiakim became of vassal of Nebuchadnezzar for 3 years.
 - iv. He rebelled against Babylon.
- f. Jehoiachin (598) – 2 Kings 24:8
 - i. He was 18 years old when he took the throne
 - ii. When Nebuchadnezzar attacked Judah for the second time in 598, Jehoiachin was captured and sent to Babylon.
- g. Zedekiah (598-587) – 2 Kings 24:17
 - i. Originally named, “Mattaniah”, Nebuchadnezzar made him king of Judah.
 - ii. He did evil in the sight of the Lord.
 - iii. He rebelled against Babylon and caused the final fall of Judah.

III. Ezekiel

- a. Ezekiel was a prophet during the Exile to Babylon
 - i. He was 25 when he was sent to Babylon and began his prophetic ministry when he was 30.
 - 1. He saw a vision of God and also a “likeness of four living creatures”

- a. Likely angels that were to represent the carrying out of God's will
- b. Similar imagery shows up in Revelation
- 2. Ezekiel 2:1-5
- b. He was sent to Babylon after Jehoiachin surrendered in 598BC
- c. Ezekiel teaches about the disobedience shown by both Israel and Judah despite all that God had done for them.
- d. He describes the sins of idolatry and its consequences.
- e. He taught that the Lord had determined for Israel and Judah to be destroyed because of their wickedness. The presence of a few good men (no matter how holy) would not prevent the destruction.
 - i. Ezekiel 14:12-14

IV. Jeremiah

- a. Jeremiah prophesied from 627 (time of Josiah) to around 570BC (after fleeing to Egypt with the remnant of Judah)
- b. He was known as the weeping prophet
 - i. Jeremiah 9:1 – “Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!”
- c. Jeremiah ministry was mainly to the kingdom of Judah
- d. He, like other prophets, contended with false prophets in the land
 - i. Jeremiah prophesied that Judah should surrender to Babylon, but the false prophets said that the Lord would protect Judah from harm.
- e. His main message was that if only the people would turn from their wicked ways and serve God that the destruction could be avoided.
- f. Jeremiah was thrown into a cistern for prophesying the truth to Judah
 - i. Jeremiah 38:2-6
 - ii. He was rescued by Ebed-melech, an Ethiopian and a gentile.

V. The final fall of Judah

- a. Babylon attacked Judah in 598BC
 - i. They captured and deported many of Israel's prized youths
 - 1. Among those deported at this time were Daniel, Hananiah (Shadrach), Misha'el (Meshach), and Azariah (Abednego)
 - ii. Zedekiah was made king by Nebuchadnezzar
- b. In 588BC Zedekiah rebelled
 - i. Babylon sieged Jerusalem and conquered them.
 - ii. By 587 a second deportation took place

- c. In 583, the appointed Governor of Judah (Gedaliah) was assassinated and a possible third deportation took place at this time.
- d. Judah was completely defeated by 587 and the Israelites were in captivity in Babylon.

VI. The promise of return

- a. Jeremiah 23:3-8
- b. Jeremiah 29:10-14
- c. The Lord did not forget His people or the promises that He made to them.
- d. The Davidic line would carry on, the Israelites would live in their land again, and the Messiah would come.

VII. Lesson learned from the Story

- a. Sin can be forgiven
- b. Sometimes, sin requires punishment
- c. God is faithful and will save if you call upon His name.

VIII. Sources

- a. *The MacArthur Study Bible*. Edited by MacArthur, John, Jr. electronic ed. Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997