

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing

Part LXVII: God's Punishment Of The Disobedient And Reward Of The Obedient (Jeremiah 39:1-18)

I. Introduction

- A. It may take some time, but God always punishes the disobedient and rewards those who obey Him.
- B. It occurred with the fall of Jerusalem in Jeremiah 39:1-18, so we study the passage for our insight (as follows):

II. God's Punishment Of The Disobedient And Reward Of The Obedient, Jeremiah 39:1-18.

- A. At the fall of Jerusalem, God severely punished those who had disobeyed Him, Jeremiah 39:1-10:
 - 1. Through His prophet Jeremiah, God had told king Zedekiah and the people of Jerusalem to surrender to the Babylonians before they invaded for everything to go well with them, Jeremiah 38:17-18 with 38:1-3.
 - 2. However, they did not heed this message, so they were severely punished when the invasion occurred:
 - a. The army of Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar began its siege of Jerusalem on January 15, 588 B. C., and 30 months later on July 18, 586 B. C., it breached the city wall and invaded and defeated Jerusalem, Jeremiah 39:1-2; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1185.
 - b. The princes of the king of Babylon then entered the city and sat in the middle gate at the north side of the city, taking their seats to establish their rule and judge those who were captured, Jeremiah 39:3; *Ibid.*
 - c. Judah's king Zedekiah and his soldiers, witnessing this traumatic event, decided to flee south through a gate near the Pool of Siloam and head east toward the Great Rift Valley (Arabah) in hope of crossing the Jordan River to escape to Rabbah, the capital city of the Ammonites, allies of Zedekiah, Jer. 39:4; *Ibid.*
 - d. However, the Babylonian army pursued and captured them in the plains of Jericho and brought them north up to king Nebuchadnezzar in Hamath near the Euphrates River, Jer. 39:5a; *Ibid.*, p. 1185, 1124.
 - e. There, Nebuchadnezzar passed severe judgment on them, Jeremiah 39:5b-7: (1) Nebuchadnezzar slew Zedekiah's sons and nobles before his eyes, Jeremiah 39:5b-6. (2) Then, Nebuchadnezzar put out Zedekiah's eyes so that the last thing he would remember seeing would be the traumatic slaughter of his sons and officials in humiliating, terrorizing defeat, Jeremiah 39:7a. (3) The Babylonian king then bound the captured, maimed king Zedekiah with chains and carried him off captive to Babylon, Jeremiah 39:7b.
 - f. The Babylonians then burned the king's palace and the houses of Jerusalem and broke down all the walls of the city, and the captain of the Babylonian guard carried away the rest of the people captive, v. 8-9. Only the poorest of the land were left to work the vineyards and fields, Jeremiah 39:10.
- B. At the fall of Jerusalem, God greatly rewarded those who had obeyed Him, Jeremiah 39:11-18:
 - 1. The Lord greatly rewarded the godly prophet Jeremiah for his upright life and ministry, Jer. 39:11-14:
 - a. For heeding the Lord in his prophetic ministry amid all of his rejection and persecutions, Babylon's king Nebuchadnezzar had given orders to the captain of his guard not to harm Jeremiah, but to treat him well, and even do as Jeremiah requested of him, Jeremiah 39:11-12.
 - b. Thus, all the princes of the Babylonians seated in the Middle Gate sent for Jeremiah and took him out of the court of the prison and committed him to the care of their puppet governor, Gedaliah that he should take Jeremiah back to his home in Anathoth that he might live among his people there, Jeremiah 39:13-14.
 - 2. The Lord greatly rewarded Ebed-melech the Cushite for putting his faith in the Lord, Jeremiah 39:15-18:
 - a. While Jeremiah had been in the court of the prison, the word of the Lord had come to him to inform Ebed-melech, the Cushite slave that he would be saved from the calamity that would befall the city, that he would not be given over to those he feared because he had trusted in the Lord, Jeremiah 39:15-17.
 - b. Ebed-melech's rescue of Jeremiah from the dungeon (Jer. 38:7-13) was evidence of his trust in Jeremiah's God, so God rewarded Ebed-melech by keeping him alive, Jeremiah 39:18.
 - c. Thus, contrary to being executed, what often happened to a mere slave in an invasion, Ebed-melech escaped death at the hands of the invading Babylonians, gaining his life as booty as if a victor in war!

Lesson: *For disobeying the Lord about not surrendering to Babylon, the people of Jerusalem and especially their king and his soldiers suffered great judgment at the hands of the Babylonians where Ebed-melech and Jeremiah who trusted in the Lord and obeyed Him experienced great relief as God's reward.*

Application: *May we realize that God in time greatly blesses obedience while in time He also severely punishes disobedience, that we thus be diligent to obey the Lord for great reward rather than to disobey Him at great loss.*