

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing Part LXXXV: God's Judgment On Damascus For Cruel Sins Against Israel (Jeremiah 49:23-27 et al.)

I. Introduction

- A. Damascus, the capital of the Aramean nation, had long opposed the Northern Kingdom of Israel in war.
- B. However, for brutality beyond what God permitted even for Gentile nations, God called for the fall of Damascus and Aramea to the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 570, 1198.
- C. The prophecies of Jeremiah 49:23-27 and Amos 1:3-5 deal with this subject, so we view them for our insight and application (as follows):

II. God's Judgment On Damascus For Cruel Sins Against Israel, Jeremiah 49:23-27 et al.

- A. God's prophet Jeremiah predicted the fall of Aramea with Damascus and its other cities in Jeremiah 49:23-27:
 - 1. God called for the people of Hamath and Arpad, two major Aramean cities, to be confounded in hearing bad news that left them terrified and troubled like the sea that cannot be still, Jeremiah 49:23.
 - 2. The people of Damascus, the capitol of Aramea, would become feeble, turn to flee with panic seizing them, anguish and sorrows taking hold of them as in the case of a woman in labor, Jeremiah 49:24.
 - 3. Damascus had been the joy of the Arameans, but it would be forsaken, left to fall to invaders, Jeremiah 49:25 ESV. The city's young men would fall in its city squares, all of its soldiers would be destroyed in the invasion by Babylon, Jeremiah 49:26.
 - 4. God would use the invaders to kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus that would devour the strongholds of the Aramean king Ben-Hadad, Jeremiah 49:27. "Ben-Hadad" literally means "son of [the god] Hadad," the name given to a dynasty of kings that ruled Damascus in the ninth and eighth centuries B. C., Ibid.
- B. The reason for this fall, noted in Amos 1:1-5, was the godless cruelty of the Arameans against Israel:
 - 1. Amos 1:3-5 indicates that the Aramean king Hazael, who seized the throne from one of the Ben-Hadad rulers, "threshed Gilead with threshing sledges of iron," so God would send a fire on the house of Hazael.
 - 2. A threshing sledge was "a pair of roughly shaped boards, bent upward at the front, studded with iron prongs or knives," Ibid., p. 1429. Whether Hazael literally ran this instrument over the bodies of his prisoners of Israel's people or whether the reference here to a threshing sledge is figurative of Hazael's cruelty in general, we know the prophet Elisha predicted that Hazael would commit atrocities against Israel when he came to the throne, 2 Kings 8:12. Gilead in particular felt the brunt of tortuous mistreatment by Hazael and also by his son Ben-Hadad III, Ibid.
 - 3. However, all the nations that had descended from Noah were under God's Noahic Covenant of Genesis 8:21-9:17. This covenant called for all men to begin to refrain from shedding blood in disregard for human life, checking such bloodshed by practicing capital punishment (Genesis 9:6) while God promised to preserve the earth as people honored and prolonged human life, Ibid., p. 1428.
 - 4. The Arameans, particularly under Hazael and Ben-Hadad III, had violated this Noahic Covenant, shedding human blood in tortuous ways, committing atrocities against other peoples in violation of God's will.
 - 5. [We note that when God told Hazael that he would be king, God knew that Hazael would commit atrocities against Israel in punishment for Israel's sins of following the god Baal, but such atrocities still violated the Noahic Covenant, so God would punish the Arameans for committing them, cf. 2 Kings 8:12.]

Lesson: *For violating the Noahic Covenant that called for man to value human life so as to administer capital punishment and to restrain from acts of cruelty and needless human slaughter while God prolonged human life by showing mercy even to sinful man, God judged Damascus, the capitol city of Aramea, to fall to the Babylonians who would destroy her soldiers and terrorize her people.*

Application: *(1) If we have treated others in a cruel manner, may we confess this to God and make amends if possible. (2) May we turn from treating others with cruelty, be it in physical, emotional or verbal realms, knowing that God wants us to respect all human life and be merciful like He is merciful unto mankind. (3) If we face people who are abusively cruel, 2 Timothy 3:1-5 directs us to withdraw from them for our own protection, for God does not want us to keep exposing ourselves to abusive treatment. (4) May we avoid so-called "entertainment" that comes in the form of books or shows or plays that promote human cruelty lest we be influenced by them to do evil, but may we instead fill our minds with thoughts that are edifying and pleasing to the Lord, cf. Philippians 4:8-9.*