

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing **Part XCV: The Limit Of God's Tolerance For His People's Idolatry** **(Jeremiah 52:12-23)**

I. Introduction

- A. Scripture teaches that the Lord is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance and believe in Christ for salvation, 2 Peter 3:9.
- B. However, there is a **limit** to God's patience, what should motivate even us Christians to repent of sin in our lives sooner than later, and Jeremiah 52:12-23 presents the end of God's patience for idolatry in His people:

II. The Limit Of God's Tolerance For His People's Idolatry, Jeremiah 52:12-23.

- A. Jeremiah 52:1-34 was written by an unknown author, its contents being "nearly identical to 2 Kings 24:18-25:30." (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1204) It was written "after 561 B. C. when King Jehoiachin was released from prison in Babylon (Jer. 52:31)" to encourage the remnant that was still in captivity, Ibid.
- B. Accordingly, the author in Jeremiah 52:12-23 described the Babylonians' destruction of the city of Jerusalem, putting a heavy, prolonged emphasis on the destruction of the magnificent temple of Solomon (as follows):
 - 1. The Babylonians under the captain of the guard Nebuzaradan entered Jerusalem in the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar, on the tenth day of the fifth month, and he burned the temple, the king's palace, all the houses of Jerusalem, including the houses of all of Judah's officials, and he broke down all of the walls around the entire city, Jeremiah 52:12-14. Babylon's purpose in administering such total demolition of Jerusalem was to leave it essentially inhabitable that it no longer be a troublesome opponent to them.
 - 2. Nebuzaradan took captive some of the poorest of Jerusalem's people, those who had remained in the city, its craftsmen and those who had surrendered to the Babylonians, Jer. 52:15. However, he left some of the poorest of the people to work the vineyards and the fields that Babylon might later tax them, Jer. 52:16.
 - 3. As for the temple, its structures of great material and sentimental value were taken to Babylon, v. 17-23:
 - a. All of the bronze structures in the temple, including the two great bronze pillars at the temple entrance, the moveable stands and the bronze Sea (laver) were dismantled and taken to Babylon, Jer. 52:17 NIV.
 - b. The Babylonians also took away the pots, shovels, wick trimmers, sprinkling bowls, dishes and all of the bronze articles that had been used in the temple rituals, Jeremiah 52:18 NIV.
 - c. The official also took away the basins, censers, sprinkling bowls, pots, lampstands, dishes and bowls used for the drink offerings, all that were made of pure gold or silver, Jeremiah 52:19 NIV.
 - d. All of the bronze in the two pillars, the Sea (laver) and the twelve bronze bulls that were under the Sea that held it up and the moveable stands which Solomon had made for the Lord's temple were beyond what the Babylonians could weigh as there was so much of it, Jeremiah 52:20 NIV.
 - e. The two great bronze pillars were national treasures, for they had figured prominently in Judah's history: its kings had been crowned beside them and those kings had addressed the nation during crises beside them (2 Kings 11:14; 23:1-3), so the author described them extensively. Each pillar was 27 feet high, 18 feet around, four fingers thick and hollow, Jer. 52:21 NIV. The bronze capital at the top of each pillar was 7 1/2 feet high and was adorned with a network of pomegranates, Jer. 52:22a,b NIV. Each network had 96 pomegranates all around, and there were 100 pomegranates on the rim above the network, Jer. 52:23 NIV.
- C. To comprehend God's **reason** for letting this great temple and its furnishings of such value be removed to Babylon, we note God's words to Solomon after he had first dedicated the temple back in 1 Kings 9:1-9:
 - 1. The Lord appeared to Solomon after he had dedicated the temple to confirm that, in accord with Solomon's prayer of dedication, He had hallowed the temple, He had promised that He had put His name there and that He would have His heart, His love, placed perpetually in that location, 1 Kings 9:1-3.
 - 2. However, were Solomon and Judah's kings after him to depart from the Lord to worship other false gods, the Lord would cut the people of Judah off from the land and "cast out of His sight" this great temple, and all who passed by its ruins would be astonished and understand that God had destroyed this great temple and removed its valuable furnishings because of His people's idolatry, 1 Kings 9:4-9 KJV.

Lesson: *The destruction of Jerusalem and especially of the magnificent, valuable temple that Solomon had built occurred because God had severely punished His people's idolatry, revealing God's great hatred for that sin.*

Application: *May we heed 1 John 5:21 and avoid idolatrously substituting anything for the Lord as our God!*