

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing

Part XCVI: The Various Fates Of Those Of Varying Choices On Heeding God's Word (Jeremiah 52:24-34)

I. Introduction

- A. Scripture teaches the key truth that obeying Scripture brings blessing where disobedience brings discipline.
- B. The various dramatic fates of people who made varying choices about heeding God's Word are presented in Jeremiah 52:24-34, and we view this passage for our insight and edification (as follows):

II. The Various Fates Of Those Of Varying Choices On Heeding God's Word, Jeremiah 52:24-34.

- A. Jeremiah's 40-year prophetic ministry had informed the people of Judah to repent of their idolatry lest they suffer an invasion of a foreign nation, Jer. 26:1-7. However, under the leadership of the false prophets and the priests, they had rejected Jeremiah's message to the point where they spoke of executing him, Jer. 26:8.
- B. When Jeremiah had told all the people of the land, including the priests and princes, that remaining in the city would bring death at the hands of the Babylonians where surrendering to them would bring them life, the princes opposed Jeremiah, directing that he be executed, Jeremiah 38:1-4.
- C. In time, Babylon **did** invade Jerusalem, and Jeremiah's prophecies proved to be **true** as seen in the varying fates that occurred to Judah's people relative to their varying choices on heeding God's Word, Jer. 52:24-34:
 1. Those leaders who strongly disobeyed the Word of God from Jeremiah, seeking to have him put to death, were themselves executed by the king of Babylon, Jeremiah 52:24-27a. The Babylonian captain of the guard, Nebuzaradan, took Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the second in line for the chief priest's office and the three keepers of the temple door along with sixty other high ranking officials of the city, brought them up to Riblah in the land of Hamath where Nebuchadnezzar passed sentence upon them, and there the king had them executed, Jeremiah 52:24-27a.
 2. The people who surrendered to the Babylonians were saved alive and taken captive to Babylon, v. 27b-30:
 - a. Jeremiah 52:27b summarizes that the Babylonians captured the people of Judah.
 - b. He describes this captivity as occurring in stages: Babylon took 3,023 people from Judah away in the seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, 832 people from Jerusalem in his eighteenth year and 745 people of Judah in his twenty-third year for a total of 4,600 people from Judah, Jeremiah 52:28-30 ESV.
 3. King Jehoiachin who had surrendered to Babylon in obedience to God's Word was initially put in prison, but in time he was released, honored and sustained by the king of Babylon, Jeremiah 52:31-34:
 - a. Though the book of Jeremiah does not record the event itself, king Jehoiachin was king in Judah during Jeremiah's ministry (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1045), and 2 Kings 24:8-12 records that he chose to surrender to Babylon's king when he once invaded Judah in obedience to God's Word through Jeremiah.
 - b. Thus, opposite the terrible fate of Judah's last king Zedekiah whom Nebuchadnezzar had blinded and imprisoned in Babylon to the day of his death for trying to flee from him (Jer. 52:1-11), Jehoiachin had a very different fate: (i) though initially imprisoned, Jehoiachin was not physically abused, (ii) and in his 37th year of captivity, Babylon's new king, Evil-merodach, brought him up out of prison, (iii) spoke kindly to him, (iv) honored his throne above that of the other captured kings in Babylon, (v) changed his prison garments, (vi) let him honorably eat at the Babylonian king's table for the rest of his life and (vii) gave him a regular, daily financial allowance for life, Jeremiah 52:31-34. ["Tablets recovered from the ruined Ishtar Gate in Babylon confirm this account of the kindness shown to Jehoiachin," Ibid., ftn. to Jer. 52:31-34.]
 - c. Jehoiachin's elevation encouraged the godly remnant of Israel and Judah in Babylon about the Lord's promise of blessing in their own future, Ibid., Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1206.

Lesson: (1) For disobeying God's Word to surrender to Babylon to the extent that they called for the execution of God's prophet who taught it, Judah's priests and officials were destined to be executed by Babylon's king. (2) For heeding God's Word to surrender, the people who survived Babylon's invasion were destined to be taken captive to Babylon. (3) For heeding God's Word to surrender as king of Judah to Babylon, Jehoiachin was destined not physically abused as was disobedient king Zedekiah, but after 37 years was raised up out of prison, treated kindly and honorably and given financial security for the rest of his life by the king of Babylon.

Application: (1) May we fully obey God's Word to enjoy His blessing, not disobey it to lose His blessing. (2) Since God always honors His Word, may we not take anything that Scripture says lightly, but very seriously!