

The Siege and Fall of Jerusalem

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16th Avenue Gospel Chapel

References: 2 Kings 25, 2 Kings 24:20; 2 Kings 25:1-10; Proverbs 29:1; 2 Chronicles 36:11-17; 2 Chronicles 36:20-21; Daniel 1:1; Daniel 4:1-37; Deuteronomy 28:1-68; Ezekiel 24:1-2; Ezekiel 12:11-13; Ezekiel 12:21-28; Jeremiah 25:8-12; Hosea 1:9

The Siege and Strangulation of Jerusalem

All right, well, it's the 25th chapter of Second Kings that I think we're looking at tonight. Second Kings 25. And just a few comments: the chapter actually is a relatively short chapter, and it's a chapter that is in many respects repeated in the book of Jeremiah, but it's also supplemented—a great deal of additional information on this area or this sequence covered in chapter 25 is repeated or, not repeated, but amplified elsewhere in Jeremiah. So a little hard following all the way through, but we're going to try to do what we can to get it started, and we'll see how far the Lord would lead us. I guess our first question is, anything more on the subject in Chapter 24?

All right, let's try 25. And it goes like this. It came to pass in the ninth year of his reign—that would be the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign. Back to chapter 24 and verse 20.

[2 Kings 24:20 NKJV]

For because of the anger of the LORD this happened in Jerusalem and Judah, that He finally cast them out from His presence. Then Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came, he and all his hosts, against Jerusalem, pitched against it, and they built forts against it round about. And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of King Zedekiah.

[2 Kings 25:1-2 NKJV]

¹ Now it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army

came against Jerusalem and encamped against it; and they built a siege wall against it all around. ² So the city was besieged until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah.

So what do you do when, after Zedekiah, all the devastation that had befallen Jerusalem and Judah from the days when Nebuchadnezzar first came and Daniel and others were carried to Babylon—this keeps going on and on. And Zedekiah ultimately becomes king and he rebels against the king of Babylon. Sorry, he rebels. Yes, he rebelled against the king of Babylon.

And so the king of Babylon comes up when Zedekiah is in his ninth year. And for two years, the city is surrounded and nothing can go in, nothing can go out. The city is economically and militarily distressed, but it's not conquered. It's just surrounded and **strangled**. And so for two years, from the ninth to the 11th year—two or three years, the city is strangled. And you say, how can you possibly survive under circumstances like that? I don't understand it.

In the previous generation, in the previous century, there was the First World War. It was bad. But it was thousands of miles away. And many of us, well, I guess we can say there's war in the world today, but it's thousands of miles away. And we don't really feel it very much. It's true, the price of gasoline has gone up and a few other things. But you ask Amir whether it's different today, whether it's different in the world today, whether it's different in the world today in Iran than it was when he was there a few years ago. And he's going to say, yes, it's different. And I have no idea how their economy is carrying on. I don't know what they're doing for money. I don't know what they're doing for food. And the implications are very, very severe. What would it be like to be in Jerusalem after all the problems they went through, to be surrounded by the enemy and two or three years of being strangled to death?

All of which means that it is folly to turn away from the Lord. The Lord said to Eve, "Don't eat of that fruit. In the day you eat it, you will surely die." And I don't think she even understood what death was all about. I don't know that—it was going to take a long time for it to be fulfilled, but it was terrible. And so one of the consequences today of rejecting the Lord—and the answer is, we heard it this morning, an eternal hellfire. What is hellfire like forever?

And sometimes I think that the complete devastation that came upon Judah and Israel because of their sin is a marvelous warning to us: **don't** be so foolish as to reject the Lord. He's the Lord. He's warned us. It's coming. Israel today is not following His plans. They're going their own way. They're pretending that they don't—they don't have to follow the Lord. Just very briefly, the homosexual capital of the Middle East is Tel Aviv. And there's a conference—not a conference, a pride festival coming up in Israel next week. And the week

after this, we've entered—but it's going to be four days. It's going to be located right down in the Dead Sea, just beside the old city of Sodom. Just blatantly defying God. What's going to happen? Same kind of thing that's happening here. We can't fight God and win. Evil is still evil. And whether it is rebuked today by the Lord's action or whether it waits a little bit longer, it is still going to be defeated. Evil is evil. And so the world has got to learn not to accept sin.

Very interestingly, repeatedly we're hearing from—I hear it from radio preachers—that America, the evangelical church in America, is preaching all kinds of good things. They just don't say much about sin or repentance or hell. Interestingly, if you read the prophets from Isaiah to Malachi, do you read a lot about punishment? A lot about the need for repentance? And the answer is, of course. That's what it's all about. And so preachers today, we've got to keep preaching on the consequences of sin and the importance of repentance and fleeing. And so you've got a glimpse of it here. Those are my interruptions. Any comments?

"You read down to what verse?"

"Well, I just read the first two verses."

"Yeah. Keep going if you want."

Prophecies of Judgment and Remedy

"Well, there's a Proverbs. Proverbs chapter 29, verse 1, that I think is very fitting to this circumstance. Proverbs 29, verse 1."

"Amen. Amen."

[Proverbs 29:1 NKJV]

He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck,

Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

And that fits into what we read here in verse, or over in Second Chronicles, where we read the parallel passage concerning Zedekiah. In Kings, Second Kings, we have the details of the siege itself, whereas in Chronicles we get the commentary on it. So in verse 15—I'm sorry, Second Chronicles 36 and verse 11, if we might read that portion, because we get a different viewpoint than we do. We get the facts in Kings, and we get the Lord's perspective in—in the sense, we get the world's perspective in Kings, we get the Lord's perspective greater in Chronicles. Verse 11, "Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king..."

[2 Chronicles 36:11-12 NKJV]

¹¹ Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. ¹² He did evil in the sight of the LORD his God, and did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke from the mouth of the LORD.

You recall in Jeremiah, there's portions there where he reproves Zedekiah, Jehoiakim, and then Zedekiah. Jeremiah was a faithful man who spent a lot of his time right in the center of God's city, the city of Jerusalem, and prophesied right against the king. Early on, Jeremiah was given the promise of God that he would be able to stand against the powers. "Don't let them," He says, "let your forehead be like flint." Don't deflecting any abuse that you might have, any criticism that you might encounter, to continue to preach the message that I will give you.

And we know that Jeremiah was—he started out, he was kind of a shy man in that sense. You get the sense that he wasn't an individual who had a naturally outward strong personality, but rather he was a man of deep conviction, but not of an outgoing and powerful personality. But the Lord gave him that strength. And it was that humility, I think, and dependence upon the Lord that gave him the strength to continue to prophesy. You recall, we could make a comparison between Elijah and Jeremiah. They were two different personalities entirely.

Whereas Elijah stood against Ahab and the house of Ahab and against the wife Jezebel—his wife Jezebel. But then after he exhausted himself somewhat, I think maybe in his own strength. Whereas Jeremiah continued, I think because of his weakness—he saw his weakness—he continued to prophesy right in the middle of Jerusalem. He was put in prison. He was put into a pit. A pit of mire. It was an empty cistern. It was full of mud, and he was put down in there and he continued to prophesy.

And so in verse 12 we read, Zedekiah did not listen to Jeremiah. He did evil in the sight of the Lord and did not humble himself before Jeremiah. Jehoiakim, you remember beforehand, he had humbled himself—he went to get the message from Jeremiah, and then he said, "I want you to tell me what's going to happen." And I should probably refer to this, I can't remember if it's in Jeremiah—or I think it's in Jeremiah, where he goes to Jehoiakim, the previous king before Jehoiachin, and Jehoiakim said, "I want you to tell me what the Lord is saying. Don't waste any words, but don't tell anybody that I have brought you to this interview." And so he told him exactly what's going to happen. Jehoiakim, even though he...

He... He heard the word, he did not act upon it. He didn't betray Jeremiah either to the others, otherwise they would have killed him. So Jeremiah was an amazing prophet.

"Amen."

The Lord Jesus was compared to Jeremiah by some—some thought He was Jeremiah risen from the dead because He was the weeping prophet. He wept over the sins of the people, and the people recognized in Jesus' day the sins of the nation. And when Jesus came, He preached the message to repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And He wept over not only the condition of the people spiritually, but physically. He wept more than the two times we read in the scriptures, I'm sure. He wept; He groaned in His spirit. He was so taken up in compassion for the state of the people. Wherever He went, He met the needs of the people and—and undid the works of the devil and healed people, preached the message that—it was like Jeremiah so long before. Jeremiah, too, was a weeping prophet. If you read his Lamentations, that little book that we sometimes ignore, you get a feeling of this man. Yeah, he said that he wept over Jerusalem, and I'm sure as he spoke to those kings in the presence of a hostile court, that he wept as he brought his message. And there—there's no greater—greater power that a preacher can give when he is speaking about sin than to weep over the sins of the people. He doesn't take the position of God who can judge sin, but rather the spokesman for them with a compassion for the people. He reached out to the people. So that's Jeremiah.

And he didn't humble himself before Jeremiah, it says, who spoke from the mouth of the Lord. And he also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, it says, verse 13:

[2 Chronicles 36:13-16 NKJV]

¹³ And he also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear an oath by God; but he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the LORD God of Israel. ¹⁴ Moreover all the leaders of the priests and the people transgressed more and more, according to all the abominations of the nations, and defiled the house of the LORD which He had consecrated in Jerusalem. ¹⁵ And the LORD God of their fathers sent warnings to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending them, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. ¹⁶ But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till there was no remedy.

Yeah. And there, he said—and here it's quoted, "till there was no remedy." It's a solemn thing.

"Amen."

"Indeed."

Israel today, we sometimes glorify the Jewish people. They're the apple of God's eye and so on and so forth. We read what Hosea says. "They're not my people." He says, "Lo-Ammi," Hosea, "they're not my people."

[Hosea 1:9 NKJV]

Then God said: "Call his name Lo-Ammi, For you are not My people, And I will not be your God.

I read in the Old Testament prophets that two-thirds of those Jews who live in the land are going to be killed during the tribulation period. It's going to be a time of Jacob's trouble.

"Amen."

Time—we think about the end when all the Jews are going to come from all over the world. Most of the ones that are going to enter into the millennium, I believe, are going to be those who are not in Israel right now. Those who are in Israel now, our brother was talking about this great celebration of the homosexual community. Tel Aviv is known as the homosexual capital of the world. God is going to bring judgment upon them until there's no remedy. But He has compassion on His people. He's going to bring them back again one day and establish them. But woe to those that are in Jerusalem in that day—the Lord Jesus said Himself. Woe to those who are in Jerusalem or in Israel. God is going to bring judgment even in our day. And then, I guess we could go...

"Read verse 17."

[2 Chronicles 36:17 NKJV]

¹⁷ Therefore He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, on the aged or the weak; He gave them all into his hand.

We will probably pick that up again as we read in Second Kings. Second Kings, then, in verse 4, or verse—yes, from verse 4 on, gives us details on the result of the siege. One last thing

before I turn it back to our brother to go over those verses is that this is the third incursion of Nebuchadnezzar. There were three incursions. The first occurs—first one was when Nebuchadnezzar came up to Jerusalem in the days of Jehoiakim and carried away some of the princes of Israel. And Daniel was one of those who was carried away, and his three friends. We get that from Daniel chapter 1, verse 1. We looked at that last week.

[Daniel 1:1 NKJV]

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.

That was in 606 B.C. And it's interesting that that date is very, very well established in the secular calendar. They know that because of the—I think it's the Babylonian or the Persian, maybe the Persian, or Babylonian accounts. The Babylonian accounts, I guess. They have that well-established date. So, some say 605, the difference being a couple of months depending on which one. But that particular time, very well established, written in the chronicles of the Babylonian Empire, 606. They carried away Daniel—Daniel and his friends, and others as well.

The second deportation then took place in 597. Jehoiachin was deposed by Nebuchadnezzar. He only reigned three months. He was captured, taken to Babylon, and was a prisoner there for 37 years. And then when Nebuchadnezzar's son, Evil-Merodach, came to power, he raised up Jehoiachin. But he never came back from the captivity, spent his last years in Babylon, though in much better circumstances.

And then the fourth deportation in 586 B.C., we have there the destruction of Jerusalem. So you have the three carryings away. One was the servitude, where the kings now that were on the throne were really vassals. They were just servants of Nebuchadnezzar. The times of the Gentiles are recorded or have begun. Israel is no longer a sovereign nation. Although they still have a king, he is a servant to Nebuchadnezzar.

The second deportation, they carry away a lot of the money and the goods, as well as taking away so many of the skilled artisans and the people that were, you might call, the economic drivers of the nation of Israel. And there were just a few scattered left.

The third deportation was one where the temple was completely destroyed, the walls broken down, the city burned, and many, many people were killed during the siege and after the siege when they broke down the walls, which we'll read about now. So there's the three deportations. The first could be named servitude. The second, the captivity, because mainly

most of the captives were taken under the second deportation, including Ezekiel was taken on the second deportation. The third carrying away was mainly a slaughter. And there were a few poor people left in the land, and the land was left barren.

The desolations begin—70 years of desolations. The 70 years of captivity begin in 606, the first deportation. And then 70 years after that, when the temple is completed, they came back from captivity. And, well, 536, the exile ends. Cyrus' decree ends with Cyrus' great decree to return to Israel and to rebuild the temple. 536, exactly 70 years after 606. So, to be fulfilled exactly. The desolations—they would come 70 years after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586. So 516, there was the decree that was sent out by Darius, another Persian king. And he says in Haggai—Haggai, count from this day forward those desolations. That is, the land would enjoy its Sabbath rests. For all the time that Israel was in there, they had neglected the seventh year of Sabbath rest. We find no record of it. But the land is given its 70 years of Sabbath rest. When they took up and began to build the temple again, Haggai says, "Observe this day." You'll begin to see it happen. It would happen—and four years later, when they completed the temple, the desolations had ended.

So those are some thoughts just on those carrying away. The Lord's patience had run to its conclusion after Him sending His prophets, warning them by His messengers, rising up early. And there were other prophets we read about, Micaiah and Uriah. Uriah was killed. All we read is that one sentence, that Jehoiakim had killed him, a prophet. We don't know all of God's messengers that had come and spoken in the name of the Lord. There are many, He says. And so we... we think there of our Lord Jesus Himself. And He was a prophet. And remember the parable that He said of the vineyard keepers? He said, "You know, take a parable. And there's a man that planted a vineyard. And he let it out to vineyard keepers. And when the time of harvest would come, he sent some of his servants to collect fruit from the servants, which was his own. And some," He says, "they took and they beat them and sent them away. Others, they even killed them. But," he said, "lastly, I'll send my son." What an investment the Father would make after the ill treatment of all those servants! And he said, "This is the heir. Let's take him and kill him." And that's exactly the motivation of those that took our Lord Jesus, the prophet, the great one, the great prophet who spoke not only in the name of the Lord—He was the word Himself. And they took and killed Him.

What would God do to that nation? Well, He gave them another 70 years or another generation, really, right until the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Over and over, Paul went out preaching to them. God is so merciful.

"Amen."

Until finally, at the end of the book of Acts, near maybe two years before the destruction of Jerusalem, Paul says, "I go to the Gentiles." No more warnings. Again, "He that being often reproved and hardens his neck will suddenly be cut off," from—that without limit. It's a thing. God is very merciful. We say, well, why doesn't God come? Because this morning, Rob brought that portion: scoffers saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?" And the reason He hasn't come is because He is so merciful. And there's, you know, we have friends and family that need to know the Lord.

"Amen."

And so the Lord is being merciful. Is He not, to us? Let's continue to encourage each other to reach out to our families and friends and neighbors and those that don't know the Lord. He's still, in this age, compassionate and will forgive.

So again, from an overview perspective, the prophets tell us what's going to happen. The question is, are those prophecies going to be fulfilled? And over and over and over, the prophets described what would happen to Israel, to Judah, if they rejected the Lord. But the prophets go on and talk about what's going to happen in the future as well. How do we know that what has been prophesied regarding what is future for us—how do we know the Lord is going to fulfill the prophecy? Answer: because He fulfilled the prophecy regarding Israel and Judah at the time of Nebuchadnezzar. And He fulfilled His prophecy in the time of the Lord Jesus regarding the tragedy of rejecting the Lord. So we have these many prophecies and many descriptions of the fulfillment of the prophecy in Scripture. It's Moses who gives the curses in, what is it, Deuteronomy 28. It basically says if you don't follow the Lord, if you don't obey, you'll be cursed. And you read those curses and you say, "Oh, will that happen?" And the answer is yes. So you go to Kings, and then you go to Chronicles, and then you go to Jeremiah and the others, and you find that, in fact, that is exactly what happened. God fulfills His prophecy. God fulfills His prophecy. So these passages, somewhat repetition here, there, back and forth, are to follow, but it's evidence that God fulfills His prophecy. The other thing, go ahead.

Fulfilling the Word of the Lord

"Just to add to that, perhaps I should have read a little bit more in Second Chronicles because it just completes what my brother is saying about God fulfilling His promises. In Second Chronicles 36, where we read in verse 20, about those who had escaped from the sword. This is at the third desolation. He's carried away to Babylon where they become servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia. And this is the verse:"

[2 Chronicles 36:20-21 NKJV]

²⁰ And those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, ²¹ to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.

"So there the desolations begin. There was the servitude, the captivity, and the desolations. The three carryings away. The first was completed in the first year of Cyrus, where he sent the great delegation back, 50,000 of them or so. And then this is the last one, a different 70 years, prophesied by Jeremiah, saying the land would be left desolate for 70 years. So there are two 70 years here, not just one, with about 20 years between them. So the land had to keep its Sabbath for 70 years. But just a point there. I think a couple of—Jeremiah chapter 25, for example, we'll just look at his prophecy, Jeremiah 25."

"I'm sorry to interrupt."

"No, you carry on. Keep your thought there."

"Jeremiah 25, verse 11. Read there."

"Verse... Verse 12, I guess, or verse 9, sorry. Verse 8."

[Jeremiah 25:8-12 NKJV]

⁸ "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: "Because you have not heard My words, ⁹ behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,' says the LORD, "and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land, against its inhabitants, and against these nations all around, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, a hissing, and perpetual desolations. ¹⁰ Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp. ¹¹ And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. ¹² "Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the LORD; "and I will make it a perpetual desolation.

"And that's, you know, the desolation there. And then we read in verse 12, 'And then it'll come to pass when 70 years are completed, that I'll punish the king of Babylon and that

nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquities.' So there's the desolations, the 70 years of desolations there for the land. It has nothing to do with the people, that 70. That's the land itself. It's the Lord's land. The 70 years of captivity were for the people. The 70 years of desolations was for the land. Let's not forget that the Jews occupy the Lord's land. The Lord has a heart for that piece of real estate. That's His prime real estate on the planet. And He has His eye on it. The people that are occupying it there, or do so, have come back in unbelief. And they have become a curse and a byword among the nations. I'm not criticizing Jewish people. I love the Jewish people. There's no better person to argue with than a Jew. I love it because you can really argue with them, and they don't take offense, but they'll give it right back to you. So in that sense, I really like the Jews. I really like them. But the Lord has His eye on that land. And He's going to restore the Jews to His land. And He's going to change them. He's going to give them a brand new heart."

"Amen."

"So that the world will love the Jew. Ten men, it says, are going to take a Jew and say, 'Please, take us up to the land. Take us up to the land, take us back with you.' Everybody will want to go to Israel. Well, sorry, Harold."

"No problem. Just a couple of comments, though, on Nebuchadnezzar. You noted in Jeremiah 25, we read the line, 'and Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, will bring them against these nations.' So Nebuchadnezzar was described here as a servant of the Lord. Now back to Second Chronicles chapter 36, where Eric has been speaking, and we read the very interesting verse 13. It says, 'Zedekiah also rebelled against the king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God. But he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart from turning unto the Lord God of Israel.' What an amazing thing. Nebuchadnezzar appointed Zedekiah king and made him swear by God that he would obey him. And Zedekiah swore by God that he would obey him, but he rebelled. And the fact that he rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar is modified slightly in the second half of verse 13. It says, 'but he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart from turning to the Lord God of Israel.' He swore by God and God held him responsible for what he said to Nebuchadnezzar, and Zedekiah hardened his heart against the Lord in rebelling against Nebuchadnezzar.

Now we know Nebuchadnezzar was an amazing kind of a man because he got converted in his latter years. And I suppose it's Daniel chapter 4, my memory is failing me, but Nebuchadnezzar wrote the first international tract to everybody in the world saying, 'Follow the Lord.' God's hand was on Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar played a key role. Jeremiah said, 'Thus said the Lord, go back to Babylon.' Nebuchadnezzar said, 'Come back to Babylon.' And the people refused to go, and God punished them for it. But Nebuchadnezzar—imagine

Nebuchadnezzar making him, before he was converted, Nebuchadnezzar making Zedekiah swear by God, and God holding him responsible for that. I pointed out last week, Zedekiah was a liar, just like most other men, just like many politicians in our world today.

Well, anyway, that's the first two verses of chapter 25, and it's only taken us an hour to get there, so that's very good. Verse 3, 'And on the ninth day of the fourth month, the famine prevailed in the city.' You can imagine that. The famine prevailed. 'There was no bread for the people of the land.' That makes sense. Verse 4, 'And the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden. Now the Chaldeans were against the city roundabout, and the king went away toward the plain.' What do we know about that? Very interesting, isn't it? That we read, 'all the men of war fled by night.' I thought that men of war were supposed to defend the people. You remember the story in the Book of Acts, the story of the shipwreck? And what were the ship crew going to do? They were going to flee the ship. They sent out the lifeboat to leave the passengers to go. First people to flee the ship were the crew. I thought they were to stay and defend the crew, defend the passengers. They were the first ones to get off the ship. So who were the first ones to flee the city? The soldiers. That makes sense, doesn't it? Well, what it teaches you is you don't trust the soldiers. You don't trust the police. I found the police to be very, very friendly. But I think under extreme circumstances, you might find the police would be the first ones to flee the situation and leave you holding the bag. So I just think it's amazing that they are—the men of war are the first ones to leave. And the king leaves with them and the city is broken up. Let's read it again: 'On the ninth day of the fourth month, the famine prevailed in the city. There was no bread for the people. And the city was broken up and all the men of war fled by night, by way of the gate between the two walls, which is by the king's garden. And the king went away toward the plain.' And the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king and overtook him in the plains of Jericho."

[2 Kings 25:3-5 NKJV]

³ By the ninth day of the fourth month the famine had become so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. ⁴ Then the city wall was broken through, and all the men of war fled at night by way of the gate between two walls, which was by the king's garden, even though the Chaldeans were still encamped all around against the city. And the king went by way of the plain. ⁵ But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and they overtook him in the plains of Jericho. All his army was scattered from him.

"So how far was it from Jerusalem to the plains of Jericho? It's a fair distance. I marvel that they got that far. The army of the Chaldeans was around the city. They must have seen them go. And they got as far as the plains of Jericho. I'm not sure how far that is. I think when I drove it, it probably took us... yeah, 45 minutes. It's a fair distance. And so they go down on their horses or whatever they had. Probably didn't have horses because they wouldn't have been able to feed them. So verse 5 again: 'The army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king and overtook him in the plains of Jericho, and all his army were scattered from him.'

So the army was fleeing the city, forsaking the populace, and they went with the king. And as they went down to Jericho, what did they do for the king? They deserted him, too. And they scattered themselves in all directions. It's a foolish thing to put your confidence in men. And scripture repeats that. 'So they took the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon in Riblah, and they gave judgment upon him.'"

[2 Kings 25:6 NKJV]

⁶ So they took the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they pronounced judgment on him.

"So the Chaldeans didn't have any trouble capturing the king because all the king's soldiers had fled. Verse 7: 'They slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, put out the eyes of Zedekiah, bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon.' What a tragic situation."

[2 Kings 25:7 NKJV]

⁷ Then they killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, put out the eyes of Zedekiah, bound him with bronze fetters, and took him to Babylon.

The Burning of the Temple

"Verse 8. We read a little bit about the good of Nebuchadnezzar when he made Zedekiah swear by God, but Zedekiah didn't obey. So what did that same king of Nebuchadnezzar do? Slew all his sons before his eyes, and then put his eyes out so his last memory of things would be the death of his sons. Wow. A lot of people say, 'I can sin, I don't—I don't care about God, I'll be all right, everything's fine.' And God says, 'No, judgment day is coming, and it's going to be a bad day.'

It was this captivity of—or this and the end of Zedekiah was prophesied by the prophet Ezekiel. And Ezekiel began his prophecies about six years before the destruction of Jerusalem; therefore, he began in Zedekiah's time—he would be a contemporary of Jeremiah as well. Now Ezekiel was carried away by the prophet—and he was taken to the land of the prophets, and he was carried away in the second deportation. And it would be 597. He was taken. In Ezekiel chapter 24, I believe, verses 1 and 2, I think. That's his prophecy concerning the siege itself, of the last siege. I got the wrong reference there. But my point is that in Ezekiel chapter 12, recall then that Ezekiel was carried away in the second deportation, that is about ten years before the destruction of Jerusalem as we're looking at now. So he's been in Babylon prophesying there. He was in Babylon. And so you might say, 'Well, why was he in Babylon prophesying? What good would that do?' Well, he was in Babylon to the captives. There were false prophets that are in Babylon were saying such things as, 'We're going to go, but we're going to be going back. Don't worry. The king is going to take us right back. Yeah, everything's fine, don't worry.' And Ezekiel the prophet was saying, 'No, you stay here and serve the king of Babylon.' That was just one of his messages. But he prophesies in verse—chapter 12, Ezekiel 12, and verse 12. Verse 11: 'Say, I am a sign...'"

[Ezekiel 12:11 NKJV]

¹¹ Say, "I am a sign to you. As I have done, so shall it be done to them; they shall be carried away into captivity."

"And you read the earlier part of that chapter. We don't want to go into that, but he dug through a wall and carried his belongings out. And that was a picture of Nebuchadnezzar going into the house of Israel, taking the people captive. He says, 'As I've done to you, as you've demonstrated,' he's dug through his own wall and carried out his belongings. And people say, 'What are you doing?' 'Well, this is what the Lord is going to do to you.' And so he says in verse 12:"

[Ezekiel 12:12-13 NKJV]

¹² And the prince who is among them shall bear his belongings on his shoulder at twilight and go out. They shall dig through the wall to carry them out through it. He shall cover his face, so that he cannot see the ground with his eyes. ¹³ I will also spread My net over him, and he shall be caught in My snare. I will bring him to

Babylon, to the land of the Chaldeans; yet he shall not see it, though he shall die there.

"That was King Zedekiah. He said that he would be carried there, but he wouldn't see it. God was going to blind him, put out his eyes, and carry him. That was the prophecy of Ezekiel in verse 12.

While I'm here in this portion, the people—there were false prophets. As you read Ezekiel, there's all kinds of false prophets. They're saying that—the verse of that same chapter, he says in verse 23, "Tell them, therefore, thus says the Lord..." Oh, sorry, in verse 21:"

[Ezekiel 12:21-28 NKJV]

²¹ And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ²² "Son of man, what is this proverb that you people have about the land of Israel, which says, "The days are prolonged, and every vision fails"? ²³ Tell them therefore, "Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will lay this proverb to rest, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel." But say to them, "The days are at hand, and the fulfillment of every vision. ²⁴ For no more shall there be any false vision or flattering divination within the house of Israel. ²⁵ For I am the LORD. I speak, and the word which I speak will come to pass; it will no more be postponed; for in your days, O rebellious house, I will say the word and perform it," says the Lord GOD."

²⁶ Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ²⁷ "Son of man, look, the house of Israel is saying, "The vision that he sees is for many days from now, and he prophesies of times far off.' ²⁸ Therefore say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD: "None of My words will be postponed any more, but the word which I speak will be done," says the Lord GOD."

"They were prophesying, said, 'Oh, no, Israel—Jerusalem is not going to be destroyed. No, no, don't worry about that. We're going to be going back soon.' And this is two years before the destruction of Jerusalem when he prophesies here that it's going to be destroyed. And so we've got Jeremiah in Jerusalem. We've got Ezekiel with the captives. And so the Lord is covering all the bases here for His people. He's not letting His people go in ignorance.

So, just an aside, perhaps. Maybe too much detail on—but hopefully, anyway, I like to tie, as much as possible, what the prophets are saying, because we often miss—we read the prophecies and we say, 'Well, what does that mean? You know, who does that apply to?' And

once you start digging in, you begin to see it more in three dimensions, how the Lord is continually working among His people. And He's always done that. If we look and just read, for example, a good history of the church down through the centuries, of twenty centuries or more, of what God has been doing in this church age among His people—He has worked in every country, different places, different times. He's raised up people and He's chastised His people. There's so many parallels to what God did with Israel that we can apply when we read the Old Testament prophets and the history that's connected to them.

"Amen."

"So I encourage—it's such a long, lifelong study, is it not? But if we can get a little bit, as we're doing this detailed study in a halting way, because we're certainly not great Bible scholars. We're men and women of limited resources. We've had to make our own living; we're not professional theologians who spend our lives in those. We've had to work little by little, line upon line. But just to encourage us as we go along, may the Lord help us."

"Amen."

"So, Second Kings chapter 25 and verse 8. In the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the 19th year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem, and he burnt the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire. And all the army of the Chaldees that were with the captain of the guard, that would be Nebuzaradan, break down the walls of Jerusalem round about."

[2 Kings 25:8-10 NKJV]

⁸ And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month (which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. ⁹ He burned the house of the LORD and the king's house; all the houses of Jerusalem, that is, all the houses of the great, he burned with fire. ¹⁰ And all the army of the Chaldeans who were with the captain of the guard broke down the walls of Jerusalem all around.

"So they came in, and they burned the temple, and then they burned the king's house, and all the palaces, all the beautiful houses in Jerusalem. From all of the great men, they burned the city. It's interesting that the devil has many names, one of which is Apollyon, which means the destroyer. Where the devil goes, it's destruction. He loves to destroy things. He loves

mostly to destroy people. And here you've got a picture of his destruction. What difference does it make if you leave some of the houses standing? Why do you have to burn them all down? But the destroyer says, 'That's what I want to do. Let's burn them all down. Let's get rid of them all.'

So interesting, this man, Nebuzaradan, he's called here captain of the guard. And my marginal reference says that means he was the chief of the executioners. He wasn't just there to do the burning. He wasn't an arsonist. He was the chief of the executioners, and he killed a lot of people. And he went in killing people, and he continued to kill people. He burned down all these buildings, but he killed the people as well.

It's interesting that the first place he burnt, verse 9, was the house of the Lord. Why? Probably because he acknowledged that it was most significant, and the children of Israel acknowledged that it was most significant. Even those who disagreed with God, even those who rebelled against God, considered it most significant, most important. And I remind you again of a note that I read many years ago when the city of Jerusalem was at war—it was the Six-Day War in 1967—and Moshe Dayan was the general of the army, and they won a spectacular victory. And one of the reporters went to Moshe Dayan and said to him, 'Why were your soldiers so effective? Why was it that they were able to win this war?' And Moshe Dayan's answer was, 'They were all fighting for the preservation of the Third Temple.' Which is an amazing thing to say if you don't believe in the God of the Temple. And the people of Jerusalem didn't believe God then, and they certainly don't today. Why would they be interested in preserving the Third Temple?

And the answer is because it was a cultural center for the Jews then, and will be a cultural center for the Jews in the future. And so the atheist wants a temple just as the believer wants a temple, because it's a cultural center. And so to the Jews who were here at this time, the temple was for the believer a most important place, from God's perspective the most important place. But even for the non-believer, a very important place. It was the temple that he built that he burned first. Then he burned the king's house, and then he went and burned the houses of all the wealthy, of all the powerful in the city. Basically destroying it. Why? So that it couldn't be rebuilt.

Eric has been telling us about those false prophets in Babylon saying, 'It's okay, we're going to go back, everything's going to be fine.' Nebuchadnezzar says, 'There's not much point in going back. I've burned it all down. Who wants to go back to a burned city?' And in Ezra's day, they went back to rebuild the temple because it had been burned here. And there were 50,000 who said, 'I will go back.' And we've always marveled that there were so few. But praise the Lord, there were 50,000 who were prepared to go to a city that was burned down.

What was left? The ashes and the foundations of these great houses and all the life that was there. And in particular, the temple. And Ezra says, 'We're going back and we're going to rebuild the temple.' Hallelujah.

So how serious is the destruction of the Lord? We heard a rather amazing statistic today. Amazing fact. And it went something like this—and our time is gone, but I'll remind you that Rob Brennan talked about the man who did the Left Behind series. And he's basically saying, 'I've left behind the Left Behind series.' What a tragedy. What's happened? Many people of God have turned away from the proclamation of the judgment of God. Just like the false prophets that we were reminded of in Babylon said, 'You can go back, everything's going to be fine.' God says, 'No point in going back. I destroyed it.' Many people today have stopped preaching hell. Many people today have stopped preaching judgment. Many people today have stopped preaching against sin in favor of repentance. They've said, 'No, we won't preach that anymore.' And this 'left behind' man has left behind behind.

What does God say? God says, 'I'm going to fulfill all My prophecies.' And so it gets worse. He doesn't just tear down, burn down the buildings. We're going to get to the point where he carries away anything of value, so that there's nothing of value to go back to. Our time is gone. Thank you for your patience. This is a big subject, and you get it in Kings, and you get it in Chronicles, and you get it in Ezekiel, and you get it in Jeremiah, and Eric has reminded us, you get it in a lot of other prophecies as well. It's a big deal. And what was a big deal then will be repeated in the judgment that's coming in a day ahead. Praise the Lord for the rapture. Someone will close in prayer, please."

Closing Prayer

"We thank you, Lord, for your faithfulness to us, Lord. We thank you, Lord, that though we are unfaithful, you never desert us or leave us in limbo. You always come back to us and tell us to repent, and then you will take care of us again, Lord. Lord, thank you for your love. Thank you, Lord, that you always fulfill your prophecies. And, Lord, I have read recently that about a thousand prophecies that were made in the Bible, Lord, about half of them, 500, have been fulfilled. And that just shows that you are a faithful God and what you say is real and true. Thank you, Lord, you are the true God. Thank you, God, that you are the God who loves us and has made a future for us. Let us, Lord, be faithful to you and do what you told us to do, on and preach the gospel. Thank you, Lord, in Jesus' precious name. Amen."

"Amen."