

The Fall of Jerusalem and the Remnant of Judah

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References: **2 Kings 25**, 2 Kings 25:11-12; 2 Kings 25:13-17; 2 Kings 25:18-21; 2 Kings 25:22-26; Deuteronomy 28:1-2; Deuteronomy 28:15; Deuteronomy 28:67-68; 2 Chronicles 34:14-16; 2 Chronicles 34:18; Isaiah 10:5-8; Jeremiah 25:9; Jeremiah 26:11; Jeremiah 26:16-17; Jeremiah 26:24; Jeremiah 31:15; Jeremiah 39:8-14; Jeremiah 40:1; Jeremiah 40:2-3; Jeremiah 50:6-7; Jeremiah 50:11; Jeremiah 50:17-18; Jeremiah 50:29; Jeremiah 50:31; Matthew 2:16-18

Introduction

So again, welcome to all, and we're just going to carry on. We're getting close to the end of 2 Kings, and frankly, we've been close to the end of 2 Kings for a long time. We're moving very slowly at the end because lots of things are happening. So, 2 Kings chapter 25, and I'm going to start tonight in verse 11.

[2 Kings 25:11 NKJV] - ¹¹ Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive the rest of the people who remained in the city and the defectors who had deserted to the king of Babylon, with the rest of the multitude.

So, there were some—we're not sure how many, probably not a great number of people—that went to the king of Babylon and basically surrendered and said, "We'll go where you want us to go." He said, "We'll be going, we'll take you up to Babylon."

Now, you'll remember that that was the counsel of Jeremiah all down through the siege. He said, "If you go to Babylon, the Lord will bless you there. It'll be hard, but the Lord will bless you there and you'll be able to come back." He had words of positive encouragement for them to go, but most of the people refused to go. Zedekiah refused to go, and others refused to go. But these, it says—the phrase is in verse 11—"they fell away to the king of Babylon," and they basically just surrendered. You can understand why. The starvation and the other problems that they went through would have been very, very great.

I think they were happy to go, but they lost everything when they did go. I don't really understand what it's like to lose everything. A lot of people who came to Canada from

difficult circumstances, they basically left everything behind. They came with a suitcase. That's not very good.

I almost did that once. I had a job in Europe, and for about three months, I lived out of two suitcases. I'm amazed. I didn't really lack anything. You can put a lot of stuff in two suitcases, and the other thing is, you don't really need a lot of stuff, right? But they nevertheless didn't take things with them. They fled. They left behind their houses and everything.

All right. So that happened. But verse 12 says:

[2 Kings 25:12 NKJV] - ¹² But the captain of the guard left some of the poor of the land as vinedressers and farmers.

And we're going to get on to the fact that even the brass was taken to Babylon. They really left nothing of any value. And the big houses, the palaces, were all destroyed. The king's palace was destroyed. The temple was destroyed. But we're going to read all about the fact that the beautiful brass works were taken as well. They had great weight, but they were taken.

So what was left? And the answer is virtually nothing left other than the land itself. And the vinedressers and the husbandmen, the poor, were given the responsibility of bringing in the harvest from the vines and from the work of the husbandmen.

So the land of Israel is an interesting place. And Babylon—the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar—said, "There's nothing in that country of value. We'll take everything of value. We will leave nothing of value. But we will keep farming it because it's good farmland." Okay.

I've mentioned some of these things before, but I will review them for you. The exports of the nation of Israel, as you read it in Ezekiel—and the exports elsewhere as well—are always either farm produce or medical items or the truth of God. They didn't export machinery. They didn't export minerals. But they were an extremely profitable, farmland people. That's the way it was in the days of the history of Israel.

In prophecy in Israel, the Northern Kingdom is going to come down to take a spoil. And the spoil they're going to be taking is the prosperity of the land. There is an argument that could be made—I've never seen statistics, but in all probability, Israel is the most profitable and the most prosperous and the most fertile arable land in the world. And so, even in the future, when theoretically there should be all kinds of fruitfulness in the world, they're going to

come to Israel for the land. That's really what the enemies of the Jews want today. Iran and other countries basically have no name on the land of Israel called "Israel." They basically say they're squatters. They don't have any rights. And, of course, it's exactly the opposite. But they want the land.

Why do they want the land? Well, because today, if you go to Israel, it's absolutely amazing. They're bringing good crops out of the area of the Dead Sea. They transformed that land. But the marvelous truth is that the land is—and this is especially true in the prophecy of Ezekiel, chapter 36—the land will be prosperous for the Jews, but it will not be prosperous for others. So when the Arabs controlled the land during the Middle Ages, century after century, the land was not prosperous. It was not prosperous.

And you'll remember that in the 18th century, when the Zionists decided they wanted to have a homeland for the Jews, they sent some of their emissaries around the world to find a proper homeland for the Jews. Their logic was probably Israel would be the best place. So they sent them to Israel. And those sent back to Europe to the Zionists and said, "Don't think you can come to this land. It is a bad land. Malaria and other weaknesses, swamps and so on, are all through the Sharon Plain. The mountains are barren. And this land of Israel, where David reigned and so on, the historic land, is today absolutely uninhabited and could never support a Jewish population."

And so they started looking in South America. I think they saw some good land in Uganda and thought maybe they would go there. By the grace of God, they went to Israel, and what was a barren land in the days of the Palestinian occupation became again the most fruitful arable land in the world. It's amazing.

So here we are, and Nebuchadnezzar had enough sense to say, "There's some good farmland here and we don't want to abandon it. We'll leave some of the poor in the country to do some farming and give us some good food." And that's the only thing they left in the land, but it is amazing to me they did leave that.

The Spoils of the Temple

And then the next section is all about the remaining value in the metals. It says, verse 13:

[2 Kings 25:13-16 NKJV] - ¹³ The bronze pillars that were in the house of the LORD, and the carts and the bronze Sea that were in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans broke in pieces, and carried their bronze to Babylon. ¹⁴ They also took away the pots, the shovels, the trimmers, the spoons, and all the bronze utensils

with which the priests ministered. ¹⁵ The firepans and the basins, the things of solid gold and solid silver, the captain of the guard took away. ¹⁶ The two pillars, one Sea, and the carts, which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD, the bronze of all these articles was beyond measure.

[2 Kings 25:17 NKJV] - ¹⁷ The height of one pillar was eighteen cubits, and the capital on it was of bronze. The height of the capital was three cubits, and the network and pomegranates all around the capital were all of bronze. The second pillar was the same, with a network.

Which would bring it up to twenty feet high? I can't—my math isn't very good. Eighteen, twenty-one cubits would be a little more than thirty feet. And they took down these beautiful pillars that Solomon had made. They took down the laver, and they took the twelve oxen that were under the laver, and the brass of them was without weight. They took it all to Babylon.

So the question is, when the evil one moves into the work of God, what does he do? What does he want? And the answer is **everything**.

It's interesting, the Lord said to Joshua, and to Moses before him, and many after him, He said, "You go in, you destroy them all." Nebuchadnezzar came in and he destroyed it all. And that's really the way it is between the flesh and the Spirit, isn't it? The flesh will destroy the Spirit, and the Spirit will destroy the flesh. Don't give the flesh a foothold. He'll keep going till he gets everything. And he wants everything, **everything**. And the Spirit is exactly the same. The Spirit says, "I want everything." So don't give place to any of the flesh. Let the Spirit have everything. And the picture of that is what's going to happen to the land. It's either going to be all the Lord's and none of the enemy, or it's going to be all enemy and none of the Jew. I just find those thoughts interesting and hopefully helpful to us. So that's my thoughts down to the end of verse 17.

"I don't have anything much."

"You don't have much on that?"

"No, I made a couple of comments last week, but the devil, he's the destroyer. He really carries away all of the Lord's things."

The Slaying of the Leaders at Riblah

Yeah, let's go down to verse 18.

[2 Kings 25:18-21 NKJV] - ¹⁸ And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the second priest, and the three doorkeepers. ¹⁹ He also took out of the city an officer who had charge of the men of war, five men of the king's close associates who were found in the city, the chief recruiting officer of the army, who mustered the people of the land, and sixty men of the people of the land who were found in the city. ²⁰ So Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, took these and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. ²¹ Then the king of Babylon struck them and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was carried away captive from its own land.

A strange sort of a situation. There were—I'm not sure, I think I added them up—possibly seventy-two carried away up to the land of Riblah where Nebuchadnezzar could kill them all. Who were they? Well, they were, interestingly, they were the high priest and they were the second priest and then three keepers of the door. So they were the chief men of the temple, and they were all carried away and slain.

You can understand them carrying away the chief military men. But these were not chief military men. They were chief priests, chief servants in the temple. Why would they be carried away? Probably because Nebuchadnezzar knew that if you don't have the physical plant, but you have the people, you're still going to have a chance for people to return to the Lord.

What would happen if an earthquake were to come through and the 16th Avenue Gospel Chapel building were to be completely destroyed? What would happen if that happened on Friday of this coming week? What would we do? Well, we'd probably check the weather forecast. And we would meet at Carnarvon Park at 9:30 on Sunday morning, and we would remember the Lord. And we'd say, "It's too bad about the building. We kind of like the building. We hope it doesn't rain." But what are we going to do on Sunday? Answer: we're going to keep serving the Lord. You can take away the building, but you can't take away the Lord. And you can take away the building, but you can't take away the truth of God and the preachers of God.

What would happen if several of the preachers at 16th Avenue Gospel Chapel were taken away? What would happen the following Sunday morning? Well, the remainders would carry on and they'd keep preaching. And Mr. So-and-so would say, "Well, I've never really preached on this passage before, but somebody's got to preach on it. I'll preach on it."

And I think it was Gabe Nicholson who, many years ago, said, "You know, the structure of the church in the book of Acts is basically indestructible." You take away Paul, you take away Timothy, you take away the others, and what happens? They all carry on. And if they're scattered here, there, and everywhere, what do they do? They go on to keep on preaching. We can't destroy the church. The church is indestructible. God is going to continue to build it.

That's why we don't have formal leadership at 16th Avenue Gospel Chapel in the sense of having a full-time pastor and full-time helpers here—because we're not dependent on the individual. We're dependent on the Lord. And as He keeps on, as He allows men to be taken away, women to be taken away, He will raise up others.

So that's what he's doing here, I believe. I think Nebuchadnezzar says, "If we leave these priests in positions, they will, without the temple, they will continue to build the people. Therefore, we'll take the spiritual leadership and we'll kill them." And then there won't be that opportunity. But frankly, they didn't kill Daniel, and they didn't kill Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael. And there were a lot of others they didn't kill. The gospel keeps on going. Hallelujah.

So that's interesting. I'm not sure who these other sixty men of the people of the land were, who mustered the people of the land. They probably had some leadership potential, and they were taken, and they were killed by Nebuchadnezzar up in Riblah. So those thoughts then down to the end of verse 21.

The Subsequent History in Jeremiah

I'll make a few comments because Jeremiah continues actually the history and gives a few points that are quite interesting to make us, I think, understand a little more clearly just what happened when Nebuchadnezzar took away the people out of the land. So Jeremiah was extremely involved all the way through the final years of the history of Judah, and prophesied in the king's palace and other places. He was mainly centered in Jerusalem, so his voice was very important during those last few days before they were carried away. But Jeremiah records some interesting details.

And I think if we turn to the book of Jeremiah, chapter 39, we get the subsequent history of Nebuchadnezzar's treatment of Jeremiah. He got some special treatment. Jeremiah chapter 39, we read, just as a summary there, verse 8.

[Jeremiah 39:8-10 NKJV] - ⁸ And the Chaldeans burned the king's house and the houses of the people with fire, and broke down the walls of Jerusalem. ⁹ Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive to Babylon the remnant of the people who remained in the city and those who defected to him, with the rest of the people who remained. ¹⁰ But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left in the land of Judah the poor people, who had nothing, and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time.

So there was some—it seems like the administration under Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, was somewhat organized. In other words, the poor people of the land had been probably oppressed during Zedekiah's reign and the previous reign. Some of the poor people of the land actually got lands and fields of their own, which probably they didn't have before. So there was, it seems, an organized resettling of some of the people that were left in the land.

And then in verse 11, it says:

[Jeremiah 39:11-14 NKJV] - ¹¹ Now Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, saying, ¹² "Take him and look after him, and do him no harm; but do to him just as he says to you." ¹³ So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard sent Nebushasban, Rabsaris, Nergal-Sharezzer, Rabmag, and all the king of Babylon's chief officers; ¹⁴ then they sent someone to take Jeremiah from the court of the prison, and committed him to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, that he should take him home. So he dwelt among the people.

Meanwhile, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah while he was shut up in the prison court. And it says—oh, that's the portion where Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, who had pulled Jeremiah out of that miry pit, was given assurance by the Lord that he would be preserved as well.

Chapter 40:

[Jeremiah 40:1 NKJV] - The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD after Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he had

taken him bound in chains among all who were carried away captive from Jerusalem and Judah, who were carried away captive to Babylon.

Now it appears then that Ramah was a staging ground. It's about, apparently, not many miles from Jerusalem—about six miles or so from Jerusalem, ten kilometers. So rather, all these captives that they rounded up, the captives of the people they had taken, it sounds like they sorted them out there before the deportation. They took them to Ramah.

And it is quite interesting to me, at least, that Ramah appears in the New Testament as well. In chapter 39 and verse 11, Jeremiah 39, verse 11 says that Nebuchadnezzar had given charge specifically to his captain of his guard on the treatment of Jeremiah. Why that was, I guess it must have been reported to him that Jeremiah had tried to encourage the nation to surrender to him. And so, somehow, Nebuchadnezzar must have found out that Jeremiah was saying, "Surrender to Nebuchadnezzar." And the word got to Nebuchadnezzar, of course, somehow, and he was given instructions to the captain of his guard to treat him well.

Now, it's interesting, too, that Nebuchadnezzar was twice mentioned that he was the Lord's servant. Jeremiah 25 and verse 9:

[Jeremiah 25:9 NKJV] - 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.

"My servant." And there's another reference to him being called My servant. He didn't have the same calling that Cyrus had, but He nevertheless speaks of him. Cyrus was prophesied many years before Cyrus was even born, but Nebuchadnezzar not so. But it was revealed to Jeremiah that Nebuchadnezzar was God's servant to the chastisement of His people and the judgment of the nations surrounding Israel.

But just going back to Ramah, this place Ramah, I think it's chapter 31. Yes, chapter 31. Jeremiah had prophesied about the scene that would take place in Ramah, where the captives—some in chains, some that had come willingly—were sorted out there at that staging ground. Jerusalem was a war zone, apparently. It wasn't the place for a peaceful sorting out before they would actually go off to Babylon. But he says:

[Jeremiah 31:15 NKJV] - Thus says the LORD: "A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted for her children, Because they are no more."

There, maybe mothers were separated from their children to be carried away, some to be carried away. And who knows what there was, but it was a great time of separation for those exiles—some going to exile, some going under the sword. And so it was a great time of weeping and wailing at Ramah.

But then this portion of Scripture sounds familiar because we've been through this. We read about it in the New Testament, don't we, in the book of Matthew, where our Lord Jesus, when He was born—you remember Herod, when he learned that the wise men had tricked him and gone out another way, he then went to kill all the children in that countryside round about Bethlehem. Now Ramah was not that far away from Bethlehem. It was on the border of Benjamin, but not far from Bethlehem. So it was there. And if you go to Matthew in chapter 2, we read that:

[Matthew 2:16-18 NKJV] - ¹⁶ Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying:

¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah,
Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children,
Refusing to be comforted,
Because they are no more."

No doubt, just as Daniel was carried away—no doubt torn from his family—so some very promising young men and women perhaps were torn from their families to be exiled into the land of Babylon. There was weeping and mourning there, but that was only a partial fulfillment. Here we see the complete fulfillment. Then was finally fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah. These babes were taken from the arms of their mothers and slain there, and there was weeping throughout that whole countryside of Ramah, around Ramah. So it was for the exiles; it was a great time of sorrow, families torn apart and separated, pretty well many of

them forever, because the parents, of course, by the time the exiles would come home, would probably be gone the way of all men.

So Jeremiah—to continue with Jeremiah—he was treated well, though. He was taken in chains, probably by mistake, up to Ramah, and there the captain of the guard, under the directions of Nebuchadnezzar, released him from his chains. And the next few verses, in verse 2 of chapter 40, talk about some interesting observations:

[Jeremiah 40:2-3 NKJV] - ² And the captain of the guard took Jeremiah and said to him: "The LORD your God has pronounced this doom on this place. ³ Now the LORD has brought it, and has done just as He said. Because you people have sinned against the LORD, and not obeyed His voice, therefore this thing has come upon you.

The Babylonians knew their calling of God to be the punishers, the chastisers under God for the children of Israel. And this makes it very plain.

And also, in the next few verses—it's not our wish to go further in Jeremiah's history; you can read it for yourself—but Jeremiah is given the choice. "You can come with us to Babylon; we'll treat you well. Or you can stay here; we're going to set up a government under Gedaliah, and you can stay with him. Just take your pick. Either way, we'll give you resources to live on." And so he was under the care of the king of Babylon. So Jeremiah makes his decision to stay in the land with the people, and in the next couple of chapters we get that history completed.

The Pride and Judgment of Babylon

But then Babylon went beyond what they had been chosen by God to do. It was a wicked and idolatrous land. And even though under Nebuchadnezzar he got clear directions from God, he became a very proud man. Remember that? How in the book of Daniel you read how Nebuchadnezzar's heart was lifted up in pride. God had to bring him down low. But this was characteristic of the whole Babylonian system. They were proud, they were bloodthirsty, cruel, and they were full of—as we've been pointing out earlier—they took everything of value wherever they went. They scoured the land for precious metals and for the best artisans. And they took everything of value and left nothing behind except the poor of the land.

So because of their pride, and because they went beyond what God had asked them to do, God was going to bring judgment upon Babylon. And I wonder if we could look at just a few verses, just to sketch out what I'm saying about Babylon. Jeremiah 50, for example. The last few chapters of the book of Jeremiah speak of the destruction, the ultimate destruction of Babylon. But even though Nebuchadnezzar was called a servant of the Lord, and he was under direction from the Lord, and his work should have been limited, the Babylonians went beyond that, so God is going to bring them into judgment.

Chapter 50, then, verse 6:

[Jeremiah 50:6-7 NKJV] - ⁶ "My people have been lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray; They have turned them away on the mountains. They have gone from mountain to hill; They have forgotten their resting place. ⁷ All who found them have devoured them; And their adversaries said, 'We have not offended, Because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, The LORD, the hope of their fathers.'

There is almost a very compassionate view of the Lord toward His own people. "My people have been lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray." That's a picture of how the leaders of Judah had led the people astray, and they were like sheep without a shepherd. "They've turned them away on the mountains. They've gone from mountain to hill. They've forgotten their resting place." So we think of the little remnant and those in Judah; they were under great distress. They were abandoned by their own leaders and their so-called shepherds.

Then He says, "All who found them have devoured them." The Babylonians, when they found these poor sheep, they devoured them, and their adversaries said, "We haven't offended. We've been sent to destroy Israel, to chastise them." So they gave their cruelty justification. They said, "We're justified in being cruel to these people because God sent us to do it. And because they sinned, we've not offended, because they sinned against the Lord, the habitation of justice, the Lord, the hope of their fathers. So we're justified in being cruel to them."

And then verse 11. And again, Jeremiah is saying:

[Jeremiah 50:11 NKJV] - "Because you were glad, because you rejoiced, You destroyers of My heritage, Because you have grown fat like a heifer threshing grain, And you bellow like bulls,

So they were glad. They rejoiced. Instead of doing the work of the Lord as they had been called, they rejoiced in their cruelty.

Verses 17 and 18:

[Jeremiah 50:17-18 NKJV] - ¹⁷ "Israel is like scattered sheep; The lions have driven him away. First the king of Assyria devoured him; Now at last this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has broken his bones." ¹⁸ Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, As I have punished the king of Assyria.

It's like wild animals on the mountains. The sheep are scattered. And the prey—the lions or wolves—could easily go after these single sheep, run them down, and devour them. That was, he says, "First the king of Assyria devoured him. Now, at last, this Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, has broken his bones." They not only stripped the flesh off the poor sheep, but now they are breaking the bones, getting the marrow of them. And so, "Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land as I have punished the king of Assyria" for the same reason. The king of Assyria and the king of Babylon did the same thing: they went far beyond what God gave them leave to do.

Verse 29 of that same chapter:

[Jeremiah 50:29 NKJV] - "Call together the archers against Babylon. All you who bend the bow, encamp against it all around; Let none of them escape. Repay her according to her work; According to all she has done, do to her; For she has been proud against the LORD, Against the Holy One of Israel.

"Sorry."

"Yes."

Call together the archers against Babylon, all you who bend the bow, and camp against it all around. Let none of them escape. God is calling for judgment on Babylon. Repay her according to her work; according to all she has done, do to her. For she has been proud against the Lord, against the Holy One of Israel. And so the Medes and the Persians came down, and they did just what the Lord asked them to do.

He says, behold, verse 31:

[Jeremiah 50:31 NKJV] - "Behold, I am against you, O most haughty one!" says the Lord GOD of hosts; "For your day has come, The time that I will punish you.

And that pride of Babylon was exemplified in Nebuchadnezzar when he said, "Oh, this vast land is mine, it's by my power, my wealth." And so the Babylonians were very proud, but they were to be taken down by the Medes and the Persians.

Isaiah chapter 10. Isaiah is referencing here the judgment of Assyria for what they did to Israel. But as we saw in Jeremiah, it applies to Babylon as well. Verse 5:

[Isaiah 10:5-8 NKJV] - ⁵ "Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger And the staff in whose hand is My indignation. ⁶ I will send him against an ungodly nation, And against the people of My wrath I will give him charge, To seize the spoil, to take the prey, And to tread them down like the mire of the streets. ⁷ Yet he does not mean so, Nor does his heart think so; But it is in his heart to destroy, And cut off not a few nations. ⁸ For he says, 'Are not my princes altogether kings?'

Babylon was the rod of God's anger against the tribe of Judah, as the Assyrians were against the nation of Israel, the northern kingdom. "The staff in whose hand is my indignation, I'll send him against an ungodly nation and against the people of my wrath. I'll give him charge to seize the spoils, to take the prey, and to tread them down like mire of the streets. Yet he does not mean so, nor does his heart think so, but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off not a few nations. For he says, 'Are not my princes altogether kings?'" There's the pride of the Assyrian, and it matches the same pride of the Babylonians. And as the Lord said through Jeremiah, "As I did to the Assyrians, for the same reason I'll do to the Babylonians."

So there we have, I think, a little preview and sequel of what God is going to do to the Babylonians because of the way they treated the children of Judah, going far beyond what

He had asked them to do as His servant. He gave them, I think, good instructions, but they disbelieved God and went to their own evil desires, sacked the lands, and were cruel to the people. Ramah is a picture of that. They didn't need to do all that. They could have been much more compassionate, I think, having sacked the city itself and burnt the temple and so on. So those are just Jeremiah's subsequent history and the sequel that would happen to Babylon.

The Governorship of Gedaliah

So the question then is, you've got a few vinedressers and husbandmen, the poor of the people, they're still in the land of Israel. The vast majority have been taken, as Eric Peterson has said, out to Ramah and then up to Babylon. But what about the people that are left? Very few.

Verse 22 then of 2 Kings 25:

[2 Kings 25:22-26 NKJV] - ²² Then he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, governor over the people who remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left. ²³ Now when all the captains of the armies, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah--Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, Johanan the son of Careah, Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men. ²⁴ And Gedaliah took an oath before them and their men, and said to them, "Do not be afraid of the servants of the Chaldeans. Dwell in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you." ²⁵ But it happened in the seventh month that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal family, came with ten men and struck and killed Gedaliah, the Jews, as well as the Chaldeans who were with him at Mizpah. ²⁶ And all the people, small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose and went to Egypt; for they were afraid of the Chaldeans.

So Nebuchadnezzar said, "I'm not going to leave the land without some sort of administration," probably because he wanted to collect the fruit of the vine and the other agricultural benefits of the country. So he said, "There's a few left, but there's got to be some administration here." So Gedaliah was appointed governor.

Verse 23 says, when all the captains of the armies, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, there came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan, the son of Kareah, and Seraiah, the son of Tanhumeth, the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah, the son of a Maachathite, they and their men. So anyway, you'd think they could have called them by simpler names, but...

It says, when the captains of the armies, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor. Who were the captains of the armies? I'm not really sure who those men were. They probably were sort of small warlords in parts of the country scattered here and there, I don't know. But these captains of the armies, they heard about it, and so they came to Gedaliah—Ishmael and these other men with him. Gedaliah swore to them and to their men and said unto them, "Fear not to be the servants of the Chaldees. Dwell in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you."

And that's exactly what Jeremiah had been telling them over and over and over. Gedaliah was appointed by the king of Babylon and basically said, "Don't fight the king of Babylon. Serve him. Everything's going to be fine." That's what Zedekiah had said earlier, and after a few years he rebelled, and he lost his eyes and his family as a consequence. So anyway, here we are. Gedaliah says to these men, "Don't fight the king of Babylon. You serve him. It will be well with you." And frankly, it was well with Daniel and the others; they went up to Babylon and some of them prospered very well.

Verse 25 says: "But it came to pass in the seventh month that Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah, that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldeans that were with him at Mizpah." So the capital was not Jerusalem; the power was at Mizpah. And Gedaliah was defeated.

It says it came to pass in the seventh month. Probably he came to power in the third month; I think there's a verse earlier that suggests that that was the case. So he'd only been reigning—not reigning, but governing—for three or four months, and Ishmael came and conquered him.

And we've mentioned it many times before, but there are times when you don't really want to be a king because the life expectancy of someone in authority in those days was very, very, very, very small. So here you got this man, Ishmael. It's interesting. Ishmael was of the seed royal, so somehow he was part of the royal family. How he got the name Ishmael, I don't know. Ishmael was not a common name given to Jewish royalty, but he is called Ishmael. He behaved like Ishmael, and he slays Gedaliah. He basically says, "I'm taking over," just as Zedekiah had done prior to this.

Verse 26 says: "And all the people, both small and great, and the captains of the armies arose and came to Egypt; for they were afraid of the Chaldeans." So Ishmael came in, he killed Gedaliah, and then they were all afraid that the Chaldeans would come back, and rightly so, to fight them. And so they went down to Egypt.

So again, some thoughts on prophecy. How did they end up in Egypt? This is the end; we're at the end of the book of 2 Kings. How and why did they end up in Egypt? And so, if you go back to the days of Moses, turn to Deuteronomy chapter 28. Deuteronomy chapter 28. And Moses, in the book of Deuteronomy, gives marvelous prophecy, marvelous instruction, and prophecy.

So he says, among other things:

[Deuteronomy 28:1-2 NKJV] - ¹ "Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. ² And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God:

"And it shall come to pass," Moses says, after a long sermon to the Jewish people, "and it shall come to pass if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth." That's an amazing prophecy. "And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, and thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field." And he goes on for many verses talking about the blessings that will flow.

Verse 15:

[Deuteronomy 28:15 NKJV] - "But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:

So the blessings flow really from verse 3 down to verse 14. And now, in verse 15, the curses flow. And the curses flow and flow and flow and flow. And they keep on flowing. Curses upon the nation, Israel, that turns away from the Lord—they keep on going.

And we should maybe pick up verse 67:

[Deuteronomy 28:67-68 NKJV] - ⁶⁷ In the morning you shall say, "Oh, that it were evening!" And at evening you shall say, "Oh, that it were morning!" because of the fear which terrifies your heart, and because of the sight which your eyes see. ⁶⁸ "And the LORD will take you back to Egypt in ships, by the way of which I said to you, "You shall never see it again." And there you shall be offered for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy you."

In the morning shalt thou say, "Would God it were evening!" And in the evening thou shalt say, "Would God it were morning!" for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, yeah, for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see, and the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again in ships, by the way whereof I spoke unto thee, "Thou shalt see it no more again." And there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you.

So the question is, when did these curses that start—we're reading about them in verse 15, and we end up down in verse 68—when were these prophecies fulfilled? And the answer is: more and more and more as Israel turned away from the truth of God. And after a long time, where did it end up? They went down to Egypt.

So prophecy, then, is an interesting thing. Prophecies talk about something in the future, but there is not always a precise schedule associated with prophecies, so it's kind of hard to know precisely where in time in the future it's going to be fulfilled. And so Moses in Deuteronomy says it's going to get so bad that you're going to go back to Egypt. And Ishmael kills Gedaliah, and it's so bad, he takes what's remaining down to Egypt. We're not told precisely what will happen there, but Moses said, "When you get to Egypt, you'll be offered as slaves. The only problem is no one will buy you." That's pretty scary stuff.

So Israel had warning after warning after warning, all the days from Moses down to Gedaliah and Ishmael and Jeremiah, who went down with them. All those prophecies, and it just got worse and worse and worse. So sometimes you'll read prophecy and you say, "Well, it isn't that bad." And I often end up saying, "Hang on, Harold Summers. Just give it a little more time. It'll be that bad." That's where it ends up.

So back again to verse 25 of 2 Kings chapter 25. Verse 26 of chapter 25: "And all the people, both small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose and came to Egypt; for they were afraid of the Chaldeans." What a tragedy. A nation, a marvelous nation, a wonderful nation—God's pride and joy. And they said, "No, God."

That's what Israel is doing today. It's saying, "No, God." And I mentioned to you repeatedly over the last couple of weeks the fact that there will be a party in Sodom starting tomorrow. And that party will be a pride parade in Sodom that basically is saying, "We don't believe in God. We love the evils that Sodom was famous for, and we're going to have a party there." They built hotels; they built fairgrounds. The party is going to go day and night, round the clock, for four days—the biggest immoral party that Europe has ever had, starting tomorrow.

What's going to happen? God's going to punish them the same way as He did Sodom. And He's going to say to them one day, "Listen, do you think that I told you about Sodom because I'm foolish? Or do you think I told you about Sodom because I didn't believe it? And you shook your fist at Me and said, 'Sodom, we're going to relive Sodom.'" And God says, "You're right, I'm going to relive Sodom." And He's going to hit them. We don't know when, but God will fulfill His judgment upon what's happening in Israel today, same way as He did in the book of 2 Kings.

All right, that's sort of the background there. There are further details you can read in Jeremiah concerning the history of those Jews that went down to Egypt and rebelled after killing Gedaliah.

The Heritage of Shaphan

Yeah. Just a word on Gedaliah, or Gedaliah, or however you pronounce it, I'm not sure. We'll stick with Gedaliah. How's that? He was the son of Ahikam, verse 22, the son of Shaphan. Now, this was a godly family. Shaphan, you would recall, his name came up during Josiah's reign. He was the scribe. Remember Hilkiah the priest? He found the Book of the Law. The first thing he did is he took it to Shaphan, a man of God. That's in 2 Chronicles 34, verse 14.

[2 Chronicles 34:14-16 NKJV] - ¹⁴ Now when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD given by Moses. ¹⁵ Then Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan. ¹⁶ So Shaphan carried the book to the king, bringing the king word, saying, "All that was committed to your servants they are doing.

And then he says:

[2 Chronicles 34:18 NKJV] - Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king.

So there was Shaphan. He was a godly man and a great help during that time of restoration under Josiah. No doubt he was one of the helpers, a consistent helper. That whole family was, actually. His son, Ahikam, later on, was a very close friend, an influential man in Israel, a close friend of Jeremiah. We read in Jeremiah 26, where Jeremiah was threatened by the king, Jehoiakim. Jehoiakim had put one prophet to death—Uriah the prophet—and now the priest, verse 11 says:

[Jeremiah 26:11 NKJV] - And the priests and the prophets spoke to the princes and all the people, saying, "This man deserves to die! For he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your ears."

And then it says, verse 16:

[Jeremiah 26:16-17 NKJV] - ¹⁶ So the princes and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, "This man does not deserve to die. For he has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God." ¹⁷ Then certain of the elders of the land rose up and spoke to all the assembly of the people, saying:

It's interesting that the priests and the prophets wanted to kill Jeremiah—the very same so-called religious group that killed our Lord Jesus Christ. But some of the princes—I think of princes in Israel, we think of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea and the people, they were princes in Israel. They died. They were for our Lord.

And so they, verse 17, then certain of the elders of the land rose up and spoke to the great assembly of the people, and they gave them a couple of stories. Nevertheless, it says, verse 24:

[Jeremiah 26:24 NKJV] - Nevertheless the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, so that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death.

It sounds like he was a very influential man of all those—the elders, the princes, all the people. He was one of the most influential voices that spoke up and said the hand of Ahikam was with Jeremiah. And his influence restrained the killing of the prophet Jeremiah. And so his son is Gedaliah.

So we have this family that, from the time of Josiah right through to the destruction of Jerusalem and the carrying away of the people, the Lord had preserved these godly leaders in the land. Isn't it wonderful the way the Lord can preserve His people? And this is a tremendous example of it. Some, like Daniel, were carried away in captivity for a purpose. Ezekiel as well was carried away. Daniel was carried away in the first captivity, Ezekiel in the second, and Jeremiah witnessed during the third deportation. But he didn't go to Babylon; rather, he stayed in the land with the people. So it's just a lovely picture, I think, there of God's preserving such an influential and godly man.

First, Shaphan, in the time of Josiah, when this young king was trying to find his way, we have Hilkiah the priest guiding him. I think his own mother had a great influence on him, but also this Shaphan the scribe was very influential. And then his son Ahikam, raised up to strengthen the hand of this young prophet Jeremiah, who was facing death. But Ahikam puts himself out there just like Joseph of Arimathea does and Nicodemus in the time of our Lord, against the tide of wickedness. These voices stand out and have great influence on the nation, as well as the welfare of the people.

And then Gedaliah, he tried his best to rally the people, to shepherd them. The only problem was he put too much trust in man. And he had surrounding him there men who were, I don't think, to be trusted one way or another. And so eventually they killed Gedaliah. But I'll just point out this one family and their ongoing influence over quite a number of years that they were leaders and shepherds. And so they were the leaders of the nation of Judah, the southern kingdom.

Amen. Praise the Lord. There are still those who fear the Lord and give wise counsel in the work of God. All right. So the tragedy is then that Ishmael, probably claiming to be not just the son of advisors to the king, but of the royal blood himself, says, "I'll be king," and he kills Gedaliah. By the grace of God, the grace of God carries on.

All right. So we'll carry on next week with the last story. It almost seems like a contrast, but we'll get to the last few verses next week, Lord willing. And we haven't really decided where we'll go after this, so I won't make a prediction, but we'll try to make an announcement as to where we're going to go, hopefully tomorrow night. We might even tell you where we would go next so you can read ahead. Thank you for your patience thus far. So our time is gone. Maybe someone will just close in prayer and then we'll carry on. Praise the Lord for today, His goodness, and the Lord is going to be with us tomorrow as well. Hallelujah.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, we do just praise You for today and Your goodness to us. We thank You again for Your faithfulness to us and the enjoyment of You this morning. And even in the details again of who You brought and all the rest of it, we just praise You for the work that You're doing. And we praise You for the encouragement through the messages this morning and tonight.

Lord, we just pray that You'd be with each one of us through this week. We think of all those who will be traveling. Keep Your hand upon them; keep them safe. Take them safely and prepare them for all that You know that they will go through, and use it all to strengthen their walk with You and bring them back safely. We think of Amir's family. Again, Lord, we just pray Your hand of protection upon them in Iran, and we praise You for the increased communication, but so much limitations even in that. We just ask that You work a work that only You can do and save them. And yeah, we thank You.

We ask for each ministry that You do through this week. We ask for Your hand upon it, Your hand also of protection, but just do the great work that You have been doing, and just bring more and more, Lord. Let Your word go out and save souls.

We ask that You be with our youth, Lord, as we go through this week at school. You know what they go through, and I ask that You protect each one of them. We think again of Daisy with her fever, and we ask that You heal her and comfort her through it, and let her see You and be drawn closer to You through it. But be with all of our youth as they go through school. Protect them from all that they go through, and just bring them to You.

And each one of us, Lord—all that each one of us are going through and have on our hearts, and the things that we get anxious about or worry about—You know it all. So just be with each one of us, again, just use it to show Yourself in a deeper way to each one of us and bring us all closer to You through it all.

We thank You. We commit ourselves and this week into Your hands and praise You in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. Amen.