

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing

Part XLVII: God's Distinguishing The Temporarily Sinful From The Hardened Rebellious (Jeremiah 24:1-10)

I. Introduction

- A. Though divine judgment was predicted for the people of Judah, God's promised fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant in Genesis 12:1-3 required that those who repented and had a change of heart would be blessed.
- B. However, some in Judah were so hardened that they would never repent, so God made a distinction between the two groups, what Jeremiah 24:1-10 reveals and explains for our insight and edification (as follows):

II. God's Distinguishing The Temporarily Sinful From The Hardened Rebellious, Jeremiah 24:1-10.

- A. Jeremiah 24:1 explains that the prophetic vision of the two baskets of figs that God gave the prophet Jeremiah occurred after Judah's king Jeconiah had been taken captive by king Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon.
- B. This historical context is key to understanding the meaning of the vision for the following reasons:
 - 1. First, Jeconiah and his officials had willingly gone out from Jerusalem to surrender to Babylon, 2 Kings 24:8-12; Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1160. Jeconiah had realized the futility of humanly trying to fight the Babylonians, so he had gone out to surrender to Babylon's king, what Jeremiah later unsuccessfully tried to get king Zedekiah to do in faith that God would preserve him instead of either trying to fight the Babylonians or trying to flee from them only to be caught and mistreated by them, Jer. 38:14-23; 52:7-11.
 - 2. Second, the Jews who remained in Judah after Jeconiah and his officials had been taken to Babylon believed that such captives were removed from God's power, that the Promised Land belonged only to those who stayed behind, cf. Ezekiel 11:14-15; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Ez. 11:14-21. This view arose from the pagan belief that a deity, including Israel's God, was only a local deity with power limited to that locale, not that Israel's God was Lord of heaven and earth as revealed in Scripture! (Ibid.)
- C. Thus, one basket of figs illustrate (1) the "good" figs, the deportees to would repent and be blessed of God and the other basket (2) the "bad" figs, the spiritually hardened people who remained in Judah and would be judged by the Lord for their lack of faith in Him and for religious syncretism with paganism, Jer. 24:2-10:
 - 1. Jeremiah described the two baskets of figs in the vision, one basket with choice figs like the firstfruits that Scripture claimed were to be given to God (cf. Deuteronomy 18:3-5) and the other basket containing very bad figs that could not be eaten, Jeremiah 24:2-3.
 - 2. God explained that the basket of good figs was like the deportees to Babylon, that He would watch over them for their good to bring them back to the land of Israel and settle them there, for He would give them a heart to know the Lord, and thus repent and return to Him, Jer. 24:4-7. This promise will be ultimately fulfilled in the Messianic Kingdom of Christ, Ibid., Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1160.
 - 3. However, the basket of bad figs were the Hebrews who remained in Judah and refused to repent, Jer. 24:8. Like Zedekiah, their refusal to trust God in surrendering to Babylon when its army returned to lay siege of the city and their warped belief about God being Lord only of their area caused by a syncretism of Scripture with paganism would bring them judgment (cf. II, B, 1-2 above). Some of them would stay in the land, but some would go to Egypt in violation of Deuteronomy 17:16, and their apostasy would bring them banishment, shame, the sword, famine and disease until they were destroyed, Jeremiah 24:9-10.

Lesson: Like the good figs, God knew the deportees under king Jeconiah would repent so God could bless them, but like the bad figs, those who remained in Judah were so rebellious against trusting in God and so corrupt in their syncretism of Scripture with paganism, they would be destroyed. [Incidentally, Daniel and his three friends had already been deported under Jehoiakim's submission to Babylon (Ibid., Ryrie, p. 1045), so they were among the "good" figs who repented and devoted themselves to God, Daniel 1:8-21. There in Babylon, God watched over them for good, saving Daniel from the lion's den and his friends from the fiery furnace! God's angel in Daniel 12:13 said that in the resurrection, Daniel would stand in his lot in Israel, a fulfillment of Jeremiah 24:4-7!]

Application: (1) May we always submit to God's directives in His Word to repent of our sin lest we get so spiritually hardened that we become immune to repentance and must suffer severe discipline. (2) May we watch that we NOT end up like the people of Judah in Jeremiah's day, that we NOT (a) fail to trust God's Word so as to heed Him versus taking things into our own hands in futility as Zedekiah did and that we NOT (b) let our attention drift from Scripture to adopt extrabiblical views along with Scripture that only corrupt our beliefs and thus our actions!