

**JEREMIAH**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Jeremiah chapter 51 as we continue our study through the Word of God. This evening we will be finishing up Jeremiah and what a journey it has been. We have seen the warnings of God, the ignoring of those warnings by God's people and then the judgment of God upon them for not repenting of their sins and turning back to Him.

Remember in our last study we were looking at God's judgment being poured out upon Babylon. Yes God used the Babylonians as His instrument of judgment upon His people but they went too far and God was holding them accountable for that!

Before we begin this evening, let me share these words from Warren Wiersbe. He wrote, Jeremiah's prophecy about Babylon has both a near and a far fulfillment. The Medes and Persians captured Babylon in 539 (see Dan. 5), but they didn't destroy the city. Cyrus issued a decree that the Jews could return to their land (Ezra 1:1-4), which many of them did in three stages: (Ezra 1-6), 458 (Ezra 7-10) and 444 (book of Nehemiah).

It was Alexander the Great who finally destroyed Babylon in 330 and left it a heap of ruins. Since Babylon symbolizes the anti-God world system, however, the ultimate fulfillment is recorded in Revelation 17-18. Remember, the prophets often looked at "two horizons," one near and one far, as they spoke and wrote about the future.

- Warren Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Bible  
Commentary, Old Testament, p. 1260

Just keep that in mind as we go through Jeremiah chapter 51 this evening. With that as our background, let's begin reading in Jeremiah chapter 51 beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

## **JEREMIAH 51**

### **VERSES 1-5**

1. God illustrates the destruction of Babylon and its people like the winnowing of chaff from the wheat. And God is bringing judgment against the Babylonians for the way they treated His people, the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

We see this spoken of in Isaiah 47:5-7 where we read, **“Sit in silence, and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; for you shall no longer be called the Lady of Kingdoms. I was angry with My people; I have profaned My inheritance, and given them into your hand. You showed them no mercy; on the elderly you laid your yoke very heavily. And you said, ‘I shall be a lady forever,’ so that you did not take these things to heart, nor remember the latter end of them.”**

Yes God was using the Babylonians as instruments of judgment against His people for their sins and their refusal to turn from their sinful ways. The problem for the Babylonians is that they went too far, they enjoyed it too much, they were cruel and God was holding the Babylonians accountable for this. He was judging them for this and their idolatry, and their pride!

2. And as you look at verse 5 you can see that God has not forsaken His people, Israel or Judah. Nothing would turn God from His people. God was still for them and as much as the Babylonians were against them, that was not going to last and the Babylonians were not going to last, God was going to sift them like wheat!

Remember what the Lord said in Jeremiah 29:11, **“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.”** Yes judgment was coming but that judgment was to bring about good in their lives. How can that be?

Look at what Jeremiah 29:12-14 says, **“Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.”**

In other words, they will return to the Lord, they will seek Him and He will be found by them. God is not hiding Himself from them but He used this judgment as a chastening to draw them back and it worked!

3. Now listen to what the Lord tells His people to do as Babylon is taken down!

VERSE 6

1. God is calling for His people to flee Babylon as the Lord pours out His vengeance upon this nation. Now keep in mind that it was not the Medes and the Persians who destroyed Babylon, they just took over the city of Babylon and destroyed the Babylonians.

Thus, the Jews who were in captivity remained there and God is telling them to get out. Why? I think this is looking ahead to the Greeks and Alexander the Great who finally destroyed Babylon in 330 B. C. and left it a heap of ruins. And yes, during the reign of Cyrus some of the Jews did return home, but many more remained in Babylon!

2. Now if we move into a future time, at the end of the Tribulation Period, we are told in Revelation 18:4-8, **“And I heard another voice from heaven saying, ‘Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities. Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, “I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.” Therefore her plagues will come in one day - death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.”**

Once again we see God warn His people, the Jews to flee for He is going to destroy Commercial Babylon in one hour!

VERSES 7-8

1. Babylon was used by God to pour out His judgment upon not only the Southern Kingdom of Judah but also upon other nations. And she was not only the religious center of the world but also the commercial center. And when Babylon fell the people mourned over their loss.

2. I think this also parallels what is going to happen at the end of the Tribulation Period as I have already said. You see, there is another Babylon that is the commercial center of the world and it is spoken of in Revelation chapter 18 as well as a religious Babylon that will fall in Revelation 17.

Listen to what takes place in Revelation 18:9-19. We are told, **“The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’ And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble; and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men. The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet,**

**and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.’ Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, ‘What is like this great city?’ They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.’”**

#### VERSES 9-10

1. God says that He would have healed her, but they refused to listen, they refused to repent, and there was no healing for them now. They were proud, they saw no need for God and thus, they refused to be cleansed and in the end, they were judged for their sins.

People still do that today, they see no need for God or they reject the God of the Bible, and it is their pride and stubbornness to turn to the Savior, to turn to Jesus that will bring them into the judgment of God. You see, man is already condemned, that is not the issue. God sent His Son to pay in full the penalty for their sins, to remove that condemnation but if they refuse Jesus then they remain condemned before God and they will die in their sins. There is no healing because they rejected the healing just as Babylon did!

The words that the Lord spoke through Jeremiah will come to pass. We are told in Jeremiah 25:12-14, **“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. So I will bring on that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied concerning all the nations. (For many nations and great kings shall be served by them also; and I will repay them according to their deeds and according to the works of their own hands.)”**

That is what we see happening here, the judgment of Babylon for their sins and what God promised them is coming to pass; they did not heed the warning! And for the Jews, they will be going home once again!

#### VERSES 11-14

1. Not only did the Babylonians treat the Jews cruelly, but they destroyed and burned the Temple of God, took the treasures of the Temple and placed it with the treasures of other nations they captured, and now God was going to repay them by destroying them.
  
2. Jeremiah, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, names the Medes as the nation that would rise up and destroy Babylon. And according to Daniel 5:30-31 we are told, **“That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.”**

So under the command of Darius the Mede the city of Babylon fell. But Isaiah tells us in chapter 45 that their King, their leader would be Cyrus and he was Persian. In fact the Lord called Cyrus by name some 150 years before he was even born and spoke of how this army would enter the open gates of the city of Babylon. Was God wrong here?

Absolutely not! Cyrus was the leader of this Medo-Persian army; he is the one who had charge of the troops. And Darius ruled the kingdom that was formally known as Babylon. This area was given to him by Cyrus immediately after the fall of Babylon, and he continued to rule for some 14 years, (539-525 B. C.).

3. And like any nation that is trying to defy God or challenge God, they set watchman on the towers, they prepared for battle and as fortified as Babylon was, it fell in one night! You see, no matter how hard they may try, no matter how secure they may feel, Babylon is going to be destroyed and it was. I think that is a good lesson for man in general. You can't fight against God and win and there may be times that you think you have won, that is just the grace and mercy of God but in the end judgment will come!

#### VERSES 15-19

1. Notice how this starts out, by looking at God who created the heavens and the earth. Perspective is everything folk's. We think we are so strong, we think we are so smart, we think we can do whatever we want and no one is going to tell us what to do. But like it or not, agree with it or not, the reality of who God is, the creator of heaven and earth is before us and thus, we are nothing compared to Him!



Think about that for a minute because man is still doing that today. And make no mistake about it, any people or nation who thinks they can fight against God and win are just fools. And yet it continues on today.

2. What is interesting to me is the words that Jeremiah is speaking here against Babylon are almost identical to what he said to the Southern Kingdom of Judah in Jeremiah 10:10-16. Why is that? Because God's judgment does not change for this group or that group, God is consistent and man has a choice to make, to follow after God or reject Him!

3. Now here is the foolishness of their actions. Because they refuse to worship the true and living God they will worship the gods they make with their own hands! And in the end these idols, these things that man has placed his trust in won't be able to help them against the true and living God.

It is as Psalm 115:3-8 says, **“But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases. Their idols are silver and gold, The work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see; They have ears, but they do not hear; Noses they have, but they do not smell; They have hands, but they do not handle; Feet they have, but they do not walk; Nor do they mutter through their throat. Those who make them are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them.”**

Why are you worshipping a piece of wood or stone or metal instead of the true and living God? Because you can do as you please, you create gods in your own image to indulge in your own sinful ways and in the end, you will not prosper, you will not win because God will judge you for your sins and all the idols in the world will not be able to save you, only God can through Jesus Christ!

You see, the god's they were worshipping were just lies and there is no comparison to our God as Moses said in Deuteronomy 32:31, "**For their rock is not like our Rock. . .**"

#### VERSES 20-26

1. Keep in mind that God used Babylon as His instrument of destruction upon the Southern Kingdom of Judah but now, because of her sins, God is going to use the Medo-Persian Empire as a battle ax against Babylon!

And not only was it their pride, their arrogance, their sins that was bringing them down but it was also for the cruelty they showed upon the Southern Kingdom of Judah, God's people and the other nations that they captured.

2. Also, the Medo-Persian army did not destroy Babylon, they didn't break down its walls but they entered the city through its gates and cut down the people. But Alexander the Great did wipe out this city of Babylon from the hands of the Medo-Persians. He leveled it to the ground!

VERSES 27-32

1. As the Medo-Persian army surrounded Babylon, their King, Belshazzar threw a drunken party for his people in complete defiance to this army that had surrounded their city. They felt secure with the massive walls that protected them. And yet, we are told that during the reign of Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon the nation fell in one night! During this party destruction came upon them, there was no escape from the judgment of God.

In fact this party overflowed and it would seem that many of the soldiers were also drunk and the gates of the riverbed were not locked that night and thus, as the water of the Euphrates River was diverted upstream the Medo-Persian army walked right into the city and as the Babylonian soldiers saw what took place they lost the will to fight, they knew it was over for them and it was, in just one night Babylon fell!

VERSES 33-35

1. God is saying that Babylon's destruction will be complete just as the chaff is threshed from the wheat. And I see Jeremiah 51:34-35 speaking of God's people and they are coming before the Lord and laying out all the wickedness that was done upon them by the Babylonians. They are petitioning God to do unto the Babylonians as they had done to them, pay them back for their actions!

VERSES 36-40

1. God will fight for His people and what the Babylonians have sown against the Jews; they were now going to reap themselves as the Lord answers the prayers of His people! As they partied for weeks, drunk as skunks, God says He is bringing them down and they will sleep a perpetual sleep. That very night the King of Babylon saw the handwriting on the wall and he was killed by the Medo-Persian army because his life was weighed in the balances of God and he came up short!

That is true of every person today, as their life is weighed in the balances of God they are going to come up short and it doesn't matter if you are a little short or a lot short, you still can't measure up to God's standards and that is the problem. To make the balances equal you need Jesus because, as Paul said, "**For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**"

You see, our righteousness doesn't balance the scales of God's justice but the righteousness of Christ that is imputed into our lives by faith balances those scales out and we can enter into eternity with Him! That is a promise from God and you can take God's promises to the bank you might say, they are sure!

VERSES 41-44

1. As God destroys Babylon He also takes away their god's. Keep in mind that Bel is an honorary title for Marduk, the patron deity of Babylon. Not only will He take away their god's, the ones that they trusted in but those that have been taken captive by the Babylonians will be set free!

VERSES 45-48

1. This is the third time that God has warned His people to get out of Babylon. (See Jeremiah 50:8, 51:6). Why people want to remain in an area that God is going to judge is beyond me. Like Lot, when God was bringing judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah the angels had to drag Lot out of the city to remove him. And once again God is warning His people to flee Babylon, don't get caught in this judgment.

And I think this is looking towards Alexander the Great and his forces coming down upon Babylon. Cyrus let the Jews return home and the sad thing is that many refused to go, they were comfortable in Babylon!

2. Now like today there are many rumors that are out there and they scare people. God is warning His people not to listen to the rumors, don't be afraid of Babylon.

As Christians may we do the same! We tend to become fearful of ISIS or any terrorist group, money problems, the government, the threat over here, the threat over there, this conspiracy and that conspiracy. Remember what Isaiah 8:12 says, **“Do not say, ‘A conspiracy,’ Concerning all that this people call a conspiracy, Nor be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.”**

God is saying to us not to listen to the rumors, don't be afraid; don't worry about the conspiracies that are out there. Then what are we to do? Trust in Him. Look to Him to be the strength of your life, your strong tower you can run to for safety from the enemy. As Psalm 61:3 says, **“For You have been a shelter for me, a strong tower from the enemy.”** Perspective is everything!

3. I do find it interesting the god's people worship but in times of need, it times of difficulty, they can do nothing. And in verse 47 of Jeremiah chapter 51 we see that played out as God is saying that the idols, the god's that the Babylonians worshiped, they won't be able to help them.

4. One more point here. In verse 48 it says that the heavens will rejoice over the fall of Babylon. Why is that and did it happen? I do believe that this is looking into the future, during the Great Tribulation Period when Babylon, the Commercial Center of the world will fall, will be destroyed. Again in Revelation chapter 18 we see this played out and for the reason all heaven is rejoicing.

Beginning in verse 20 of Revelation chapter 18 we read **“Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!” Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, ‘Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore. The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore. The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth.’”**

Revelation 18:20-24.

I think this is referring to the end of the Tribulation Period when Babylon will be destroyed for good!

VERSES 49-51

1. Remember that when the city of Jerusalem was attacked the Babylonians entered the Temple of God and then they destroyed it. They took the sacred vessels, the implements used in the worship of God back to Babylon with them. And God is once again telling His people to get out of Babylon because judgment is coming.

Remember what God said to Abraham in Genesis 12:2-3, “**I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**” Babylon was finding that out and so have the many nations who have come against the Jewish people. May we as a nation heed the warning!

VERSES 52-58

1. Look at the pride of Babylon, their city was a mighty fortress. According to historical accounts, it took 200,000 men one year to build Babylon’s massive walls. But it didn’t matter how Babylon tried to fortify itself. Yes the walls of the city were some 80 feet thick, 350 feet high and they had watch towers every 100 feet extending another 100 feet into the air around this 15 square mile city. But in the end they will not be victorious; they will not be able to stop the judgment of God from coming upon them.

VERSES 59-64

1. We are told that in the fourth year of the reign of Zedekiah, the last King on the throne in the Southern Kingdom of Judah before their captivity, he was called to Babylon. The King of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar called his vassal Kings to Babylon in 594 B. C. to insure their loyalty to him and his kingdom.

If they refused the King had a good incentive program for them, **DEATH!** So I doubt if any rebelled at that time, although Zedekiah did revolt against Babylon which just brought the Babylonian army down upon them taking them away captive to Babylon in 586 B. C.

As they traveled to Babylon Zedekiah was accompanied by his quartermaster Seraiah, whom the prophet Jeremiah had entrusted with a scroll setting forth God's judgment against Babylon!

As they arrive in Babylon Seraiah reads these words, he then prays to God and takes this scroll, ties a rock to it, and casts it into the sea. What was that all about? What he did was an object lesson as it was symbolizing the destruction, the complete destruction upon this nation of Babylon!

It was a vivid object lesson of what was coming, and the people saw it, but I seriously doubt if they received what was spoken. I'm sure they were mad at what Seraiah said. They were a proud people, a strong people, and they felt their god's were superior to the God of Israel! How wrong they were. You see, God did warn them, they just refused to listen.

2. Now as we get into Jeremiah chapter 52 and the conclusion of this book, we see what Jeremiah says here parallel what was said in Jeremiah chapter 39. This is some added details on the fall of Jerusalem as we shall see.



**JEREMIAH 52****VERSES 1-3**

1. Jeremiah gives to us some information about Zedekiah, who was the last King in the Southern Kingdom of Judah prior to their captivity. And the information is not good, he was not a good King, he too was very wicked. We can read of some of the things that he did in II Chronicles 36:11-16 where we are told, **“Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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.”**

Yes the nation as a whole refused to listen to the Lord but as a leader, as the King he was responsible to lead the people accordingly and he didn't. He refused to listen to the prophets of God and this wickedness spread throughout the kingdom to the point where there was no remedy for them. Judgment was coming and they brought it on themselves!

VERSES 4-6

1. The Babylonians had taken the Southern Kingdom of Judah, except for a few cities and Jerusalem, which was a walled city. And the Babylonian army surrounded the city cutting off the food supply and then they waited until they surrendered or they starved to death. Either way they would be victorious, but of course it was also very cruel. But war is cruel and brutal.

But God warned them through the prophet Jeremiah not to fight against Babylon but to surrender and they refused to listen. And now the enemy has them surrounded and how can they fight in this weakened condition as they are starving to death? They can't and the city will be taken!

2. Now these siege walls or mounds were impressive. They were nothing more than earth and stones that were built up to the city wall. One writer explained what they did like this,

The ramp would be reinforced with wooden planks (Jer. 6:6), so it could support the siege machines, such as the battering rams, that were used for breaching the defenders' walls or sapping under the walls to gain entrance. The wooden beam of the battering ram, equipped with a metal point, was suspended from the war machine by thick ropes. The body of the battering ram, mobilized by four to six wheels, was enclosed to protect its operators from the defenders' missiles.

- Philip Graham Ryken, *Jeremiah and Lamentations*, pp. 722-723

VERSES 7-11

1. After some 2 years of coming against Judah and Jerusalem, the Babylonians broke down the walls of the city of Jerusalem. That was in July of 586 B. C.

2. According to Josephus regarding this invasion,

The battering ram took its last run at the walls. Darts from the enemy siege mounds arched into the midnight sky and struck their mark in flames. Famine had already claimed many lives inside the walls. Five Babylonian princes marched through the streets of Jerusalem, their faces illuminated by the flames of destruction.

- Flavius Josephus, as paraphrased in John Guest, Jeremiah, Lamentations, The Communicator's Commentary, Vol. 17, p. 277

3. As King Zedekiah sees all that has happened, he knows he is in trouble so he exists stage left! He is fleeing for his life. Remember, Jeremiah warned him that if he tried to fight against Babylon it would only bring about trouble. But if he surrendered to Babylon his life would be spared. He chose to fight and thus he is terrified of what is going to happen to him.

As Zedekiah tried to escape with his family he was caught in the area of the plains of Jericho and then he was brought to Riblah, which was located about 200 miles north of Jerusalem in the area of Syria. This city, Riblah, is still in existence today.

Now we aren't sure what Nebuchadnezzar was doing up in Riblah, but this is where Zedekiah was brought, along with his family as they were caught trying to escape from Jerusalem as the Babylonians broke through the walls of the city. And they did manage to make it as far as the plains of Jericho, but they could not outrun the Babylonian army.

As you can imagine, the King of Babylon was angry with Zedekiah's rebellion against him, so he makes him pay for it. The last thing he sees is the death of his sons, and then Nebuchadnezzar has his eyes put out. He then is taken away captive back to Babylon, where he dies.

VERSES 12-23

1. Now we see the destruction of Jerusalem, the Temple and the spoil of the victory that the Babylonians took away with them. And as you look at this it is very detailed and I think that is important. You see, as you go through this list of what was taken by the Babylonians, even down to the utensils that were used in the Temple, there is something that is valuable that is missing!

There is nothing mentioned of the Ark of the Covenant. Considering the gold used in this I think it would have been not only taken but it would have been inventoried by Jeremiah but he leaves it out and I think there is a good reason for that.

I personally believe the reason for that is the Ark was hidden before the Babylonians entered the city by Jeremiah. There are many secret tunnels under the Temple Mount, and one of the Rabbis in Jerusalem said that he personally saw the Ark in one of these chambers, which has now been sealed up by the Palestinians. I think Jeremiah; in knowing that the city was going to be overtaken hid the Ark under the Temple Mount.

Today the Orthodox Jews believe that when the Third Temple is built, the Ark will be discovered and placed in this Temple. Time will tell, but to me it is interesting to see that in this list there is no mention of the Ark! Do they need the Ark to start the sacrifices once again? No, they did not have it from the time when they returned from Babylon until and through the times of Jesus! So they don't need it but if they had it or they were building the Temple this would be an encouraging find for the Jews!

Let me share this article with you that is called, “The Temple and The Ark of the Covenant”, we are told,

On May 15, 1992, CBS broadcast a unique two-hour television special called *Ancient Secrets of the Bible*. It was the first positive examination of biblical history by a secular television network and won the highest ratings with forty million viewers. The location of the lost Ark of the Covenant was one of the topics. The narrator reported that Rabbi Getz claimed that they have discovered the Ark of the Covenant in the tunnels. However, my Israeli sources report that they were unable to examine the object. Although they could only see it with flashlights for a few minutes in a darkened tunnel from fifty feet away, Rabbi Getz and Rabbi Goren concluded they had found the Ark. Unfortunately the Arabs heard them and broke into the tunnel from the sub-structures beneath the Dome of the Rock. A terrible fight took place which prevented the rabbis from actually examining the object. Within hours the Arabs sealed the gate with concrete preventing Jewish archaeologists from exploring this tunnel area. At this point we cannot be certain if it was the Ark or another object.

- Grant R. Jeffrey, Prince of Darkness: Antichrist and the New World Order

Once again, time will tell but I have a feeling that it will be found and put into this rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem!

2. One more point before we move on. Why was the Ark missing during the time of Jesus? Keep in mind that the Ark represented the presence of God as God dwelt between the Cherubim above the Mercy Seat. And if you think about it, God was present among them in Jesus and thus, there was no need for the Ark, they had God in their very presence!

VERSES 24-30

1. So the city of Jerusalem is destroyed and the Temple burned to the ground. Russell Dilday gives us some insight into what transpired during the destruction of Jerusalem. He wrote, “The Talmud declares that when the Babylonians entered the temple, they held a two-day feast there to desecrate it; then, on the third day, they set fire to the building. The Talmud adds that the fire burned throughout that day and the next.”

Also, in regards to this person, Nebuzaradan, who is the captain of the guard, Russell Dilday once again makes these interesting comments. He wrote, “That title in Hebrew is literally, ‘the chief executioner’ or ‘the slaughterer.’ Methodically, he set about to demolish the beautiful city, burning the palace and the chief buildings, breaking down the walls, and wrecking the temple.” Not a pretty picture, nor is it intended to be!

2. Here we see the three sieges the Babylonians made upon the Southern Kingdom of Judah with the last one being the one where the city of Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed! Now it says that the total number taken into captivity was 4,600 Jews. In the first invasion there were 3,023, the second 832 and the third and final 745.

Now I don’t believe that was the total number of Jews in captivity, but it represents a series of deportations that the Babylonians made after their final push into the Southern Kingdom of Judah. These mentioned were the important people. The reason I say that is because we are told in II Kings 25:11-12, **“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. But the captain of the guard left some of the poor of the land as vinedressers and farmers.”**

So I think there were many more that were taken into captivity but they were the common people. Also, I don't think the women are listed because all these people were not important to the Babylonians and thus, they are not listed in these numbers!

#### VERSES 31-34

1. There are two views of what is happening here and I will let you decide for yourself which one is right. First of all, when Nebuchadnezzar went insane for those seven seasons, his son, Evil-Merodach was overseeing the kingdom. And he was wicked, so much so that when Nebuchadnezzar came back to his senses he placed his son in prison where he befriended Jehoiachin, one of the Kings from the Southern Kingdom of Judah, who was also in prison.

At the death of Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-Merodach became King and because of the relationship he had with Jehoiachin in prison, he released him and took care of him all the days of his life.

The other view is this. Remember Jehoiachin was a wicked King who had a blood curse placed upon him and his descendants. He was bad! It is possible that while in prison he repented and got right with God. And God in turn blessed him by putting him in favor with the King, eating at the Kings table for the rest of his life.

Think about it, we have a blood curse placed upon our life, sin. And God has released us from that bondage through His Son Jesus Christ. And we too will eat at the Kings table. The point being is that no one is so evil that the grace of God can't forgive them!

And it is there in Babylon that Jehoiachin died!

2. Let me close with these words about the book of Jeremiah from Matthew Henry. This is how he closed his commentary on Jeremiah. He wrote,

. . . no word of God shall fall to the ground, but the event will fully answer the prediction; and the unbelief of man shall not make God's threatenings, any more than his promises, of no effect. The justice and truth of God are here written in bloody characters, for the conviction or the confusion of all those that make a jest of his threatenings. Let them not be deceived, God is not mocked.

- H. L. Ellison, Lamentations," in  
The Expositor's Bible, Vol. 6, p. 702

Powerful words from Matthew Henry about a powerful book, Jeremiah! It is as Paul said in Romans 15:4, "**For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.**" May we heed the warnings, may we see the love of God for us and may we remember what the Lord said in Jeremiah 29:11, "**For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.**"