

## Babylonian Captivity of Jerusalem: Worst of All

I have often said that the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon – that lasted some 18 months – was the greatest man-made tragedy of human history. In it, Nebuchadnezzar was the instrument – or servant – of God to punish His Jewish people for all their abominations and their sinful idolatries. – (See, **Jer. 27:6**; to wit: *“And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, MY SERVANT.”*) – Also in the destruction of Jerusalem, Daniel says, God *“confirmed his words.”* See, **Dan. 9:12**; to wit: *“And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.” Dan. 9:12.*

“That is,” says Gill, *“He hath made good his threatenings of wrath and vengeance.”* Of the severity of this tragedy, Jeremiah lamented when he said, *“Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.” Lam. 1:12.* And again: *“The Lord hath done that which he had devised; he hath fulfilled his word that he had commanded in the days of old; he hath thrown down, and hath not pitied; and he hath caused thine enemy to rejoice over thee, he hath set up the horn of thine adversaries.” Lam. 2:17.* *“Behold, O Lord, and consider to whom thou hast done this. Shall the women eat their fruit, and children of a span long?” Lam. 2:20.*

***“The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people. The Lord hath accomplished his fury; he hath poured out his fierce anger, and hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the foundations thereof.” (Lam. 4:10,11)***

Additional evidence in support of my proposition that the destruction of Jerusalem was the worst tragedy in history, is the following from **Ezekiel 5:9**; to wit: *“And I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of all thine abominations.”* (Get it?, *“that which I HAVE NOT DONE, and that which I WILL NOT DO.”*) *“Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgment in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds. Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord God; Surely, because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish thee; neither shall mine eye spare, neither will I have any pity.” Ezek. 5:9-11.*

In expounding verse 10 of this passage, Gill says: *“‘Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee;’ Which was long ago – (about 1000 years ago, in fact) – threatened by the Lord, and prophesied of by Moses, – Lev. 26:29, Deut. 28:53, 55,57 – and was fulfilled at several times in the people of Israel, as at the siege of Samaria, 2 Kgs. 6:28,29, at the siege of Jerusalem by King Nebuchadnezzar, Lam. 4:10, and at the later siege of Jerusalem by Titus the*

*Great, as related by Josephus. For though these instances only show that mothers ate their children, yet no doubt the fathers took part with them; for if mothers, who are naturally more tender, could do this, it is much more reasonable to suppose that fathers did the same... though monstrously shocking."*

The dreadful history of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem is told in condensed form at **2 Kgs. 25**; to wit: *"And it came to pass in the ninth year of his (Zedekiah's) reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about. AND THE CITY WAS BESIEGED unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah"* – 18 months of pure terror – pure horror.

## **THROUGH THE ANGER OF THE LORD, ZEDEKIAH REBELLED**

Let us interrupt the narrative here to comment upon God's precious sovereignty in stirring up Nebuchadnezzar to invade Israel and besiege Jerusalem at this particular time with such a massive force. What triggered it? It was certainly a long time coming. Many prophets had warned of Jerusalem's destruction for many years. Why now? The answer is found in the last verse of **2 Kgs. 24, verse 20**. The Lord stirred up the idiot, smart-alecky king Zedekiah – the last king of Judah – to tweak Nebuchadnezzar's nose.

Read the verse. **2 Kgs. 24:20**; to wit: *"For through the anger of the Lord it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon."*

Now let us continue the narrative: *"And on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land. 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 Chaldees were against the city round about:) and the king went the way toward the plain. And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho; and all his army was scattered from him. So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him. And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon."* **2 Kgs. 25:1-7**.

There was strong personal enmity between these two kings, arising from Zedekiah's unfaithful dealings with Nebuchadnezzar, which had a lot to do with Nebuchadnezzar's extremely harsh treatment. One verse tells it all:

***"And he (Zedekiah) also rebelled against 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."* (2 Chron. 36:13)**

This enmity manifested itself in the words, *"and they gave judgment upon him (Zedekiah)."* The words could be rendered, "they spake judgments with him." Meaning, Nebuchadnezzar severely chided him, and upbraided him for the injury he had done him; the perfidy he had been guilty of in breaking his oath and covenant. So Josephus says, *"After he (Zedekiah) came to him, Nebuchadnezzar began to call him a wicked man and a covenant-breaker, unmindful of*

*promises he had made to preserve the country for him; he reproached him with ingratitude, in receiving the kingdom from him he had taken from Jehoiachim, and given to him, who had used his power against the giver; but, says he, the great God that hates thy manners has put thee into our hands."*

To this agrees the warning of Jeremiah, when he told Zedekiah what his fate would be for rebelling against God; to wit: *"And thou shalt not escape out of his hand, but shalt surely be taken, and delivered into his hand; and thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, and he shall speak with thee mouth to mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon."* Jer. 34:3.

## **IT IS A DREADFUL & FEARFUL THING TO DEPART FROM THE LIVING GOD**

In any event, Beloved, you see from these nuances how that a thousand things coalesced to bring it to pass that the destruction of Jerusalem was a thing of unequalled horror and monstrous barbarism. All to show mankind what a dreadful and fearful thing it is to depart from the Living God. Some 1000 years before the event, it began to be prophesied about in exquisite detail. Especially, see **Lev. 26 and Deut. 28**. And especially take notice of the reduction to cannibalism of the super-nice and refined element of society.

We hit a nerve a while back when we reminded this generation that they will eat their children, because they have departed from the Lord, and because they stubbornly refuse to repent. We hit a nerve because a responsive "Amen!" sounds in every human heart upon hearing that warning; to wit: *"And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me...Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. AND YE SHALL EAT THE FLESH OF YOUR SONS, AND THE FLESH OF YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL YE EAT."* Lev. 26:21,28,29.

Old Dr. Bob Jones used to say often that any sin that any sinner ever committed you could commit, under the right provocation. When once a person departs from God and takes up the worship of idols, there is no telling how far down into debauchery that person will go. In any case, there is a powerful reason the Lord our God said, that under certain conditions, *"Thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters."* Deut. 28:53.

Some of those conditions are said to be as follows; to wit: *"And thine enemy shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land; and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee; So that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave; So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat; because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates. The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter. And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which*

*she shall bear: for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates. If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD.” Dt. 28:52-58.*

To further demonstrate the utter and unprecedented devastation of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, consider this: The siege of Samaria by the Syrians (about 900 B.C.) was nothing compared to the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (about 600 B.C.).

And yet, they were eating their little babies and children in Samaria! Which shows the severity of the siege of Samaria; to wit: *“And it came to pass after this, that Benhadad king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria. And there was a great famine in Samaria; and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass’s head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of dove’s dung for five pieces of silver. And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king. And he said, If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress? And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow. So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son. And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes...Then he said, God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day.” 2 Kgs. 6:24-31.* (Typical to blame the prophet of God, however outrageous, even as his murderous father Ahab blamed Elijah [1 Kgs. 21:20]; and in words like his murderous mother Jezebel used in threatening Elijah [1 Kgs. 19:2]).

## **THE WARNING PROPHECY OF JEREMIAH**

Moreover, the great prophet Jeremiah – who was on the scene in the days of good king Josiah as well as evil kings Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, even unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive – warned that they would eat their children in Jerusalem; to wit:

***“Hear ye the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle...And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall straiten them.” (Jer. 19:3,9)***

And that same wonderful prophet, – after the fact, – lamented with tears as follows: *“The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people. The Lord hath accomplished his fury; he hath poured out his fierce anger, and hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the foundations thereof.” Lam. 4:10,11.* Amen.