

2 Kings 24

Written by K B Napier
Monday, 03 October 2016 10:31

It took over two centuries for Jehovah to finally act against Judah, and the time of His wrath was now very close. God had already judged both Judah and Israel for much of their combined histories. No doubt their tribes thought they could just carry on as usual, mistaking God's quietness for His complacency. God is never complacent, nor does He ever forget, or cover-over, sin. The Lord gave Israel and Judah opportunity after opportunity to repent, come away from idols, and to obey. But, whenever a good king died, his righteous rule was immediately changed back to idolatry and sin.

Most Christians are like this! They have a pang of conscience every so often, and then revert back to their inward and even outward sins. Some will say that I am being too harsh, or too general, but I am only talking about what I observe, and there are many indicators of how individual Christians ignore God in their hearts while acknowledging Him with their external activities. I should know, because I have done, and occasionally (rarely) still do, the same things. I am no better than those I write for, and those I teach! Therefore, every one of us must own our sins and repent. Time is now very short – obey God and live.

Verses 1-6

1.

In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him.

2.

And the LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the prophets.

3.

Surely at the commandment of the LORD came this upon Judah, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did;

4.

And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon.

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5.

Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

6.

So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead.

Nebuchadnezzar, then the ruler of Middle East nations, lived in Babylon. Nēbucadne'tsār means 'may Nebo protect the crown'; the king was, then, a pagan who worshipped Nabu/Nebo, the god of wisdom and writing. His name, traced back to Semitic roots, means 'to prophesy'. This god was introduced to the region by the Amorites 1500 years previously and was also worshipped by the Assyrians. The priests of Nebo sacrificed both animals and humans to him; they expected every virgin about to marry to sell her body to a stranger and give the money to the pagan temple. Thus, the end of Judah was brought about by the opposite kind of spirituality offered by Satan, as a kind of dismissal of God.

The Babylonian ruler captured Jerusalem and Judah's king was made subject to Babylon, as were many other kings. Jehoiakim lasted three years as a vassal king before rebelling, at very great cost. As part of His warnings, God led several vassal nations to attack Jehoiakim – the Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites, Ammonites, all ranged themselves against Jerusalem. The Chaldeans lived on the lower Euphrates; the Syrians lived north of old Israel; The Moabites were to the east of the Dead Sea; and the Ammonites were in Transjordan north of Moab.

Scripture is very clear about it – GOD sent these warring factions to begin the end of Judah. He does the same today, which is why I see the slaughter and invasion by Islam as a punishment from God upon His sinful people. Added to this are other vassals of Satan – environmentalists, atheists, evolutionists, homosexuals, and all who trouble believers. We are witnessing our own demise, and God sent it to us as a penalty. Yet, a penalty from God is also an urgent call to repent. Not to repent is to call on God to bind us in Satan's chains.

Thus, God "... sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the prophets." "Surely at the commandment of the LORD

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came this upon Judah, to remove them out of His sight."

It was a result of the sins of Manasseh, which included the same evils found amongst the heathen, such as the murder of innocents (v4). These murders by royal decree

"filled Jerusalem with innocent blood".

Yes, Islamic killings are of innocents, but today many more are killed in 'decent society' with millions of deliberate abortions, seen as a convenient way to get back your figure, or to reject responsibility. God watches these things and His hammer WILL fall soon. And those who die before it happens will face God on judgment day to answer for their awful crime of baby-murder.

You will note that even if those people of Judah repented, God would still punish them, because they committed evils that *"the LORD would not pardon"* (v4). How many modern Christians treat sin lightly, and say in their hearts that all they need do is repent and everything goes back to normal – not always!

This wicked king of Judah is further noted in Chronicles. When he died, his son, Jehoiachin ('Jehovah establishes'), reigned as the last-but-one king of Judah. His reign was very short – three months and 10 days in 600 BC. He surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar and was imprisoned in Babylon for 36 years.

Verses 7-9

1.

And the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt.

2.

Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem.

3.

And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done.

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For a while the Pharaohs did their best to rule the known world. But, with the rise of Nebuchadnezzar, Egypt receded in power and stopped invading lands to the north and east. Instead, Babylon took the land up to the Nile, and all other lands conquered by Egypt, including Arabia.

The new king of Judah was 18 when he began his ill-fated three-month reign, and we can say conclusively that because he was as evil as those before him, his sins became a crushing-stone on which God's punishment would grind Judah. Evil ALWAYS has a time of reckoning. Do not be fooled by a time lapse.

Verses 10-14

1.

At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged.

2.

And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it.

3.

And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign.

4.

And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said.

5.

And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land.

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Just after three months, the army of Babylon (could have been soldiers of any vassal states, e.g. "the servants") surrounded Jerusalem with a siege. By that time Nebuchadnezzar had reigned for eight years. Resistance did not last long – the king, his leaders and courtiers, his family, all surrendered to Babylonian forces. The general then took everything of value, gold, silver and bronze from the city, including vessels for the Temple gifted by Solomon, and valuables from the palace. Larger items were cut into smaller pieces, to be transported back to Babylon, thus desecrating the Temple of God. Yet, God had already warned Jerusalem that He had forsaken the Temple as well as the people. Nebuchadnezzar took all people of rank, over ten thousand of them, to Babylon as prisoners. The only people left in Judah were those who Babylon had no purpose for – the poor, old, and the unskilled.

Verses 15-20

1.

And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon.

2.

And all the men of might, even seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand, all that were strong and apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon.

3.

And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah.

4.

Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

5.

And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done.

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6.

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.

The Babylonian army took the king, his family, and all the high-ranking people of the realm, to Babylon. Daniel and others of high rank had already been taken there a few years earlier. They were accompanied by 7000 best fighting men, along with 1000 of the best craftsmen. Others, capable of fighting on behalf of Babylon, were with them. Nebuchadnezzar made Mattaniah ('gift of Jehovah'), a son of Josiah, king of Judah, changing his name to Zedekiah ('Jehovah is righteous'). Sadly, these names did not match the person, who, like so many others, did what was evil.

Zedekiah, 21 when he was made king, reigned in Jerusalem for eleven years, as a vassal king under Nebuchadnezzar. It is difficult to see what he was really king over, given that all the capable people and high-ranking men of court were gone, leaving a rag-tag disparate group of lower-working classes.

Eventually, even this vassal king rebelled against Babylon, though he had few who could fight on his behalf. Yet, this was all part of God's plan, to be rid of Judah completely. Zedekiah just made Babylon's final overthrow of Jerusalem easier. In our own day, it is vassal-believers of Satan and his advocates who make the demise of the whole church far easier, giving unbelievers the option to laugh us to scorn. Their righteousness is of their own making, bringing shame upon the Lord's Name.

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