

OCTOBER 13

Another exciting day of seeing Jeremiah in action and beginning the fourteenth book of the New Testament.

Jeremiah 22-23:20

Jeremiah 22

The kings after Josiah went like this: Josiah, Josiah's son Shallum, Josiah's son Jehoiakim, Jehoiakim's son Jehoiachin, Josiah's son Zedekiah.

This prophecy to the kings seems to be made toward the end of Jehoiakim's reign. When Josiah died, the people made his oldest son Shallum (Jehoahaz, 2 Kings 22:30) the king. Pharaoh Neco took Shallum prisoner and made his brother, Jehoiakim, king. After Jehoiakim, Coniah (also referred to as Jeconiah or Jehoiachin) was made king. Jehoiachin surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar, and Neb made another son of Josiah the king, Jehoiachin's uncle Zedekiah.

Anyway, Zedekiah is not in view here, so the timing seems to be during Jehoiakim's reign, looking back to Shallum and looking forward to Jehoiachin.

Vs. 1-4 If this word was spoken to Jehoiakim, it definitely fell on deaf ears. We'll see Jehoiakim's true character in a few chapters.

Vs. 5-9 God knew that they wouldn't obey. What is interesting is that even in God bringing judgment to the people and destruction to Jerusalem, it would be a testimony to the nations.

Vs. 10-12 It should have been a major shock to see Josiah's son Shallum taken away. Unlike King Manasseh who repented and was returned from prison, Shallum would never return. He was a warning.

Vs. 13-17 Rather than fearing and respecting God and taking to heart what happened to his brother Shallum, Jehoiakim lived the good life and was a rotten ruler.

Vs. 18-19 As a result, no one would be sad to see Jehoiakim die. I'll bet they didn't even say, "Ah, my donkey!"

Vs. 20-23 This is a cry to the house of David and the entire nation. Notice the mention of the *shepherds*. The *shepherds* (leaders) will be the focus of the next chapter.

Vs. 24-30 God is saying that the taking of Coniah was a sure thing. He was actually evil, but even if he had been like a ring on God's hand, he would have been sent away. Jehoiachin (Coniah) was only 18 or 19 when taken as a prisoner to Babylon. Oddly enough, 37 years after he was taken, Nebuchadnezzar's son, Evil-Merodach (I think Merodach translates into "Knievel," in Babylonian) freed Jehoiachin, as proof of the blessing God had spoken on those who would surrender to Nebuchadnezzar. (2 Kings 25:27)

One interesting note here is that God says that none of Jehoiachin's descendants would sit on the throne of David. Joseph, Mary's husband, was descended from David through Jehoiachin. That would have made Jesus disqualified to sit on David's throne, but Jesus was the *physical* son of Mary, who was descended from David through Nathan, Solomon's brother, none of whose sons became kings. God held to this curse on Jehoiachin. It is interesting that Jesus did not come through the line of Solomon. Solomon was an idol worshipper.

Jeremiah 23

Vs. 1-4 This is the promise of judgment on the past *shepherds* of Israel and a promise for the regathering of the people under good shepherds.

Vs. 5-8 The house of David will once again become good shepherds. In fact, the shepherd in view here is the Good Shepherd, Jesus Himself. That a *Branch* is referred to has to do with a stump being left of a tree, and a branch would come out of this "remnant" and become a tree. Although different words are used for branch, the word Nazareth means "branch." When people said, "Jesus of Nazareth" they were hearing "Jesus of Branch." God had put clues all over, for those who were perceptive enough to seek Him.

I think the days in view here are the Millennial Kingdom when Jesus rules over the world and the Jews will be regathered to Israel.

Vs. 9-10 This cry of Jeremiah is because of the false *prophets*, some of whom were priests and known by Jeremiah.

Vs. 11-15 In this judgment on the prophets and priests, there is a comparison between the false prophets of Samaria and Jerusalem. The main difference is that while the prophets in Samaria spoke in the name of Baal, the prophets in Jerusalem spoke lies in the name of the Lord.

Vs. 16-20 God will continually show these *prophets* are wrong by bringing disaster on the people. It is also interesting that Jesus strongly and repeatedly warned His disciples against false christos and false prophets. In the last days there will be lying signs, visions and good talking people. (Matt. 24:24)

With so much being said about the leaders leading the people away from the Lord, it is good to know that we are leading people to the Lord. Making disciples is never about us, it is about others growing deeply in the Word and growing to love and follow the Son. Disciples are not greater than their teacher. We need to have this depth in the Word and love for Jesus, so that we can imitate Him and those learning of Him can see it in us.

2 Thessalonians 1

This letter was probably written in Corinth immediately after Timothy returned from Thessalonica. The two big issues that seem to be present had to do with the Thessalonians holding up under persecution and there was a need for correction regarding some false teaching about the Lord's return.

Vs. 1-4 Their growth was evident in how they treated one another and how they stood firm in persecution and affliction. In their short time as a church, God had made them an example to other churches.

Vs. 5-6 In suffering, God tempers His people, proving their "worth;" that is, that they are really saved, and He deepens them in knowing Him. When those who mistreat believers see that persecution doesn't work, they see this as an omen of their coming judgment. I think Paul saw this during that time when he persecuted the church. Paul was convicted by the love and steadfastness of believers who would not deny Christ.

Vs. 7-10 At the judgment, there will be vindication and joy for those who have suffered, and there will be judgment for those who don't know God. It is interesting that as Paul mentioned this relief, he also mentioned the coming of the Lord and God's judgment on mankind. For some of the atrocities on this planet there will be no relief until we leave this planet. There will be no justice until people have a "face-to-face" with the Lord.

V. 9 Hell will be away from the presence or face of the Lord, and those who are in hell will have no sense of God's glory or might. Everyone alive has an internal sense of His eternal power and deity. We all enjoy God's work and presence. That will be removed for those who reject God.

V. 10 Jesus will be glorified IN his people who held on.

Vs. 11-12 Paul's prayer was that they would be strong Christians, in whom the power of Christ would be proven. As disciples we know we are to carry our cross, prepared for death, daily; but it is the Lord's choice to determine how our lives will bring glory to Him in the harvest. If it means being crushed for Christ to bring Him glory, then we praise God in the press.

What is interesting in these days of reading is that it is hard to find a day when the Lord is not pointing to the end of time and the fulfillment of redemption. Did you realize that? I think that's pretty cool. We are always being given the hope and perspective of what we are living for and that God will bring everything to a glorious ending and a new beginning.

Psalm 83

Reading Jeremiah, we understand that God does approve of our crying out for justice and for help from oppression.

Vs. 1-8 This long complaint may have come during the days of Hezekiah when the surrounding nations thought that the Assyrians would level Jerusalem. These nations would have been east of Jerusalem, across the Jordan; and they might have felt insulated from Assyria's threat. That this crying out is included in God's Word, and inspired by His Spirit, should tell us it is OK for us to cry out to Him too.

Vs. 9-12 This son of Asaph appeals to how God delivered Israel during the life of Gideon, as recorded in Judges 6-8. This goes to show that it is good to read the Bible and know the events that show God's deliverance and power.

Vs. 13-18 To me, vs. 16 and 18 are the most interesting verses. Even in calling on God to rebuke these nations, there is the thought that if God humbles them, they may seek Him. After seeking God comes the knowing of God, and in it all, God receives the glory.

Proverbs 25:11-14

All of these are good words and advice. Wisdom is using God's words here to guide the next things we do. Inherent in God mentioning these different people is His desire that we become like the positive examples and don't become the negative examples.