

## OCTOBER 26

### Jeremiah 49:23-50:46

Jeremiah 49:23-39

Vs. 23-27 This is God's judgment on Syria, represented by Damascus. Syria had plagued Israel and had played a role in Israel's demise.

Vs. 28-33 This is a judgment against the nomadic tribes descended from Ishmael. You often hear people say that the enemies of the Jews came from Ishmael, and they say that Israel's enemies came as the result of Abraham's relationship with Hagar. It is obvious that what Abe and Sarah decided with Hagar was a poor decision, but Israel had plenty of enemies without these guys. The people who became the Babylonians (Iraq) and the Persians (Iran) were there long before. The enmity is really a spiritual thing and goes back to the garden and God's working with Abraham, a man who came from what today would be Iraq.

Vs. 34-39 Elam is what was to become the Persian Empire. Today it is Iran.

It is hard to say when this happened, or whether it has happened yet. It certainly didn't happen with Babylon rising in power. Nebuchadnezzar married a Persian princess and made the hanging gardens of Babylon for her. There were good relations between Babylon and Persia. Read Daniel. When Persia took over Babylon it was basically bloodless and Darius the Mede ruled in the city of Babylon as the co-ruler of the Persian Empire. Persia certainly hasn't been an empire since Alexander defeated them, but Alexander didn't destroy much either. Note that God will set up His throne there. That would mean judgment. Also, in the latter days, God will restore them. That is restoration during the Millennial Kingdom. This has led people to believe that this destruction will take place during the Tribulation.

Jeremiah 50

Vs. 1-3 Generally speaking, this long declaration of judgment on Babylon hasn't been fulfilled yet, in the terms described here. This has also led people to believe that the total fulfillment of this will not happen until the Tribulation and the Millennial Kingdom. There is a lot written about Babylon in Revelation that sounds similar to some of what is said here.

Vs. 4-5 Notice that this is definitely talking about the Millennial Kingdom.

Vs. 6-7 God's judgment is on the nations for not showing compassion to Israel, even though they knew Israel belonged to Him and were being punished by Him. Actually Egypt, Babylon, and Persia hosted Israel and will receive some blessing for that in the Millennial Kingdom.

Vs. 8-10 This is the declaration of punishment against Babylon.

Vs. 11-16 Verse 13 hasn't fully happened yet, so many people think this is pointing to the time of the Tribulation and that the Babylon mentioned in the book of Revelation might be the real city of Babylon.

Vs. 19-20 Again, this is millennial blessing. Because of the punishment mentioned just before this promise of blessing, that punishment would just precede the fulfilling of the promise.

Vs. 21-46 This description is much larger than what took place when Persia defeated Babylon. That was almost a friendly takeover. What is said in these verses is still looking for a future fulfillment.

A couple of thoughts:

Although God humbled Nebuchadnezzar, the kings after him did not respect God. Chapter 5 of Daniel shows a lot of disregard for God and what He had done. When Persia took over, it was through the events of Daniel 6 that Cyrus sent the Jews back to Jerusalem. God created a new

respect for His name and a sense of fear regarding forcing the Jews to worship anyone but Yahweh.

It could be that in the time of the Tribulation, both Iran and Iraq play a larger role in world affairs and as a result are put down by the antichrist. In order for the antichrist to make a world-recognized peace treaty with Israel, certain hostile nations, especially Islamic and anti-Semitic nations, will either change their attitude or be put down. With Iran tinkering around with making a nuclear weapon, you wonder how all of that history will play out.

In the meantime, we need to keep focused on the harvest before us. Our task is following our Savior into the harvest He died to redeem, making disciples, who make disciples. We don't need to be consumed with the events that are slowly coming to the horizon. As to what is going to happen and when it's going to happen, remember what Jesus said to the disciples in Acts 1:7-8, *He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

### **Titus 1**

Vs. 1-3 To my knowledge, this is the longest introduction of any of Paul's letters. Notice how much "gospel" Paul puts in here. It sets the tone of the letter and shows Titus what kind of foundation needs to be laid in this church.

V. 4 Apparently, Paul led Titus to Christ.

Vs. 5-9 Paul and Titus had traveled together and Paul left Titus in Crete. This is all after the events recorded in Acts. Notice that Paul gave Titus apostolic authority. Titus was to appoint elders. There was no congregational voting here.

V. 9 Notice that the elders had the authority to protect the teaching of the church.

Vs. 10-16 Once again, there was pressure for the Gentile Christians to adopt customs and teaching from the Jewish law. This new church in Crete needed to have these false teachers strongly rebuked, and Titus was the man. In contrast, Paul never told Timothy to rebuke anyone in Ephesus, probably because they had a better core of leaders with whom Timothy could work.

In order for this church to reach its harvest, it had to be unified around Jesus and His mission, and therefore the need for order and correct teaching. That's the same with us. If the church is not bearing fruit for the Lord in the harvest, making disciples, who make disciples, we are doing something wrong and are focused on the wrong stuff. Sometimes before we become fruitful, there needs to be correction, in our hearts and in the group.

### **Psalms 97-98**

I appreciate more and more that there is a "price" to pay to be able to sing these songs from the heart. In Psalm 98 it mentions *a new song*. From Psalm 40 you see that it is the Lord who puts that new song in our hearts. Only He can do it, and I think it gets there by Him proving us in the harvest, following Christ.

Psalm 97

Vs. 1-5 The Lord reigns and even the creation obeys and bows before Him. What chance does puny man have before Him?

Vs. 6-7 This is just like Romans 1:18-22. How can we disregard the Creator and worship images and creatures and stuff?

Vs. 8-9 Zion rejoices because Israel's only hope is the Creator, and He will take His seat in Zion and rule the earth. Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He. *All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* (John 1:3)

Vs. 10-12 Love, not slavish obedience, has always been the key to knowing God and knowing His joy and blessing.

Psalm 98

Vs. 1-3 That *new song* begins with salvation, and we learn new verses of that song as we follow Christ in the harvest, experiencing grace after grace, deliverance after deliverance, seeing new spiritual life come into existence, learning how deep and wonderful God is. But, we can never forget our salvation. Notice that v. 3 is in the past tense. That hasn't happened yet, but it will.

Vs. 4-6 The celebration of the saved should be with all their heart and passion and skill.

Vs. 7-9 The celebration of the creation will join in to the song as the King approaches.

**Proverbs 26:13-16**

We have either met this guy, or we've been this guy in some area of our lives. God is certainly for rest, but He is not for this kind of behavior.