

# **Exposition of Jeremiah - Lesson 52**

## ***“A Lack of Faith In The Word Results in Discipline”***

**By:**

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**Applicational Text: Hebrews 4:2** *For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them; but the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.*

**Expositional Text: Jeremiah 52:24-27** <sup>24</sup> *And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door: <sup>25</sup> He took also out of the city an eunuch, which had the charge of the men of war; and seven men of them that were near the king's person, which were found in the city; and the principal scribe of the host, who mustered the people of the land; and threescore men of the people of the land, that were found in the midst of the city. <sup>26</sup> So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard took them, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah. <sup>27</sup> And the king of Babylon smote them, and put them to death in Riblah in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was carried away captive out of his own land.*

### **Introduction:**

We come to the last chapter of the Book of Jeremiah in which our stated purpose has been that we might learn from the failure of others in order to avoid the pain, loss, and suffering of “Divine Discipline.”

However, as we have observed Israel of old did not profit through the long ordeal of discipline in which there were three primary deportations to Babylon under three kings of Judah: Jehoiakim, Jeconiah also known as Jehoichin, and Zedekiah.

You could separate the wayward Children of Israel into two basic categories: rebellious and indifferent. Some of them were defiant and openly rebellious. They knew God but glorified Him not as God. They refused to acknowledge the Lord as God and openly embraced immorality and idolatry. Then there were the indifferent, those who lacked conviction. Through all those invasions and deportations the prophet Jeremiah was there calling the rebellious to repentance and calling the repentant to commitment. Repentance is an experience; commitment is a lifestyle.

Whether we are rebellious or indifferent, what we should be looking for is a lifestyle. Yes, it begins with repentance but for change to be successful, commitment is required. The Children of Israel had knowledge and stages of repentance but lacked commitment and went into exile.

This Book closes with a brief appendix: The Reign of Zedekiah (1-3), The Destruction of the Temple (12-23), The Deportation of the People (24-30), and Grace to a Fallen King (31-34). Yes! The Book closes with grace, it begins with judgment and concludes with grace.

## I. Rebellion Instead of Surrender:

As we close out this study of Jeremiah, we come to chapter fifty-two where we have a brief summation of the final conquest of Judah by the Babylonians. God's instruction to the Children of Israel was that He was going to discipline them for their lack of obedience. He told them to simply surrender to that discipline, and it would be turned to blessing, but most of them refused. Therefore they missed the blessing and experienced the consequences of being devastated by the Babylonians. Their conquest occurred in three major invasions with three major groups taken into captivity over a period of time.

Our text begins with King Zedekiah who had been placed on the throne of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar. Zedekiah is said to be the son of Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. Her father is not the prophet Jeremiah, but another man named Jeremiah who was from Libnah.

Zedekiah reigned eleven years under that arrangement but then rebelled against the King of Babylon. Our text says...

**Jeremiah 52:1-11** *<sup>1</sup>Zedekiah was one and twenty 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. <sup>2</sup>And he did that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. <sup>3</sup>For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, till he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. <sup>4</sup>And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it, and built forts against it round about. <sup>5</sup>So the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. <sup>6</sup>And in the fourth month, in the ninth day of the month, the famine was sore in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land. <sup>7</sup>Then the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled, and went forth out of the city by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king's garden; (now the Chaldeans were by the city round about:) and they went by the way of the plain. <sup>8</sup>But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho; and all his army was scattered from him. <sup>9</sup>Then they took the king, and carried him up unto the king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath; where he gave judgment upon him. <sup>10</sup>And the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes: he slew also all the princes of Judah in Riblah. <sup>11</sup>Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death.*

God had revealed his plan of discipline to Zedekiah, but he would not follow that plan. He could have had a comfortable life by surrendering to God's discipline, and serving under Nebuchadnezzar, but his humanity got in the way. We too often muff our opportunities for spiritual growth during a period of discipline by rebelling instead of surrendering to His revealed will. Zedekiah rebelled against the Babylonian conquerors and attempted to form an alliance with other kings. This resulted in Nebuchadnezzar bringing his troops back to Jerusalem with a determination to put down the rebellion.

The city was under siege by the Babylonians for eighteen months and famine spread throughout the land. When the Babylonians were finally successful in breaking down the wall and invading the city, Zedekiah and his troops tried to escape through the king's garden but were soon overtaken by the Babylonians and taken to Riblah where the Babylonians had set up headquarters. The Babylonians killed Zedekiah's sons and then they put Zedekiah's eyes out and took him to Babylon where he remained in prison until he died.

## II. The Destruction of The Temple:

King Solomon, the son of David and Bathsheba, had built a magnificent temple that was designated as the dwelling place of God. But, the Children of Israel had defiled it, even setting up idols in it and conducting worship of false gods in it. Things had become so bad that God moved out of it. Ezekiel, a prophet along with Jeremiah during the exile, tells us about the glory of God departing the temple because of the idolatry and immorality that had infiltrated it. (Ezekiel 10). Having withdrawn His presence from the Temple, God allows it to be destroyed, listen to Jeremiah describe its destruction...

**Jeremiah 52:12-23** <sup>12</sup> *Now in the fifth month, in the tenth day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, which served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem, <sup>13</sup> And burned the house of the LORD, and the king's house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the great men, burned he with fire: <sup>14</sup> And all the army of the Chaldeans, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down all the walls of Jerusalem round about. <sup>15</sup> Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive certain of the poor of the people, and the residue of the people that remained in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the multitude. <sup>16</sup> But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left certain of the poor of the land for vinedressers and for husbandmen. <sup>17</sup> Also the pillars of brass that were in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brasen sea that was in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans brake, and carried all the brass of them to Babylon. <sup>18</sup> The caldrons also, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the bowls, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away. <sup>19</sup> And the basins, and the firepans, and the bowls, and the caldrons, and the candlesticks, and the spoons, and the cups; that which was of gold in gold, and that which was of silver in silver, took the captain of the guard away. <sup>20</sup> The two pillars, one sea, and twelve brasen bulls that were under the bases, which king Solomon had made in the house of the LORD: the brass of all these vessels was without weight. <sup>21</sup> And concerning the pillars, the height of one pillar was eighteen cubits; and a*

*fil-let of twelve cubits did compass it; and the thickness thereof was four fingers: it was hollow.<sup>22</sup> And a chap-i-ter of brass was upon it; and the height of one chap-i-ter was five cubits, with network and pomegranates upon the chapters round about, all of brass. The second pillar also and the pomegranates were like unto these.<sup>23</sup> And there were ninety and six pomegranates on a side; and all the pomegranates upon the network were an hundred round about.*

As the Children of Israel are marched off into exile, God's presence vacates the temple and the Babylonians and Chaldeans ransack the temple, carrying back to Babylon those things of value as well as all the implements that were used in the ritual of the law. You may marvel at God allowing His house to be plundered, but we must remember that the Israelites had already profaned it by bringing idolatry into the temple.

It is worthy of note that God said that all the silver and gold belong to Him (Haggai 2:8). He can give the custody of it to whoever He wills. God's ownership of the vessels in the temple will be remembered when the Babylonians attempted to use them for party vessels in Daniel chapter five. Having desecrated the vessels from the temple in one of their wild orgies, the Babylonians and Chaldeans observe as God, with the fingers of a man's hand, writes on the wall *"Mene Mene Tekel Upharsin which is interpreted "God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it, Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."*

However, the glory of the Lord moved out of the temple, and it was looted by the Babylonians. But according to Ezekiel God does not depart without making a promise to eventually return to His house (Ezekiel 43).

Today, during the church Age, our bodies as believers are described as the Temple of God (I Corinthians 6:19-20), and although He has promised never to leave us (Hebrews 13:5). He must get mighty uncomfortable living in us. We go where He is uncomfortable to go and do with our bodies that which not only desecrates the temple but makes Him uncomfortable residing there.

### **III. The Deportation of The People:**

In this passage Jeremiah documents for us the deportation of God's people into Babylon as He invokes the fifth cycle of discipline. In Leviticus chapter 26 the Lord gave the Children of Israel warnings concerning their departure from the conditions He had established for them in order for them to continue to occupy the Promised Land. They had repeatedly ignored the previous degrees of discipline and now, because of their disobedience, they were being removed from the land. For four hundred and ninety years they had ignored His command to observe the Sabbatical Year. Now, they had owed God seventy sabbatical years, and He was collecting. They would live in captivity for seventy years and the land would have its rest.

**Jeremiah 52:24-30** <sup>24</sup> *And the captain of the guard took Se-raiah the chief priest, and Zeph-a-niah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door: <sup>25</sup> He took also out of the city an eunuch, which had the charge of the men of war; and seven men of them that were near the king's person, which were found in the city; and the principal scribe of the host, who mustered the people of the land; and threescore men of the people of the land, that were found in the midst of the city. <sup>26</sup> So Neb-u-zar-adan the captain of the guard took them, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Rib-lah. <sup>27</sup> And the king of Babylon smote them, and put them to death in Rib-lah in the land of Ha-math. Thus Judah was carried away captive out of his own land. <sup>28</sup> This is the people whom Nebuchadrezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year three thousand Jews and three and twenty: <sup>29</sup> In the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar he carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred thirty and two persons: <sup>30</sup> In the three and twentieth year of Nebuchadrezzar Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Jews seven hundred forty and five persons: all the persons were four thousand and six hundred.*

Most of those going into exile would never return, but there would be a new generation that would once again be offered the intimacy of a relationship with God and the opportunity to live in a land of milk and honey. Hopefully, that new generation will understand the principles of divine discipline. Yet, more importantly, is the hope that we will learn from their pain, loss, and suffering to walk according to His instruction and avoid our own personal discipline.

As we stated in our introduction, the Children of Israel's exile into captivity was carried out in three major periods of time. The judgment of God was revealed by Jeremiah to be for seventy years. It is fascinating to observe that their return to the land after the exile also occurred in three periods of time each corresponding to the prescribed seventy years of captivity.

#### **IV. A Lesson of Grace in Closing:**

In this conclusion of the Book of Jeremiah, the writer includes an interesting note:

**Jeremiah 52:31-34** <sup>31</sup> *And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, in the five and twentieth day of the month, that Evil-me-ro-dach king of Babylon in the first year of his reign lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah, and brought him forth out of prison. <sup>32</sup> And spake kindly unto him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon, <sup>33</sup> And changed his prison garments: and he did continually eat bread before him all the days of his life. <sup>34</sup> And for his diet, there was a continual diet given him of the king of Babylon, every day a portion until the day of his death, all the days of his life.*

Evilmerodach was a son of Nebuchadnezzar. He became King of Babylon upon the death of Nebuchadnezzar and takes Jehoiachin out of prison and seats him at the king's table and elevates him above the seats of the other captive kings that were in Babylon.

Jehoiachin also known as Jeconiah or Coniah, was the son of Jehoiakim, the grandson of King Josiah. He reigned only three months and eleven days before being taken by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon. The Bible says he did evil in the sight of the Lord and was cut out of the lineage of the Messiah, necessitating the physical lineage of David to go through Nathan to Mary (Christ's genealogy in Luke), while the promised line of succession through Solomon is fulfilled in Joseph (Christ's genealogy in Matthew). Although Joseph was not the biological father of Jesus, his acceptance of Jesus as his son gave Jesus the legal right of succession through Solomon.

We do not know much about Evilmerodach, as this is the only political act recorded of this king. There is an ancient cuneiform tablet that tells the story of one of Nebuchadnezzar's sons being placed in prison and being befriended by a fellow prisoner who may have been Jehoiachin. Due to the spelling of names it is difficult to know for certain, but indication is that that son was Evilmerodach and the befriender was Jehoiachin.

Whatever the reason for the pardon and favorable treatment, grace is given to Jehoiachin and after 37 years in prison Jehoiachin gets out of his prison clothes, is given a daily allowance and the privilege of eating at the King's table for the rest of his life. He was also seated above all the other captive kings that were in Babylon.

## Conclusion:

Our Applicational Text is **Hebrews 4:2** *For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them; but the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.*

The *"them"* in this text refers to Israel. It refers to their rejection of God's instruction to trust Him to go before them into the "Promised Land." As a result of their lack of faith the "Exodus Generation" wandered in the wilderness for forty years. They failed to trust God and were not allowed in the Land. In our study of Jeremiah we have seen that same lack of faith resulted in their failure to trust God and resulted in their being removed from the Land.

Our applicational text reminds us of the danger of our own lack of faith because we do not trust God and that prevents us from entering into the rest God has prepared for us. That rest is living the faith rest life. That is, by our faith in the principles, promises, doctrines, and mechanics of God's word and "Surrendering to His Instruction," rather than doing our own thing, we can experience the peace that passes all understanding.

Israel did not profit from the preaching they received because they did not mix that which was preached to them with faith. Faith is the English translation of the Greek noun *pistis* which means to place one's weight or dependency upon something. The Greek verb is *pisteuoh* which is a transitive verb meaning that faith must have an object that performs the work, or it is dead faith – without that object performing the works. Our faith is dead. Israel was given the plan of God and were exposed time and again to the provision of God, but they refused!



We are going to follow this study of Jeremaiah with a review of the principles, promises, doctrines, and mechanics of the Church Age in pursuit of experiencing the rest that God has provided for us in this life, in the midst of the disorder of this world system. I will provide the preaching, but we each must make the application. Our happiness depends on our individual application and our mission to the world demands it.

Those who surrendered to the Babylonians were not surrendering to the enemy but to the will of God. Jesus said, *“Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.”* (Matthew 16:25)

**But it all begins at Salvation:**

- *For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God...*
- *The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life...*
- *With the heart man believes unto righteousness...*
- *But with the mouth confession is made unto salvation...*
- *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved..*

*Let Us Learn From The Failure of Others and Avoid  
The Pain, Loss, Or Suffering of Personal  
Discipline!*