

Why Jerusalem Fell IV

When we began the study, we were introduced to three individuals, i.e., Zephaniah, Josiah, and Nebuchadnezzar. Zephaniah was the great-great-grandson of Hezekiah, but not Hezekiah the king. Josiah was the son of Amon, the son of Manasseh. Amon and Manasseh did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, Manasseh specifically, “And he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, after the abominations of the nations whom Jehovah cast out before the children of Israel” (2 Kgs. 21:2), which we noted in the last installment that Jehovah had told Moses, in Leviticus 18:26-28 “Ye therefore shall keep my statutes and mine ordinances, and shall not do any of these abominations; neither the home-born, nor the stranger that sojourneth among you; (for all these abominations have the men of the land done, that were before you, and the land is defiled); that the land vomit not you out also, when ye defile it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you.” Thus, the kings had been forewarned that such conduct would result in the nation of Israel being “vomited out” of the land because of such practices. Although Josiah was a good king and broke the cycle of evil, the die had been cast and the nation would fall. Our third introduction was to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

Oppressing:

As Zephaniah prophesied against the sins of Judah, Jehovah said the inhabitants of Jerusalem were guilty of “oppressing.” When Jehovah spoke to Jeremiah the prophet (during the reign of Josiah), saying, “Hear the word of Jehovah, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, are these. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute justice between a man and his neighbor; if ye oppress not the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your own hurt: then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, from of old even for evermore. Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods that ye have not known, and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered; that ye may do all these abominations?” (Jer. 7:2-10). Even though Jehovah had warned the people, they refused to comply. Therefore, Jehovah said, “because ye have done all these works, saith Jehovah, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not: therefore will I do unto the house which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim” (Ibid. vs. 13-15).

The consequences of oppressing the fatherless and widow had a price, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem would have to pay up.

The next installments will cover the populations’ attitude toward their God.