



LESSON 24 NO REMEDY

Israel		Judah	
Jeroboam	931–910	Rehoboam	931–913
Nadab	910–909	Abijah	913–911
Baasha	909–886	Asa	911–870
Elah	886–885		
Zimri	885		
Omri	885–874		
Ahab	874–853	Jehoshaphat	873–848
Ahaziah	853–852		
Joram	852–841	Jehoram	848–841
Jehu	841–814	Ahaziah	841
		Athaliah	841–835
Jehoahaz	814–798	Joash	835–796
Jehoash	798–782	Amaziah	796–767
Jeroboam II	793–753	Uzziah	792–740
Zechariah	753		
Shallum	752		
Menahem	752–742	Jotham	750–731
Pekahiah	742–740		
Pekah	752–732	Ahaz	735–715
Hoshea	732–722	Hezekiah	729–686
		Manasseh	696–642
		Amon	642–640
		Josiah	640–609
		Jehoahaz	609
		Jehoiakim	608–598
		Jehoiachin	598–597
		Zedekiah	597–586

The Lord had been ready to destroy the Israelites following their breaking the covenant by making the golden calf (Exodus 32). However, Moses interceded for the people and the Lord relented. It was soon after that the Lord would pass in front of Moses and declare His own glory: "Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.'" (Exodus 34:6–7, NASB95) The Lord's compassion and slowness to anger have been manifest throughout our study of the divided kingdom. However, His anger had also been manifest and His righteous indignation was about to bring judgment on His people.

¹⁵ The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place; ¹⁶ but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, until there was no remedy. ¹⁷ Therefore He brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, old man or infirm; He gave them all into his hand.

(2 Chronicles 36:15–17, NASB95)

The Siege of Jerusalem (2Kings 25.1-7)

2Kings 24.20 ends by stating that “Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.” Thus, it’s unsurprising that chapter 25 begins with recounting how Nebuchadnezzar besieged the city of Jerusalem for two years. Pharaoh Hophra came to the throne of Egypt in 588 BC and it would appear that Zedekiah made the mistake of so many previous kings: he ignored the Lord’s warnings and placed his trust in Egypt. Even as the Babylonians were marching toward Jerusalem, the Lord instructed Jeremiah to go to the valley of Ben-hinnom and declare the calamity that was approaching (Jeremiah 19). Jeremiah’s willingness to proclaim the Lord’s message would result in his imprisonment (Jeremiah 20.1-2), but soon thereafter Zedekiah inquired of Jeremiah if the Lord would deliver them from Babylon (Jeremiah 21.1-2). The Lord’s answer was not what the king hoped to hear (Jeremiah 21.3-14).

They Egyptians did send an army against the Babylonians, which resulted in a temporary lifting of the siege around Jerusalem (Jeremiah 37.11). However, the reprieve was short-lived and the Babylonians quickly resumed the siege of Jerusalem. Meanwhile, the Babylonians were also capturing the remaining cities of Judah. Archaeology has illuminated the situation in Judah at this time, namely in the Lachish Letters. “Most of these letters are addressed to Yoash, commander of the Judean forces at Lachish from a man named Hoshaiiah. Hoshaiiah appears to be in charge of an outpost north of Lachish where he could see the smoke signals from Azekah. Ostacon IV read, ‘And let [my lord] know that we are watching for the signals of Lachish, according to all indications which my lord has given, for we cannot see Azekah.’ Jeremiah 34:7 noted that Lachish and Azekah were the last cities to fall to Nebuchadnezzar before he finally took Jerusalem. Apparently Azekah too had fallen according to the letter IV when no more signals came, just before Lachish and then Jerusalem fell.” (Walter Kaiser, *A History of Israel*, pages 404-405)



Top: Lachish Ostacon III

On the 9th day of the 4th month of the 11th year of Zedekiah’s reign, the walls of Jerusalem were breached (2Kings 25.2-3; Jeremiah 39.2). The king, along with his men of war, managed to escape from the city and fled toward

Jericho (Arabah). However, they were overtaken, captured and taken to Nebuchadnezzar's headquarters at Riblah. There Zedekiah was forced to watch the execution of his sons before having his eyes put out and being led bound to Babylon. Never again would there be an Israelite king reigning in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem Destroyed (2Kings 25.8-21; 2Chronicles 36.15-21)

Just a little over a month later, on the 7th day of the 5th month, the Babylonians leveled Jerusalem. They burned all of the houses, broke down the walls of the city and sent the inhabitants into exile. Only "the poorest of the land" were left behind to tend the land (2Kings 25.12). The great Temple of God received special attention as it was completely stripped of anything of value. Recall that the Temple had already been looted by the Babylonians on two previous occasions (see Daniel 1.1-2; 2Kings 24.13). Now, nothing was spared! Even the great bronze pillars which Solomon erected at the entrance of the Temple, Boaz and Jachin (see 2Chron. 3.15-17), were broken into pieces so they could



be transported to Babylon. The Lord's message to Hezekiah had come to pass: "'Behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and all that your fathers have laid up in store to this day will be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the LORD." (2 Kings 20:17, NASB95)

But Nebuchadnezzar wasn't finished, for not only would the house of the Lord be destroyed, but punishment would also be meted out to those who served in the Temple. Thus the chief priest, second priest and various officials were summoned to Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah, and there they were executed (2Kings 25.18-21). The year was 586 B.C., and the Temple which Solomon had built almost 400 years earlier, the place where Israel could turn and know that God would hear (see 1Kings 8.46-53), was no more. "Thus Judah and Jerusalem ceased to be the focus of divine covenant activity on earth." (Eugene Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, page 466).

Jeremiah had suffered greatly through this ordeal. Remember that he had counseled Zedekiah to submit to the Babylonians (Jeremiah 27), and so he

was viewed suspiciously by the priests and others in the king's court. An occasion came during the siege where Jeremiah tried to leave the city, but he was arrested, accused of treason and thrown into prison (Jeremiah 37.15). Later he was cast into a watery pit, where he would have perished if not for the kindness of an Ethiopian (Jeremiah 38.7-13). Jeremiah tried once more to convince Zedekiah to submit to the Babylonians, but once again the king refused to heed the Lord's message (Jeremiah 38.17-23). Upon taking Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar freed Jeremiah from his captivity (Jeremiah 39.11-14). But the prophet's sorrows were not over, for as he surveyed the carnage he would write, "My eyes fail because of tears, My spirit is greatly troubled; My heart is poured out on the earth Because of the destruction of the daughter of my people, When little ones and infants faint In the streets of the city. They say to their mothers, "Where is grain and wine?" As they faint like a wounded man In the streets of the city, As their life is poured out On their mothers' bosom. How shall I admonish you? To what shall I compare you, O daughter of Jerusalem? To what shall I liken you as I comfort you, O virgin daughter of Zion? For your ruin is as vast as the sea; Who can heal you?" (Lamentations 2:11-13, NASB95) And Jeremiah would know that all of this destruction was a result of the Lord's righteous anger (Lamentations 2.7-8).

News of Jerusalem's destruction swiftly reached the captives in Babylon (Ezekiel 33.21). Tragically, the Lord revealed to Ezekiel that this great calamity would not result in the repentance of the people who remained in the land, and so the Lord declared "As I live, surely those who are in the waste places will fall by the sword, and whoever is in the open field I will give to the beasts to be devoured, and those who are in the strongholds and in the caves will die of pestilence." (Ezekiel 33:27, NASB95) Our next lesson will look further at the aftermath of Jerusalem's destruction.