

JTB X. JUDAH'S EXILE IN BABYLON

Scripture: 2Kings 25; 2Chronicles 36; Daniel, Ezekiel, Jeremiah/Lamentation
Historical Era: 606-536 B.C.

The Exile was Foretold from Moses Onward

(1) The dispersion of Jews from the Promised Land for covenant-breaking was foretold from Moses onward¹

(2) The restoration of scattered Jews back to the Promised Land was foretold from Moses onward²

(3) All of the prophecies above were made prior to 586 B.C. (when Solomon's Temple was destroyed) and none of the prophets who prophesied AFTER the Babylonian captivity spoke of a future dispersion and restoration of Jews from/to the land! Several prophets identified the Babylonian exile as the "dispersion and restoration" foretold {Daniel 9:1-13; Ezekiel 36:19; Zechariah 7:8-14; 8:9,13,15; Nehemiah 1:7,8}

The Fall of Judah was Accomplished in Four Stages

(1) ca. 605 B.C. - Nebuchadnezzar raided Judah and put Jehoiakim under tribute {2Kings 24:1}. Temple treasure and royal youth taken to Babylon (Jeremiah 25:1; Daniel 1:1-3)

(2) ca. 601 B.C. - Jehoiakim revolted when Egypt repelled the Babylonians (2Kings 24:1b-4). Guerilla bands harassed Judah for three years until Nebuchadnezzar could rebuild his army.

(3) ca. 597 B.C. - Jehoiakim died and Jehoiachin ruled for 3 months until Nebuchadnezzar returned to Jerusalem and took Jehoiachin, the king's family, 10000 leading citizens, and the remainder of the temple treasure back to Babylon {2Kings 24:8-16; 2Chronicles 36:9,10}

(4) ca. 587/6 B.C. - Nebuchadnezzar returned to burn Jerusalem, break down the walls, capture and blind king Zedekiah as he tried to escape, and take him back to Babylon in chains {2Kings 25:1-21; 2Chronicles 36:11-21; Jeremiah 52:28-30}

Three Prophets spoke During the Babylonian exile

(1) Jeremiah spoke to Jerusalem/Judah during the final days of the monarchy. Jeremiah's message encouraged Judah's surrender to Babylon (21:8-10; 29:3-7), condemnation of false prophets (23:16-40; 27:9-17, the length of the captivity (25:11), and Messianic hope for the future (23:5,6; 31:31-34; 33:14-16). He wrote a letter to the exiles in Babylon (29).

(2) Ezekiel was taken to Babylon and he prophesied there from ca. 593-573 B.C. by explaining the reason for Judah's exile (1-35), foretelling the restoration back to the land (36,37), a savage attack from the north after the restoration from Babylon and a period of peace (38,39), and the age of Messianic blessing to follow (40-48).

(3) Daniel was taken to Babylon as a youth [ca. 601-520? B.C.]. God used him to prepare Nebuchadnezzar for YHWH's service (2-4; Jeremiah 27:5-7) and to prophetically lay out the four great empires (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome) which would precede God's Messiah and kingdom.

The Reasons for Judah's Exile in Babylon

(1) it was the fulfillment of the covenant curses for breaking the covenant (Deuteronomy 8:19,20; 28:15-68; 30:1-18)

(2) it fulfilled God's warning to Solomon that apostasy would bring the end of the temple (1Kings 9:1-8)

(3) the punishment of unfaithful Israel was to be a lesson to all concerning God's holiness/justice (1Kings 9:8-10; Jeremiah 22:8-9)

(4) it allowed the land to have the 70 missed "sabbatical" years of rest (Jeremiah 34:8-22; 2Chronicles 36:17-21)

The lesson of Israel's exodus, wandering, conquest, monarchy, and exile from Canaan are summarized by Paul in 1Corinthians 10:1-12: God's people are special, but they must continue in faith or be removed from His presence! Judgment does begin with the house of God (1Peter 4:17) and those who enter a covenant with YHWH must continue in it or suffer the covenant curses (Romans 2; 1Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:5; Hebrews 11:26-29). "Grace" is an undeserved opportunity to live by faith, not a "free ride" for the lazy to continue in their sins without fear of penalty!

Charles E. McCoy
4/15/2006

¹ Predictions of Israel's exile - Leviticus 26:33-39; Deuteronomy 4:25-28; 28:48-68; 1Kings 14:15; Isaiah 1:3-15; 7:8; 10:1-12; 28:7-14; Jeremiah 9:16; 13:19,24; 18:17; 25:11,29,34; 29:1,4; 30:11; 40:15; Ezekiel 5:10,12; 6:3-11; 12:11-15; 22:15

² Predictions of Israel's restoration from exile - Leviticus 26:40-45; Deuteronomy 4:29-31; 30:3; Isaiah 10:20-25; 11:11,12; Jeremiah 29:14; 31:10; Ezekiel 11:17; 20:33-42; 28:25,26; 34:11-13; 36:22-35; Amos 9:11,14,15