

Jeremiah 21 - Jerusalem's Doom is Sealed; Message to the House of David

II. Thirteen prophecies of judgment upon Judah (Jer 2:1–25:38)

(3) Four specific prophecies of judgment that omit offers of repentance (Jer 21:1–25:38)

(A) Tenth Message: rebuke of the Kings (21:1–23:8)

(a) Zedekiah (21:1–22:9)

(i) Zedekiah seeks Jeremiah's counsel (21:1-2)

(ii) Jeremiah's answer to various groups (21:3–22:9)

(a) Zedekiah (21:3-7)

(b) People (21:8-10)

(c) King's household (21:11-14)

Comments on the Kings

This is the start to a very major section. The first 19 chapters have a certain style. Jer 21-25, in some respects, may sound very much of the same thing, but you may notice a change of style: there is more reference to times, places and persons. Jer 21-23 are a series of messages delivered under four kings. Some people call these sections the Comments on the Kings. They are not necessarily in chronological order. Jer 21 appears to have been delivered about 588 BC. The Babylonians are advancing on Jerusalem, but they haven't been besieging it at close range yet. In 586 BC they will besiege it and level it. That is the third siege of Nebuchadnezzar, it is the brutal one, and that is forthcoming. This is going to occur in about the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign. The siege is going to come up shortly and they are besieged about a year and a half. They are slaughtered and resort to cannibalism.

Chronologically, Jer 21 falls between Jer 37-38. Zedekiah was the last king, he was a vassal king that was put on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar. You will find this in 2 Kings 24:17. He was the uncle of Jehoiachin. Zedekiah likes Jeremiah; he wasn't as bad as Jehoiachin. One of Zedekiah's problems was that the Jews never really accepted him because Nebuchadnezzar put him on the throne. That was in the second siege. Zedekiah would like to be nicer to Jeremiah but his second-in-command hated Jeremiah, and since Zedekiah is weak and vacillating, he is therefore damaging. Jer 21-29 lay the groundwork for a period of time which, in the Scripture, is called the "Time of the Gentiles." In Luke

21:24, the Lord Jesus uses that phrase. This period starts with Nebuchadnezzar and concludes probably with those alive today.

Jeremiah 21

(3) Four specific prophecies of judgment that omit offers of repentance (Jer 21:1—25:38)

(A) Tenth Message: rebuke of the Kings (21:1—23:8)

(a) Zedekiah (21:1—22:9)

(i) Zedekiah seeks Jeremiah's counsel (21:1-2)

1 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD when King Zedekiah sent to him Pashhur the son of Malchijah and Zephaniah the priest, the son of Maaseiah, saying,

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1 The message that came to Jeremiah from the LORD when King Zedekiah sent to him Malchijah's son Pashhur and Maaseiah's son Zephaniah the priest:

1 The word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, when king Zedekiah sent unto him Pashur the son of Melchiah, and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, saying,

- Don't confuse this Pashur with the one in Jer 20 (yet same as one in 38:1). The name Pashur is probably a title of sorts.

— A significant period of time, something like 15 or 17 years occur between these two chapters. The Pashur of before is long gone.

- Zephaniah was successor to Jehoiada the Priest (Jer 29:25-26; 37:3; 52:24) and second in rank to High Priest. Slain by Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah.

2 "Please inquire of the LORD in our behalf, because Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon is making war against us; perhaps the LORD will deal with us in accordance with all His wonderful acts, so that *the enemy* will withdraw from us."

2 "Please inquire of the LORD on our behalf, for Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon is warring against us; perhaps the LORD will deal with us according to all His wonderful acts, so that *the enemy* will withdraw from us."

2 "Please inquire of the LORD on our behalf, because King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon is fighting against us. Perhaps the LORD will do some of his miraculous acts for us, and Nebuchadnezzar will depart from us."

2 Enquire, I pray thee, of the LORD for us; for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon maketh war against us; if so be that the LORD will deal with us according to all his wondrous works, that he may go up from us.

- Nebuchadnezzar's name is actually Nebuchadrezzar. It is transliterated from other languages.

— Basically here, Zedekiah is soliciting from Jeremiah what he hoped would be a favorable oracle. (Other examples: 2 Kings 18-19 Hezekiah did the same thing to Isaiah; Jehosaphat in 2 Chr 20).

— Zedekiah is hoping that Jeremiah will give him a favorable message, yet there is no repentance or commitment to do God's Will.

(ii) Jeremiah's answer to various groups (21:3—22:9)

(a) Zedekiah (21:3-7)

3 But Jeremiah said to them, "You shall say to Zedekiah as follows:

3 Then Jeremiah said to them, "You shall say to Zedekiah as follows:

3 Jeremiah told them, "This is what you are to say to Zedekiah,

3 Then said Jeremiah unto them, Thus shall ye say to Zedekiah:

4 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel says: "Behold, I am going to turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands, with which you are making war against the king of Babylon and the Chaldeans who are besieging you outside the wall; and I will gather them into the middle of this city.

4 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel, "Behold, I am about to turn back the weapons of war which are in your hands, with which you are warring against the king of Babylon and the Chaldeans who are besieging you outside the wall; and I will gather them into the center of this city.

4 'This is what the LORD God of Israel says: "I'm about to turn against you the weapons of war that are in your hands and with which you are fighting the king of Babylon and the Chaldeans who are besieging you outside the walls. I'll gather them into the center of this city.

4 Thus saith the LORD God of Israel; Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands, wherewith ye fight against the king of Babylon, and *against* the Chaldeans, which besiege you without the walls, and I will assemble them into the midst of this city.

5 And I Myself will make war against you with an outstretched hand and a mighty arm, and in anger, wrath, and great indignation.

5 I Myself will war against you with an outstretched hand and a mighty arm, even in anger and wrath and great indignation.

5 Because of my anger, wrath, and great fury, I'll fight against you myself with an outstretched hand and a strong arm.

5 And I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath.

- God is saying that not only is he not going to help them, but he is going to fight against them.

6 I will also strike the inhabitants of this city, both the people and the animals; they will die of a great plague.

6 I will also strike down the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast; they will die of a great pestilence.

6 I'll strike down the residents of this city, both people and animals, and they'll die from a terrible plague.

6 And I will smite the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast: they shall die of a great pestilence.

7 Then afterward," declares the LORD, "I will hand Zedekiah king of Judah, his servants, and the people, that is, those who survive in this city from the plague, the sword, and the famine, over to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, to their enemies, and to those who seek their lives; and he will strike and kill them with the edge of the sword. He will not spare them nor have pity nor compassion."

7 Then afterwards," declares the LORD, "I will give over Zedekiah king of Judah and his servants and the people, even those who survive in this city from the pestilence, the sword and the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their foes and into the hand of those who seek their lives; and he will strike them down with the edge of the sword. He will not spare them nor have pity nor compassion."

7 Afterwards," declares the LORD, "I'll give King Zedekiah of Judah, his officials, and the people—those who are left in this city from the plague, the sword, and the famine—into the control of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, right into the hand of their enemies and the hand of those who want to kill them. He'll execute them with swords and won't pity them. He won't spare them, nor will he have compassion on them."

7 And afterward, saith the LORD, I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, and his servants, and the people, and such as are left in this city from the pestilence, from the sword, and from the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those that seek their life: and he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy.

(b) People (21:8-10)

8 "You shall also say to this people, 'This is what the LORD says: "Behold, I am setting before you the way of life and the way of death.

8 "You shall also say to this people, 'Thus says the LORD, "Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death.

8 "You are to say to this people, 'This is what the LORD says: "I'm about to set before you the way of life and the way of death.

8 And unto this people thou shalt say, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death.

9 Anyone who stays in this city will die by the sword, by famine, or by plague; but *anyone* who leaves and goes over to the Chaldeans who are besieging you will live, and he will have his own life as plunder.

9 He who dwells in this city will die by the sword and by famine and by pestilence; but he who goes out and falls away to the Chaldeans who are besieging you will live, and he will have his own life as booty.

9 Whoever stays in this city will die by the sword, by famine, and by the plague. But whoever goes out and surrenders to the Chaldeans who are besieging you will live. He will save his life as a spoil of war.

9 He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey.

- Jeremiah is saying that those who give up will at least live, the others who fight will die.

10 For I have set My face against this city for harm and not for good," declares the LORD. "It will be handed over to the king of Babylon and he will burn it with fire."

10 For I have set My face against this city for harm and not for good," declares the LORD. "It will be given into the hand of the king of Babylon and he will burn it with fire."

10 Indeed, I'm firmly decided—I'm sending calamity to this city, not good," declares the LORD. "It will be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he will set it on fire."

10 For I have set my face against this city for evil, and not for good, saith the LORD: it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.

- Zedekiah was hoping that he would get the same response that Hezekiah got from Isaiah. God gives three oracles here: one against Zedekiah, one against the people, and one against the Davidic house (Jer 34:1-5).

— While Jeremiah is writing here in Jerusalem, in the second deportation, Ezekiel writes at the same time, but is a slave in Babylon (Ezek 12:13).

— Zedekiah's first-string guys made fun of the prophets, saying that they couldn't even get their stories straight.

- 2 Kings 25:6-7 is where Nebuchadnezzar takes Zedekiah captive. The first thing they do is slaughter his sons, then they put out his eyes and take him away captive.

— Now when you go back and read the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the creepy thing is that they are very literally fulfilled.

- Zedekiah did not die by the sword, they put out his eyes. The last thing he saw was his sons being slaughtered, and they carried him off to Babylon where he died.
- Zedekiah never saw Babylon just like Ezekiel said, because his eyes were put out. Take God literally.
- The Jews were slaves in Babylon for seventy years to the very day. The “Servitude of the Nation” and the “Desolation of Jerusalem” are not coterminous. There is a nineteen-year offset, but each one is to the very day.

Jeremiah, who is prophesying their doom, politically, was labeled a traitor (Cf. 38:17-18). He was charged with treachery in chapters 37:13-14 and 38. These charges were proven false because when the city fell, he chose to remain in the devastated land rather than go to Babylon.

(c) King's household (21:11-14)

- 11 “Then say to the household of the king of Judah, ‘Hear the word of the LORD,
- 11 “Then say to the household of the king of Judah, ‘Hear the word of the LORD,
- 11 “To the house of the king of Judah say, ‘Hear this message from the LORD.
- 11 And touching the house of the king of Judah, say, Hear ye the word of the LORD;

12 house of David, this is what the LORD says: “Administer justice every morning; And save the *person* who has been robbed from the power of *his* oppressor, So that My wrath will not spread like fire And burn, with no one to extinguish *it*, Because of the evil of their deeds.

12 O house of David, thus says the LORD: “Administer justice every morning; And deliver the *person* who has been robbed from the power of *his* oppressor, That My wrath may not go forth like fire And burn with none to extinguish *it*, Because of the evil of their deeds.

12 This is what the LORD says, house of David: “Judge appropriately every morning, and deliver those who have been robbed from the oppressor, so my anger does not break out like fire and burn with no one to put it out because of your evil deeds.

12 O house of David, thus saith the LORD; Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver *him that is* spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench *it*, because of the evil of your doings.

13 “Behold, I am against you, you inhabitant of the valley, You rocky plain,” declares the LORD, “You who say, ‘Who will come down against us? Or who will enter our dwellings?’

13 “Behold, I am against you, O valley dweller, O rocky plain,” declares the LORD, “You men who say, ‘Who will come down against us? Or who will enter into our habitations?’

13 "Look, I'm against you, city dwelling in the valley, rock of the plain," declares the LORD, "those of you who say, 'Who can come down against us and who can enter our habitations?'

13 Behold, I *am* against thee, O inhabitant of the valley, *and* rock of the plain, saith the LORD; which say, Who shall come down against us? or who shall enter into our habitations?

14 "But I will punish you according to the results of your deeds," declares the LORD, "And I will kindle a fire in its forest So that it may devour all its surroundings.""

14 "But I will punish you according to the results of your deeds," declares the LORD, "And I will kindle a fire in its forest That it may devour all its environs.""

14 But I'll punish you according to what you have done," declares the LORD. "I'll start a fire in her forest, and it will consume everything around her.""

14 But I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings, saith the LORD: and I will kindle a fire in the forest thereof, and it shall devour all things round about it.