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APOSTOLIC VERSE BY VERSE BIBLE STUDY

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“CONSEQUENCES OF OBEDIENCE AND DISOBEDIENCE”

Jeremiah 22:1-30

Jeremiah 22:1 "Thus saith the LORD; Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and speak there this word,"

Jeremiah 22:2 "And say, Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these gates:"

Chapter 22 like chapter 21 contains messages that were addressed to the house of the king of Judah and concerned the throne of David. Several kings appear to be in view in this chapter: Jehoiakim, Jehoahaz, and Jehoiachin. Chronologically, the events of this chapter precede those of chapter 21. Word had been sent to them before, but this was to be said to their faces. A great deal of the problems in the land could be traced to the leadership. Jeremiah was told to take a message from God to the king of Judah. Now, God tells Jeremiah, "Go to the king, and tell him to his face, the message I have for him". Even though the message is spoken directly to the king, it still pertains to all of the people.

Jeremiah 22:3 "Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place."

God's demand was straightforward: Administer justice and righteousness. To be earthly king over the family of God, took on grave responsibilities. The judgment of this king must be an example to all the heathen countries around them. The king, here, had to be aware that he was king because God put him there. His judgment had to be righteous and just because he represented God to the world. They had to live the golden rule. They were not to deal unfairly with anyone. Such was the burden on the shoulders of the Lord's king. This included treating fairly those who were being oppressed, such as the resident alien, the fatherless, [and] the widow.

Jeremiah 22:4 "For if ye do this thing indeed, then shall there enter in by the gates of this house kings sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, he, and his servants, and his people."

Jeremiah 22:5 "But if ye will not hear these words, I swear by myself, saith the LORD, that this house shall become a desolation."

If they conduct themselves the way God would have them to, they could remain kings, and their descendants after them could be kings. God's blessings would be upon them if they were

obedient to God. The LORD swore by Himself because there was no greater. If they live like the world and disobey God, they will be destroyed.

Jeremiah 22:6 "For thus saith the LORD unto the king's house of Judah; Thou [art] Gilead unto me, [and] the head of Lebanon: [yet] surely I will make thee a wilderness, [and] cities [which] are not inhabited."

Obedience to God's commands would bring blessing and the continuance of David's line ruling in Jerusalem, but disobedience from the house of the king of Judah would turn Judah and its cities into a wilderness. Gilead, in the verse above, is a place and not a man. It, along with Lebanon, was covered with beautiful cedar trees. On close inspection, you would find that Gilead had been a place of ruins at one time, however. In the sense it is used above, I believe it speaks of the beauty of the king's house made of cedar. Even though these places are so physically beautiful, God will destroy them, if they remain unfaithful to Him.

Jeremiah 22:7 "And I will prepare destroyers against thee, every one with his weapons: and they shall cut down thy choice cedars, and cast [them] into the fire."

Jeremiah 22:8 "And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every man to his neighbour, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this great city?"

Jeremiah 22:9 "Then they shall answer, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God, and worshipped other gods, and served them."

Cedar is an almost indestructible wood, but it will burn, if placed in the fire. God says, even the beauty of the cedars will burn in the fire of His wrath. Many people of other nations have come to see the beauty of the city, but after the destruction, they will realize God destroyed it. They will be questioning what great sin they committed, to bring such anger from God? Even the outside world will know the reason for the great destruction, is because they have broken their covenant with God. The specific sin they committed, was the worship of false gods. The first commandment God had given them was to have no other gods. The people of other nations would ask how that could happen to such a great city as Jerusalem, and those who had been their pagan neighbors would answer: God's people abandoned the covenant of the Lord their God and bowed in worship to other gods and served them. Make no mistake: your spiritual commitments have significant consequences for you and for those around you.

Jeremiah 22:10 "Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him: [but] weep sore for him that goeth away: for he shall return no more, nor see his native country."

Jeremiah 22:11 "For thus saith the LORD touching Shallum the son of Josiah king of Judah, which reigned instead of Josiah his father, which went forth out of this place; He shall not return thither any more:"

Jeremiah 22:12 "But he shall die in the place whither they have led him captive, and shall see this land no more."

In the rest of the chapter, the Lord addressed Zedekiah's three predecessors: Shallum (Jehoahaz), Jehoiakim, and Coniah (Jehoiachin). Shallum (or Jehoahaz) was taken captive to Egypt by Pharaoh-nechoh on his return from Haran in 609 B.C. Jehoiakim appears to have died in ignominy. The actions of these kings, and their corresponding judgment by the Lord, should have served as object lessons for Zedekiah not to follow their destructive and evil ways. But the lessons were lost on Judah's final king. The first of these three rulers were Shallum, also known

as Jehoahaz. He was a son of good King Josiah. God didn't have much to say to Shallum. He was doomed to die in Egypt and never return to the Holy Land. This is saying that death was merciful because it was over and done with. Those who were taken captive would look back with grief at the loss of the promised land. Shallum was the son of Josiah, who was taken into exile after reigning a very short time and did not take Josiah's place as king. Shallum was spoken of in Chronicles as Jehohaz. Jehoiakim took over as king. The comparison is, he shall not return anymore.

Jeremiah 22:13 "Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; [that] useth his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work;"

Jeremiah 22:14 "That saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and [it is] ceiled with cedar, and painted with vermilion."

Jehoiakim succeeded Shallum on the throne in Jerusalem, but he was spiritually bankrupt. He was a puppet king installed by the Egyptians and was so self-serving and corrupt that he made his subjects work for him without pay to build him a massive palace of cedar. Shallum did not reign long enough to leave a legacy of good or evil. It appears, Jehoiachim was very evil for his 11-year reign. He did not follow in the footsteps of Josiah, who did right in the sight of God. He was greatly responsible for the introduction of false worship. Everything he did indicated his unrighteousness. Everything he built was deceitfully built. God will greatly punish him. This tells of the magnificence. Nothing was spared in the building of it. It appears, it was quite large and had beams of cedarwood. Just the fact he had an expensive mansion, made with cedarwood, did not make him a king. This was the most expensive wood a person could use. Vermilion is red, so it was painted red.

Jeremiah 22:16 "He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then [it was] well [with him: was] not this to know me? saith the LORD."

Jeremiah 22:17 "But thine eyes and thine heart [are] not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do [it]."

Josiah, the father of Jehoiachim, was a good king. He ate and drank and had parties, but he was fair with all mankind. Jehoiachim would have done well to be like his father. He thought only of himself. He was an evil king. It does not mean that God would forbid him to eat and drink, it just means he needed to be more aware of the needs of his people. He, also, needed to worship God. We see the fairness that his father judged with. The reason the father judged fairly, was because of his relationship with God. God blessed him mightily. Jehoiachim was a greedy man. He wanted other people's possessions. If anyone got in his way, he just killed them. He was not just in his judgments. He ruled the people with violence. Tragically, he too was a son of Josiah, one of Judah's most righteous kings who led a much-needed revival and cared deeply about his people. Josiah administered justice and righteousness and took up the case of the poor and needy. But his son only cared about making dishonest profit. Moreover, he was not above shedding innocent blood and committing extortion and oppression to get what he wanted.

Jeremiah 22:18 "Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; They shall not lament for him, [saying], Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! they shall not lament for him, [saying], Ah lord! or, Ah his glory!"

Jeremiah 22:19 "He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem."

Jeremiah 22:20 "Go up to Lebanon, and cry; and lift up thy voice in Bashan, and cry from the passages: for all thy lovers are destroyed."

Jeremiah 22:21 "I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; [but] thou saidst, I will not hear. This [hath been] thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my voice."

Jeremiah 22:22 "The wind shall eat up all thy pastors, and thy lovers shall go into captivity: surely then shalt thou be ashamed and confounded for all thy wickedness."

Jehoiakim was so despised that no one would mourn for him at his death; instead, his body would be dragged off and thrown outside Jerusalem's gates. There will be no funeral for him. He will be treated no better than an animal that dies. He acted like an animal, so he would die like an animal. He was an evil king, and no one would grieve when he was gone. He had been trouble for all who knew him. "Lovers", here, probably are speaking of nations that they had made war agreements with. It appears, they will be of no help at all. They are defeated, too. It is almost as if God is saying, "What will it take to get you to repent?" The wind will destroy the pastors {shepherds}. Those who have been your partners will go into captivity. Surely, they will be wise enough to see what is happening and return to God. They have sinned so much; they know no shame.

Jeremiah 22:23 "O inhabitant of Lebanon, that makest thy nest in the cedars, how gracious shalt thou be when pangs come upon thee, the pain as of a woman in travail!"

Lebanon means the buildings made with cedarwood. This is really speaking of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The destruction will come on them quickly, without warning as the pains of a woman about to give birth. How will they feel when the battle begins? Will they turn to God then, or die in their sin? Meanwhile, the people of Jerusalem would wail and lament when their captivity came. Like a woman in labor, they would groan in pain.

Jeremiah 22:24 "[As] I live, saith the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence;"

Jeremiah 22:25 "And I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand [of them] whose face thou fearest, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans."

Jeremiah 22:26 "And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die."

The young Coniah (or Jehoiachin), the son of Jehoiakim, was carried away captive in Nebuchadnezzar's second campaign against Jerusalem, but lived on in captivity beyond his captor's death in 562 B.C. The signet ring was a sign of having the power of that person. The signet was used many times to seal a deal. Joseph was given the signet in Egypt when he was given power and authority next to the king. This, perhaps, is saying the king would not be able to stop this even with all his power and authority. This leaves no doubt at all their outcome. God has given Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and the Chaldeans, the power and authority to destroy them. This destruction will be from the king of the land down to the poorest person. It is God who has placed them in their hands to carry out His judgment. This is all of Judah and Benjamin that will be given over to the Babylonians. Those who live will be captive slaves in Babylon. Many will die in the foreign land.

Jeremiah 22:27 "But to the land whereunto they desire to return, thither shall they not return."

Jeremiah 22:28 "[Is] this man Coniah a despised broken idol? [is he] a vessel wherein [is] no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not?"

Jeremiah 22:29 "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD."

When God slams the door shut, it is shut until He opens it. No one else can open it. Their heart's desire will be to come home, but they will not be allowed to. The third king addressed in Jeremiah's series of messages was Jehoiachin, also known as Coniah or Jeconiah. It appears, from this that he thought of himself as a god. He spent 36 years in captivity in Babylon. He was very evil. God's word to this man was filled with judgment and even contempt, calling him a despised, shattered pot. This is a sorrowful saying, showing the seriousness of their transgressions. God, perhaps, was sorrowful that He had made the earth.

Jeremiah 22:30 "Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man [that] shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah."

The judgment against Jehoiachin was not just for him, but for his seed, as well. He would have no children, who would ever reign. God goes so far as to say, that no one even like him, will ever reign in Jerusalem again. Childless means that none of Jehoiachin's seven sons would succeed him on the throne of Judah, nor would any of his natural descendants succeed him. Coniah was so useless to the Lord that he placed a severe curse on this king and his family, saying none of Coniah's descendants would sit on the throne of David. This curse has serious messianic implications, for the Messiah was to come from David's line. Surprisingly, Coniah appears in Jesus's genealogy in Matthew (as Jeconiah). Although Jesus' paternal ancestors through Joseph include Jehoiachin, the line of descent is thus recorded only to show Jesus' legal right to the throne of David. Because Jesus was virgin-born, hence not the natural son of Joseph, the pronouncement against Jehoiachin's line is not contradicted. Had Jesus been Joseph's biological son, then, he would have been prevented from sitting on the throne of David by this curse. But of course, Jesus was not conceived by Joseph but by the Holy Spirit. Since Joseph was Jesus's legal father, but not his biological father, Jesus was not contaminated by the curse on Jeconiah's descendants. The Messiah, though, still had to have a biological tie to David, which Jesus had as demonstrated in Luke's genealogy (Luke 3:23-38). Although Jehoiachin's grandson Zerubbabel was governor of Judah he was never Israel's king. Thus, the human kingship of Israel and Judah ended with the sixth century B.C. Jesus' human descent is apparently traced through Mary, a descendant of David through his son Nathan (not the prophet), not Solomon. Therefore, heir to David's throne through both parents, as the virgin-born son of Mary, Christ did not abrogate the prophetic curse against Jehoiachin's line. Rather, the great accuracy and trustworthiness of the Scriptures are again demonstrated.

QUESTIONS

1. Where did God send Jeremiah in verse 1?
2. Whose throne did the king sit upon?
3. What instructions did Jeremiah give him in verse 3?
4. Why was it so important for him to be just in his judgments?
5. If he does what God says, what will happen?
6. Gilead, in verse 6, is a _____ not a _____.
7. Cedar is an almost indestructible _____.
8. Weep ye not for the _____.
9. Who was Shallum?
10. What was another name for Shallum?
11. Who is verse 13 speaking woe to?
12. How long did Jehoiachim reign?
13. What had he said he would build?
14. What were the beams of the house made of?
15. Just because he had a mansion, did not make him _____.
16. Jehoiachim is so evil no one will _____ for him when he dies.
17. He shall be buried with the burial of an _____.
18. Who does verse 20 say to cry for?
19. God spoke to them in their prosperity, did they listen?
20. When was the only time they would seek God?
21. Who was Coniah?
22. Who had God given power to destroy them?
23. How long was Coniah in captivity?
24. The judgment against Jehoiachin extended to whom?