



2015 Q4 Jeremiah Lesson 10

The Destruction of Jerusalem

FRIDAY

“We are in continual danger of getting above the simplicity of the gospel. There is an intense desire on the part of many to startle the world with something original, that shall lift the people into a state of spiritual ecstasy, and change the present order of experience. There is certainly great need of a change in the present order of experience; for the sacredness of present truth is not realized as it should be, but the change we need is a change of heart, and can only be obtained by seeking God individually for His blessing, by pleading with Him for His power, by fervently praying that His grace may come upon us, and that our characters may be transformed. This is the change we need today, and for the attainment of this experience we should exercise persevering energy and manifest heartfelt earnestness. We should ask with true sincerity, ‘What shall I do to be saved?’ We should know just what steps we are taking heavenward.” —Ellen G. White, Selected Messages, book 1, pp. 187, 188.

This is a fantastic quote, & one I was previously unfamiliar with. Thanks to the lesson’s author for including it.

SABBATH

Within a few short years the king of Babylon was to be used as the instrument of God’s wrath upon impenitent Judah. Again and again Jerusalem was to be invested [surrounded] and entered by the besieging armies of Nebuchadnezzar. Company after company—at first a few only, but later on thousands and tens of thousands—were to be taken captive to the land of Shinar, there to dwell in enforced exile. Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah—all these Jewish kings were in turn to become vassals of the Babylonian ruler, and all in turn were to rebel. Severer and yet more severe chastisements were to be inflicted upon the rebellious nation, until at last the entire land was to become a desolation, Jerusalem was to be laid waste and burned with fire, the temple that Solomon had built was to be destroyed, and the kingdom of Judah was to fall, never again to occupy its former position among the nations of earth.”—Ellen G. White, Prophets and Kings, pp. 422, 423.

According to Wikipedia: Jerusalem has been completely destroyed twice, besieged 23 times, attacked 52 times, and captured / recaptured 44 times. Sounds like a vibrant history.



SUNDAY

Weeping for Tammuz

Tammuz: Babylonian major God. Believed to die every Summer solstice, therefore women would spend 6 days mourning [weeping] his “death” which brought on shorter days, searing summer heat & drought. He was resurrected 6 months later [Winter solstice], making December 25 a time of celebration [sound familiar]. Most of the pagan deities are related to the early practice of Sun worship, which is, of course, worship of Lucifer [“The bright Morning Star”].

Tammuz became Osiris became Baal became Zeus became Jupiter became St. Peter. What do these have in common?? Appeasement, and most of them had a sexual / fertility ritual associated with their worship.

“The foulest Babylonian custom is that which compels every woman of the land to sit in the temple of [Aphrodite](#) and have intercourse with some stranger at least once in her life. Many women who are rich and proud and disdain to mingle with the rest, drive to the temple in covered carriages drawn by teams, and stand there with a great retinue of attendants. But most sit down in the sacred plot of Aphrodite, with crowns of cord on their heads; there is a great multitude of women coming and going; passages marked by line run every way through the crowd, by which the men pass and make their choice. Once a woman has taken her place there, she does not go away to her home before some stranger has cast money into her lap, and had intercourse with her outside the temple; but while he casts the money, he must say, “I invite you in the name of [Mylitta](#)” (that is the Assyrian name for Aphrodite). It does not matter what sum the money is; the woman will never refuse, for that would be a sin, the money being by this act made sacred. So she follows the first man who casts it and rejects no one. After their intercourse, having discharged her sacred duty to the goddess, she goes away to her home; and thereafter there is no bribe however great that will get her. So then the women that are fair and tall are soon free to depart, but the uncomely have long to wait because they cannot fulfil the law; for some of them remain for three years, or four. There is a custom like this in some parts of Cyprus.” [Herodotus](#), *The Histories* 1.199, tr A.D. Godley (1920)

Weeping for Tammuz is demonstrating “sympathy for the devil.” This theme is still prevalent in modern comic book “mythology”.

MONDAY

The Unhappy Reign of King Zedekiah

Jeremiah was one of Zedekiah’s advisors, and yet his epitaph is “... he did evil in the sight of the Lord.” 2 Kings 24: 19, 20.

Consider the last thing Zedekiah saw with his own eyes: His children being killed, then his eyes plucked out. One wonders how deeply he lamented not following Jeremiah’s advice.



Jeremiah was imprisoned and dumped in to a muddy well for speaking the truth. How would we have been able to distinguish truth from error at that time? or now??

TUESDAY

The Fall of Jerusalem

The continual message of Jeremiah was more or less

“Through Jeremiah the word of the Lord to His people was: “Return, thou backsliding Israel, ... and I will not cause Mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God.... Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you.” “Thou shalt call Me, my Father; and shalt not turn away from Me.” “Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.” PK 410.

The king was even too weak to be willing that his courtiers and people should know that he had held a conference with Jeremiah, so fully had the fear of man taken possession of his soul. If Zedekiah had stood up bravely and declared that he believed the words of the prophet, already half fulfilled, what desolation might have been averted! He should have said, I will obey the Lord, and save the city from utter ruin. I dare not disregard the commands of God because of the fear or favor of man. I love the truth, I hate sin, and I will follow the counsel of the Mighty One of Israel. PK 458.

Consider how difficult the destruction of Jerusalem must have been on, not only Jeremiah, but God Himself .

Note how the Babylonian general, Nebuzaradan employs the Law of Liberty when setting Jeremiah free.

But today I am freeing you from the chains on your wrists. Come with me to Babylon, if you like, and I will look after you; but if you do not want to, then don't come. Look, the whole country lies before you; go wherever you please.” Jer. 40: 4.

WEDNESDAY

All Your Heart

What comes first?? The change of heart or the seeking with all of the heart?? Does it matter which comes first??



The lesson makes it personal:

“What has been your experience with this promise [“*You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart*” Jer 29:13]?”

The following text is often referenced as a meaningful promise:

For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jer 29:11.

Do events always work out the way the Lord has planned??

From the lesson:

“We have been given the prophetic gift in the wonderful minis- try of Ellen G. White. How can we be sure that we don’t show the same attitude toward her today that many (but not all) had toward Jeremiah?”

Were the Judeans supposed to blindly follow Jeremiah’s advice or were they expected to test it?? Are we intended to treat prophetic messages any differently?? What should be given more critical attention – the message or the messenger??

THURSDAY

The Seventy Years

Seventy years is no short time period. It’s slightly less than the average life span of a US male [76.3 years]. Think about how difficult this must have been to come to grips with for the children of Judah, especially the ones who believed the false prophets. Even with God’s advice to settle, build, plant, marry, and assimilate in to Babylonian society, they must have quickly realized that many of them would die there and never see their homeland again.

The lesson also brings out the valuable point that praying for the betterment & success of Babylon, and living in peace there must have been very foreign to the Judeans. They had been steeped in the “eye for an eye”, and “destroy every living thing [Cannanite]” mentality. Perhaps God was trying to bring them to a higher level of moral development [ultimately to “Love your Enemies”].

Now that they were in captivity, how were Jeremiah’s prophecies considered?? See Dan. 8

“The present is a time of overwhelming interest to all living. Rulers and statesman, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the relations that exist among the nations. They observe the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly



element, and they recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place – that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis. The Bible, and the Bible only, gives a correct view of these things. Here are revealed the great final scenes in the history of our world, events that already are casting their shadows before, the sound of their approach causing the earth to tremble and men's hearts to fail them for fear.” PK 537.