

NOON BIBLE STUDY: EXILE (PT. 2)

REVIEW FROM LAST WEEK:

- JUDAH EXILED TO BABYLON
- JEREMIAH'S PROPHECY: 70 YEARS
- GOD'S MESSAGE TO EXILES IN BABYLON - "LIVE YOUR LIFE."
- SORROWFUL HOPE

THIS WEEK: WHAT'S HAPPENING IN BABYLON

LAST WEEK WE REVIEWED JEREMIAH'S PROPHECY OF A 70 YEAR EXILE FOR THE REMNANT OF JUDAH.

JEREMIAH 25:8-11 - "THEREFORE THUS SAYS THE LORD OF HOSTS, 'BECAUSE YOU HAVE NOT OBEYED MY WORDS, 9 BEHOLD, I WILL SEND AND TAKE ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE NORTH,' DECLARES THE LORD, 'AND I WILL SEND TO NEBUCHADNEZZAR KING OF BABYLON, MY SERVANT, AND WILL BRING THEM AGAINST THIS LAND AND AGAINST ITS INHABITANTS AND AGAINST ALL THESE NATIONS ROUND ABOUT; AND I WILL UTTERLY DESTROY THEM AND MAKE THEM A HORROR AND A HISSING, AND AN EVERLASTING DESOLATION. 10 'MOREOVER, I WILL TAKE FROM THEM THE VOICE OF JOY AND THE VOICE OF GLADNESS, THE VOICE OF THE BRIDEGROOM AND THE VOICE OF THE BRIDE, THE SOUND OF THE MILLSTONES AND THE LIGHT OF THE LAMP. 11 'THIS WHOLE LAND WILL BE A DESOLATION AND A HORROR, AND THESE NATIONS WILL SERVE THE KING OF BABYLON SEVENTY YEARS.

FOR 70 YEARS, THE EXILES WILL WAIT, LIVE (AND DIE) HOPE AND PRAY. TIME WILL PASS AND THE EMPIRE OF BABYLON WILL RULE AND THRIVE. BUT REMARKABLY, SOME OF THE CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM WILL BE FAVORED AND THRIVE WHILE THEY ARE EXILES. ONE SUCH EXILE WAS DANIEL, WHO SERVED NEBUCHADNEZZAR AND THE BABYLONIAN KINGS. WITH A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE HISTORICAL EVENTS AND THE CAST OF CHARACTERS, LET'S LOOK AT THE CONTEXT OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL.

DANIEL 1:1-7 - DANIEL & FRIENDS CAPTIVE TO BABYLON

THIS TOOK PLACE DURING THE FINAL YEARS OF JUDAH. NEBUCHADNEZZAR BEGINS HIS SIEGE AGAINST JERUSALEM AND INITIALLY TAKES CAPTIVE A GROUP OF ROYALTY AND OTHER SPECIAL PEOPLE TO BE HIS SERVANTS. THIS HAPPENED DURING THE EVENTS WE READ IN 2 KINGS 23-24:

2 KINGS 23:36-24:2 - JEHOIAKIM WAS TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OLD WHEN HE BECAME KING, AND HE REIGNED ELEVEN YEARS IN JERUSALEM; AND HIS MOTHER'S NAME WAS ZEBIDAH THE DAUGHTER OF PEDAIAH OF RUMAH. 37 HE DID EVIL IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD, ACCORDING TO ALL THAT HIS FATHERS HAD DONE. **24:1** IN (JEHOIAKIM'S) DAYS NEBUCHADNEZZAR KING OF BABYLON CAME UP, AND JEHOIAKIM BECAME HIS SERVANT FOR THREE YEARS; THEN HE TURNED AND REBELLED AGAINST HIM. 2 THE LORD SENT AGAINST HIM BANDS OF CHALDEANS, BANDS OF ARAMEANS, BANDS OF MOABITES, AND BANDS OF AMMONITES. SO HE SENT THEM AGAINST JUDAH TO DESTROY IT, ACCORDING TO THE WORD OF THE LORD WHICH HE HAD SPOKEN THROUGH HIS SERVANTS THE PROPHETS.

DANIEL 1:8-13 - THE HEBREW MEN CHOOSE TO HONOR GOD WHILE CAPTIVE IN BABYLON

DANIEL 1:14-21 - NEBUCHADNEZZAR FAVORS DANIEL & HIS FRIENDS

BECAUSE OF THEIR DESIRE TO HONOR GOD, GOD FAVORS DANIEL, HANANIAH, MISHAEL AND AZARIAH. THEY ARE EXALTED BEFORE NEBUCHADNEZZAR AND WILL BE A PART OF HIS ROYAL ADVISOR COURT.

DANIEL CHAPTER 2 WILL TELL OF WHEN DANIEL CORRECTLY RECOUNTS AND INTERPRETS NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM. AS A RESULT OF GOD WORKING THROUGH DANIEL, NEBUCHADNEZZAR EXALTS HIM

DANIEL 2:46-49

DANIEL 3 TELLS THE STORY OF THE 3 MEN WHO ARE RESCUED FROM THE FIERY FURNACE. AS A RESULT OF THIS MIRACLE, NEBUCHADNEZZAR PRAISES THE LORD!

DANIEL 3:28-30

WE SEE 2 GREAT THINGS FROM THE LIVES OF THESE 4 FAITHFUL MEN. FIRST, WE SEE HOW THEY MODELED AN UNCOMPROMISING DEVOTION TO THE LORD AND HIS WAYS IN THE MIDST OF A FOREIGN LAND. THEY ARE SURROUNDED BY IDOLATRY, COMPROMISE AND PRESSURE AND YET THEY NEVER WAVER TO FOLLOW THE TRUE GOD. SECONDLY, WE SEE HOW THEIR OTHERWORLDLY EXAMPLE AND FIDELITY TO THE LORD WAS NOTICED BY THOSE AROUND THEM. WHETHER THROUGH PERSECUTION FROM THOSE WHO WERE JEALOUS OR FAVOR AND EXALTATION BY THE KING, THEY STOOD OUT AND LET THEIR "LIGHT SHINE." WE WOULD DO WELL TO FOLLOW THEIR EXAMPLES IN OUR DAY.

LET'S PAUSE FOR A MOMENT AND CONSIDER WHAT WE HAVE JUST LEARNED.

THE PEOPLE OF GOD HAVE BEEN EXILED TO BABYLON BECAUSE OF THEIR HABITUAL SIN. THEY WILL STAY IN EXILE FOR 70 YEARS. THAT WORD IS SURE. AND YET WHILE IN EXILE THE LORD ENCOURAGES THEM TO LIVE LIFE, STAY FAITHFUL AND HAVE HOPE. AND HE WORKS IN AND THROUGH HIS PEOPLE, WHILE IN EXILE, TO FURTHER HIS PURPOSES AND SPREAD HIS FAME. AND HE CALLS FOR HIS PEOPLE TO HAVE HOPE THAT THE EXILE END AFTER THE APPOINTED TIME. EVEN WHILE IN A FOREIGN LAND *BECAUSE OF THEIR REBELLION*, THE LORD IS WITH HIS PEOPLE - AND HE WORKS THROUGH THOSE WHO "MAKE UP THEIR MIND" (DANIEL 1:8) TO LIVE FOR HIM. THERE IS TRULY NO ONE LIKE THE LORD.

BACK TO OUR STORY. DURING DANIEL'S LIFE, WE OBSERVE THAT HE WAS A MAN WHO FAITHFULLY PRAYED.

DANIEL 6:10 (NLT) - BUT WHEN DANIEL LEARNED THAT THE LAW HAD BEEN SIGNED, HE WENT HOME AND KNELT DOWN AS USUAL IN HIS UPSTAIRS ROOM, WITH ITS WINDOWS OPEN TOWARD JERUSALEM. HE PRAYED THREE TIMES A DAY, JUST AS HE HAD ALWAYS DONE, GIVING THANKS TO HIS GOD.

AS THE TIME PASSES DURING THE 70 YEAR EXILE, DANIEL, WHO WAS ONE OF THE FIRST CAPTIVES TAKEN AS A YOUNG MAN, HAS NOW GROWN OLDER. YET HIS DEVOTION TO PRAYER CONTINUES. AS WE GET TOWARDS THE END OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL AND THE END OF HIS YEARS, WE AN AMAZING PRAYER OF DANIEL RECORDED IN THE BIBLE.

DANIEL 9:1-19 - DANIEL'S PRAYER

V. 1-2 - TIMING OF DANIEL'S PRAYER - DANIEL HAD BEEN PAYING ATTENTION TO THE WORD OF THE LORD. HE HAD BEEN READING THE "BOOKS" (PERHAPS SOME OF JEREMIAH'S LETTERS?) AND REALIZED THAT WAS APPROACHING THE END OF THE 70 YEARS! SO HE FASTED, MOURNED AND PRAYED.

HOW DANIEL PRAYS - NOTICE THE LANGUAGE USED BY DANIEL AS HE PRAYS - "WE" AND "US" ARE USED FAR MORE THAN "THEY" OR "THEM". DANIEL IS LIKELY ONE OF THE MOST RIGHTEOUS MEN IN THE WORLD AND YET HE INCLUDES HIMSELF IN THE NATION AS THOSE WHO HAVE NOT BEEN FAITHFUL TO THE LORD. HE MODELS HOW TO PRAY A PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE. HE EXALTS GOD AND HIS WAYS AND RATHER THAN BLAMING THOSE WHO HAD SINNED (EX: MANASSEH OR FALSE PROPHETS) OR BEING BITTER TOWARDS THE PEOPLE WHO "CAUSED" THE EXILE - HE IS ON HIS KNEES ON BEHALF OF THE ENTIRE NATION.

DANIEL 9:20-23 - GOD RESPONDS TO DANIEL'S PRAYER

WE WON'T SPEND THE TIME TODAY LOOKING AT THE SPECIFIC DETAILS OF GABRIEL'S RESPONSE, BUT I WANTED TO HIGHLIGHT THE FACT THAT GOD SENDS AN ANGEL (GABRIEL NO LESS!) TO CONFIRM TO DANIEL THAT HIS PRAYER HAD BEEN HEARD! WOW! THE LORD CONFIRMS TO DANIEL THAT THE DECREE WILL BE MADE FOR THE PEOPLE TO RETURN TO JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD, WHICH CURRENTLY LIES DESOLATE, WILL BE REBUILT.

THERE IS ONE FINAL THING TO REVIEW IN LIGHT OF DANIEL'S PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS AND RESTORATION. WE NEED TO GO BACK TO WHEN THE TEMPLE ITSELF WAS FIRST DEDICATED. CONSTRUCTION ON THE PERMANENT LOCATION FOR THE WORSHIP OF YAHWEH HAS BEEN COMPLETED UNDER SOLOMON'S DIRECTION AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD WILL FILL THE HOUSE. AND BEFORE THE PEOPLE ENTER THE GATES AND COURTS, SOLOMON PRAYED A LENGTHY PRAYER OF DEDICATION FOR THE HOUSE. WHEN THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLED THE TEMPLE THAT DAY, IT WAS CONFIRMATION THAT THE LORD HAD HEARD AND TAKEN NOTE OF THE WORDS SOLOMON PRAYED. LET'S REVISIT ONE OF THE THINGS KING SOLOMON HAD PRAYED FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD IN JERUSALEM:

1 KINGS 8:46-52 - "WHEN THEY SIN AGAINST YOU (FOR THERE IS NO MAN WHO DOES NOT SIN) AND YOU ARE ANGRY WITH THEM AND DELIVER THEM TO AN ENEMY, SO THAT THEY TAKE THEM AWAY CAPTIVE TO THE LAND OF THE ENEMY, FAR OFF OR NEAR; 47 IF THEY TAKE THOUGHT IN THE LAND WHERE THEY HAVE BEEN TAKEN CAPTIVE, AND REPENT AND MAKE SUPPLICATION TO YOU IN THE LAND OF THOSE WHO HAVE TAKEN THEM CAPTIVE, SAYING, 'WE HAVE SINNED AND HAVE COMMITTED INIQUITY, WE HAVE ACTED WICKEDLY'; 48 IF THEY RETURN TO YOU WITH ALL THEIR HEART AND WITH ALL THEIR SOUL IN THE LAND OF THEIR ENEMIES WHO HAVE TAKEN THEM CAPTIVE, AND PRAY TO YOU TOWARD THEIR LAND WHICH YOU HAVE GIVEN TO THEIR FATHERS, THE CITY WHICH YOU HAVE CHOSEN, AND THE HOUSE WHICH I HAVE BUILT FOR YOUR NAME; 49 THEN HEAR THEIR PRAYER AND THEIR SUPPLICATION IN HEAVEN YOUR DWELLING PLACE, AND MAINTAIN THEIR CAUSE, 50 AND FORGIVE YOUR PEOPLE WHO HAVE SINNED AGAINST YOU AND ALL THEIR TRANSGRESSIONS WHICH THEY HAVE TRANSGRESSED AGAINST YOU, AND MAKE THEM OBJECTS OF COMPASSION BEFORE THOSE WHO HAVE TAKEN THEM CAPTIVE, THAT THEY MAY HAVE COMPASSION ON THEM 51 (FOR THEY ARE YOUR PEOPLE AND YOUR INHERITANCE WHICH YOU HAVE BROUGHT FORTH FROM EGYPT, FROM THE MIDST OF THE IRON FURNACE), 52 THAT YOUR EYES MAY BE OPEN TO THE SUPPLICATION OF YOUR SERVANT AND TO THE SUPPLICATION OF YOUR PEOPLE ISRAEL, TO LISTEN TO THEM WHENEVER THEY CALL TO YOU.

SOLOMON ASKED FOR THE LORD TO REGARD PRAYERS PRAYED TOWARDS JERUSALEM IF GOD'S PEOPLE EVER SINNED TO THE POINT OF BEING EXILED FROM JERUSALEM AS PUNISHMENT! THIS IS LIKELY WHY DANIEL PRAYED THE WAY HE DID DURING THE YEARS OF HIS EXILE FROM JERUSALEM. REMEMBER HOW HE WAS PRAYING IN DANIEL 6?

DANIEL 6:10 (NLT) - BUT WHEN DANIEL LEARNED THAT THE LAW HAD BEEN SIGNED, HE WENT HOME AND KNELT DOWN AS USUAL IN HIS UPSTAIRS ROOM, WITH ITS WINDOWS OPEN TOWARD JERUSALEM. HE PRAYED THREE TIMES A DAY, JUST AS HE HAD ALWAYS DONE, GIVING THANKS TO HIS GOD.

GOD HAD APPOINTED THE TIME OF THE EXILE TO BE 70 YEARS THROUGH JEREMIAH'S WORD - BUT I AM SURE THAT THE PRAYERS OF MEN LIKE DANIEL ENSURED THIS DAY CAME. IN RESPONSE TO DANIEL'S PRAYER, AT THE END OF THE 70 YEARS, THE LORD DETERMINES TO BRING HIS PEOPLE BACK "HOME." AND WITH THAT WE MOVE TOWARDS THE TIME OF THE BOOKS OF EZRA & NEHEMIAH.