

2 Kings 25

The Destruction of Jerusalem – The end of the Davidic Dynasty

Zedekiah, Josiah's son and Jehoiachin's uncle, is placed on the throne by Nebuchadnezzar when his nephew is carried off into captivity after just three months on the throne. After a while he rebels against the rule of the Babylonian overlords and Nebuchadnezzar returns to Jerusalem in the 9th year of his reign and laid siege to the city for two years. The people were starving while the Babylonians build siege ramps and began the laborious task of breaching the walls of the city. When the walls were just about broken through, the king and his remaining army or guard, escaped Jerusalem and fled to the Arabah to the south of the Dead Sea. The Babylonians caught up with him on the plains of Jericho and his soldiers scattered. They killed the King's sons before his eyes then they gouged his eyes out then they put him in shackles and led him off to Babylon. This marks the end of the Davidic Dynasty. The throne that was promised to David forever was ended because of the sin of the kings and the people. Did God lie? Did he not keep his promise? NO! There is a greater fulfillment of the promise to David and it goes beyond a physical throne over an earthly kingdom with its capital in Jerusalem. Jesus is the Son of David who will fulfill the promise and will forever reign over the people of God.

In verse 8, the text turns from the King to the City of God – Jerusalem. The Babylonian army destroys the city and burns it down. The destruction is described from the inside out – beginning with the Temple of the Lord – then the Palace of the King – then the homes of the people and finally the walls of the city. The fires are so hot that the stones are superheated and explode leaving nothing but rubble.

In verse 11, the text turns to the people. All of the inhabitants of the city, after starving for two years and now taken into captivity and marched to Babylon. The rest of the population in the surrounding area are rounded up and carried into captivity as well. Those who had deserted the besieged city and surrendered to the Babylonians were also carried off in this third and final deportation to Babylon. The commander of the army left some of the poor people there in the ruins to tend the vineyards and fields.

In verse 13 the text turns to the treasures of the Temple and describes all of the items that were carried off by the king of Babylon. Later in the book of Ezra, many of these implements will be returned by the King of Persia who inherited the storehouses.

Next is leadership. The King is gone so the general of the Babylonian army rounds up all of the leaders left after the siege and the failed escape of the king and takes them to Nebuchadnezzar who executes them. He appointed a man named Gedaliah as governor and he tries to convince the people to settle down, work the land and serve the king of Babylon peacefully. Ismael, a man with some connection to the house of David, comes with 10 assassins and killed Gedaliah and all the Babylonians with him. Because of their fear of retribution, they take all of the remaining people – the resistance – and escape to Egypt. This is how the large Jewish community is started down in Alexandria, Egypt. Jeremiah the prophet was taken down there with them and they will eventually write the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament – known as the Septuagint. When Mary and Joseph flee to Egypt with baby Jesus it is most likely

to this community that they go to seek refuge. Therefore there are two exiles – the larger, Babylonian Exile which was forced, and the smaller, self-imposed exile to Egypt.

After all of this pain and destruction the book of 2 Kings ends with the brief but hopeful story of the release of Jehoiachin from prison in Babylon and that he was treated honorably by being given status as a member of the court of the Babylonian king and invited to eat from his table. He was also given an allowance from the king that he retained for the rest of his life. This ending story give hope to the people of Judah and the Davidic Line that God is not done with them. Their sin has cost them everything, but God is still at work. It is from Jehoiachin that Zerubbabel will come, who will be the governor appointed by the Persians to take the Jews back to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple and the city. And it is through this line that Jesus will be born to fulfill the prophesies and save God's people from their sin.