

Feinberg's "Jeremiah": Prophecy of the 5th Cycle to Judah, Jer 25:1-11; Failure in the Pulpit Initiates National Decline, Jer 12:10-13; Thieme's "National Crisis": Five Areas of National Desolation; The Five Cycles of Discipline; Pharisees Claim They Are Free but Are in Slavery, John 8:31-36

Jeremiah 25:1 - The word came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

v. 2 - So Jeremiah the prophet said to all the people of Judah and to all those living in Jerusalem:

v. 3 - "For twenty-three years—from the thirteenth year of Josiah son of Amon \ā'-mon\ king of Judah until this very day—the word of the Lord has come to me and I have spoken to you again and again, but you have not listened.

v. 4 - "And though the Lord has sent you all his servants the prophets again and again, you have not listened or paid any attention.

v. 5 - "They said, 'Turn now, each of you, from you evil ways and your evil practices, and you can stay in the land the Lord gave to you and your fathers for ever and ever.

v. 6 - "Do not follow other gods to serve and worship them; do not provoke me to anger with what your hands have made. Then I will not harm you.'

v. 7 - "But you did not listen to me," declares the Lord, "and you have provoked me with what you hands have made, and you have brought harm to yourselves."

Verse 1: This prophecy is precisely dated to show its extraordinary significance. The fourth year of Jehoiakim synchronizes with the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, namely, 605 B.C. The first year of Nebuchadnezzar marked his first invasion of Judah with his allies (cf. 2 Kings 24:1-2). The emphasis in vv. 1-7 rests on Israel's continued disobedience. Jeremiah's purpose was to lead the nation to reconsider her past sinful ways and to alert her to the future. The Lord's patience with Israel had at last been exhausted. (p. 174)

Verses 2-7: That Jeremiah could address all in Jerusalem and Judah shows that he was still able to move about freely and speak publicly (v.2; cf. 36:1, 5, 26). Sad indeed it must have been for Jeremiah to look back on twenty-three years of faithful, earnest ministry for the Lord and then to have to pronounce it a failure as far as Judah was concerned (v.3).

Nineteen years under Josiah and four under Jehoiakim did not suffice to turn Judah to repentance; she would not hear. It was now about the middle of Jeremiah's career (cf. 1:2-3), and more difficult days lay ahead. Moreover, in his grace the Lord had sent some other godly prophets contemporary with Jeremiah to warn Judah of the impending disaster (v.4). There were Uriah, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk. Above all, the people were repeatedly exhorted to forsake the senseless worship of idols (v.6); but their response was always the same—persistent obstinacy (v.7). (pp. 174-75)

Prediction of the Exile, 25:8-11:



Jeremiah 25:8 - “Therefore the Lord Almighty says this: ‘Because you have not listened to my words,

v. 9 - I will summon all the peoples of the north and my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon,” declares the Lord, “and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin.

v. 10 - ‘I will banish from them the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, the sound of millstones and the light of the lamp.

v. 11 - ‘This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.’”

Verses 8–9: Because of Israel’s determined disobedience (v.8), the Lord had his agent of judgment ready to inflict the merited judgment (v.9). That agent was Nebuchadnezzar and his followers. Nebuchadnezzar is designated three times (here; 27:6; 43:10) as the Lord’s servant. The characterization of Nebuchadnezzar as the Lord’s servant shows the magnitude of the work committed to him. It was not so much that God’s pleasure was on him but that as the Lord’s instrument he was to execute the divine plan for Judah and the nations. He was unconsciously doing God’s will by devoting whole populations to destruction, whether Judah or the surrounding nations. (p. 175)

Verses 10–11: Jeremiah points out the domestic effect of invasion (v.10). Normal life will be totally disrupted. The land will be shorn of its inhabitants. All joy and domestic work would go. Sounds of normal human activity would cease. In v.11, Jeremiah for the first time indicates the duration of the captivity in Babylon, i.e., seventy years (cf. 29:10).¹ (p. 176)

This passage was prophetic of the fifth cycle imposed on Judah in 586 B.C., and it has allusions to the process by which the Lord brings down justice on all reversionistic client nations. Nebuchadnezzar is described by the Lord as “my servant” in verse 9.

He uses the leaders of predator nations and their armies to inflict judgment on His people. But in doing so, His plan continues to move forward. Many reversionists died at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar’s army, but the select few in Judah’s pivot were preserved in order to insure the ultimate restoration of the client nation.

Just as Jeremiah warned Judah for 23 years about its impending judgment, likewise I have spent a similar amount of time similarly warning this congregation. And, just as Jeremiah was ignored, I get the impression I have been, too. That’s fine, but there are obvious and distinct harbingers of economic disaster in our nation’s future.

The downfall of a client nation always starts in the pulpit:

(See visual: Five Areas of National Desolation.)

Jeremiah 12:10 - “Many shepherds have ruined My vineyard, they have trampled down My field; they have made My pleasant field a desolate wilderness.

¹ Charles L. Feinberg, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), 174–76.

v. 11 - "It has been made a desolation. Desolate, it mourns before Me; the whole land has been made desolate, because no man lays it to heart.

v. 12 - "On all the bare heights in the wilderness destroyers have come, for a sword of the Lord is devouring from one end of the land even to the other; there is no peace for anyone.

v. 13 - "They have sown wheat and have reaped thorns, they have strained themselves to no profit. But be ashamed of your harvest because of the fierce anger of the Lord." (NASB)

I'd like to go through the Five Areas of National Desolation: (1) Spiritual, (2) Military, (3) Economic, (4) Social, and (5) Soul:

The Spiritual Area. In the spiritual area we have the angelic conflict, the issue of the gospel, and the concept of relationship with the Lord. The desolation in the spiritual realm—pastors are destroying the vineyard; they have destroyed a spiritual heritage through false teachings and distortions of God's Word. (pp. 15–16)

The Jews ... achieved the destruction of their nation first of all in the spiritual realm through negative volition toward Bible doctrine. But there is also a second realm: the military establishment.

The Military Area. The regular army of Judah had virtually disappeared as a functional organization. Once this happens, there is a divine law that goes into operation: no nation ever survives the destruction of its military establishment. The military establishment is just as necessary to freedom as the Bill of Rights, since it is the military establishment that protects freedom and maintains its existence. Without the military establishment fighting for freedom, there is no freedom. There is a principle of doctrine found in the Scriptures: armies preserve freedom and armies destroy freedom. The desolation always begins with negative volition toward doctrine. Peace movements inevitably bring about the destruction of the military. First of all, it is discredited, and then finally neutralized as an effective organization. (p. 16)

There can be no realization of world peace until Jesus Christ returns to the earth. Jesus Himself said there would be wars and rumors of wars until He returns (Matt. 24:4–7). God has set up certain divine laws. ... a nation protect(s) its sovereignty and freedom through its military establishment! Whenever the military is being discredited, there is a conspiracy to destroy the nation. ... once you have freedom, you must maintain it by fighting for it! (p. 16–17)

The Economic Area. This third area of desolation is expressed in the first phrase of Jeremiah 12:13: "They have sown wheat, but shall reap thorns" [KJV]. The economic principle of Bible doctrine is free enterprise, which is the basis of our prosperity. Industry is employing foreign sources of labor because labor in this country is so far out of line with its ridiculous demands. The concept of free enterprise is being destroyed because the government has, in the name of ecology, welfare, ... forced its finger in every business and is slowly strangling our system.

How is it possible to put a seed of wheat in the ground and get a thorn? All you have to do is to encourage socialism and government intervention into industry. Where free enterprise is replaced by government control, that country is in trouble. (p. 17)

The Social Area. The social conspiracy is probably the most obvious. Real men are scarce, for they are being replaced by males with female souls. This is always a sign of degeneracy. ... anti-establishment, murder, the same type of promiscuity as in the days of the Baal activity in Judah, the rise of the racial revolution. All these factors in the area of social life lead to disintegration.

Basically, this country was designed to reward ability and hard work. There is a divine law which says that economic depression is designed to eliminate the weak or indolent. When cycles of depression occur and people starve to death, as they did in the Northern Kingdom in the days of Elijah, then the people become vigorous again. Economic depression preserves the vigor of the people.

We are today in the great social vacuum: dictatorial labor unions, no respect for authority, widespread drug addiction, lowered standards in public education, subjective and erroneous attitudes toward capital punishment and gun legislation. This is all a part of the social disintegration. It takes great character, courage, training, self-discipline and moral fiber to be successful in battle! These tragic conditions are related to the fifth area of desolation, for the spiritual, military, economic and social revolts are but the result of the desolation in the soul. (p. 18)

The Soul Area. The soul was designed to have relationship with God and with people; but the soul can get out of kilter. If you are negative toward God, and if you reject the principles which God has established, such as the divine institutions or the Ten Commandments, then your soul will fail to function properly; you will have an emotional revolt in the soul, and you will put scar tissue on the soul. (pp. 18–19)

The emotions are meant to be the appreciator of your soul. But, when your emotions start to dominate your thinking ... this is where the desolation begins. When you go negative toward God and Bible doctrine, when you become involved in promiscuity, drugs, mental attitude sins, such as hatred, bitterness, jealousy, etc., you will put scar tissue on your soul. Scar tissue means that your fellowship with God is shut down, and your relationship with other people is totally out of focus. A vacuum is created in the soul and false doctrine, human viewpoint and doctrines of demons are all sucked into your soul. That is desolation of soul!² (p. 19)

What did you think of that little dissertation? Did you think it was current enough? Well, I've got something to tell you: I read this from an out-of-print book, written by the Colonel in 1973. I don't know what the math is on that but it's something like thirty-five years. This is as pertinent today ... and it's about Jeremiah; it's about the passages we've looked at and others ... as pertinent today as it was thirty-five years ago except things are "worse" now than they were then.

² R. B. Thieme, Jr., *National Crisis*, rev. ed. (Houston: Berachah Tapes & Publications, 1973), 15–19.

As I read through my notes getting ready for tonight's Bible class, and as I went through this passage in Jeremiah, I was reminded of Jeremiah 12:10, "The shepherds have destroyed my vineyard." That sparked recall of this book, *National Crisis*. And I went and got it and looked at it and it hit me about the five areas of desolation, and as I read through it I could see that what was happening in Judah in the sixth century B.C. was happening in client nation America in 1973. And what's evaluated there is just as true today, except more so, as it was then.

The early events associated with the five cycles of discipline are already in evidence:

1. The first cycle: Loss of health, decline of agricultural prosperity, terror, fear, and death in combat, loss of personal freedoms due to negative volition toward Bible doctrine (Leviticus 26:14-17).
2. The second cycle: Economic recession and depression, increased personal and individual discipline for continued negative volition in spite of the first warning (Leviticus 26:18-20).
3. The third cycle: Violence and breakdown of law and order; severe restriction of travel and commerce (Leviticus 26:21-22).
4. The fourth cycle: Military conquest and/or foreign occupation, scarcity of food (reduced to one-tenth the normal supply), separation of families (Leviticus 26:23-26).
5. The fifth cycle: Destruction of the nation due to maximum rejection of biblical principles (Leviticus 26:27-39).³

We presently find ourselves in compromised situations regarding our economy: we are at least 12 trillion dollars in debt during what is described as a recession; we are considering laws and treaties that would create circumstances ripe for a depression: health care and cap and trade which will add several more trillion dollars to the debt. This will result in the failure of the dollar and the loss of triple-A credit rating. Loss of jobs and income will lead to the violence and the breakdown of law and order in the third cycle.

In an attempt to restore order the government will declare Martial Law by restricting travel and the flow of commerce. China may foreclose out debt which could make us subservient to a foreign power which is a communist dictatorship and whose military is now superior to ours in number and fast approaching superiority on the high seas.

The reason for the sudden demise of the United States as the world's dominant superpower is because of a loss of thought that is based on biblical truth. Doctrinal pastors have consistently taught the truth only to find there is no broad response to their warnings. Jeremiah's warnings to Judah were likewise ignored. The result of negative volition resulted in the destruction of the nation. We are not immune to a similar circumstance.

In John 8:31, Jesus is speaking to believers. They have been manumitted from the slave market of sin, but to utilize that freedom they must be willing to "continue in My Word."

To what kind of freedom does the Lord refer? Freedom from the slave market of sin makes freedom from the dictates of the sin nature possible. But freedom to serve God requires concentration on the content and guidance of His Word so that they know what to do.

³ R. B. Thieme, Jr., *Freedom through Military Victory*, ed., R. B. Thieme III (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2003), 16n13.

Freedom in this verse speaks of freedom to serve Christ, not political freedom from totalitarianism, communism, or tyranny; not physical freedom from slavery; not establishment freedom of natural law.

To legitimately serve Christ one must know His Word and be willing to amalgamate its “truth” into the soul’s long-term memory for application. In the past, application of divine viewpoint has and will surely again cause many to become politically or physically enslaved for their beliefs.

John 8:31b - “If [ἐάν *ean*: 3CC] you continue in My word [**positive volition to doctrine**], then you are truly disciples of Mine,

v. 32 - and you will know the truth [ἀλήθεια, *alētheia*: doctrine], and the truth will set you free [ἐλευθερώω, *eleutheroō*: to release form bondage into an environment of freedom to serve God].”

The Pharisees rudely interrupted the Lord with an arrogant rebuttal based on their genetic relationship to Abraham:

John 8:33 - They interrupted Him saying, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, ‘You will become free?’”

These Jews do not understand the concept of the heavenly community. They undeniably have the genes of Abraham but due to arrogance they reject Jesus as Messiah and, therefore, do not have the God of Abraham. Consequently, they are slaves to the oral law and the Mosaic Law they revere is now fulfilled in the One they interrupt.

The Lord’s response addresses the slavery of the Pharisee’s souls not the freedom implied by their genetic bloodline:

John 8:34 - Jesus answered them, “I am telling you the truth, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.

v. 35 - “The slave [**the unbeliever who is in bondage to the sin nature**] does not remain in the house forever [**exclusion from eternal life due to unbelief**]; the son [**the believer is the “son of God”**] does remain forever.

John 8:36 - “So if [3CC] the Son [**Messiah**] makes you free, being in this state of freedom you shall be free indeed.