

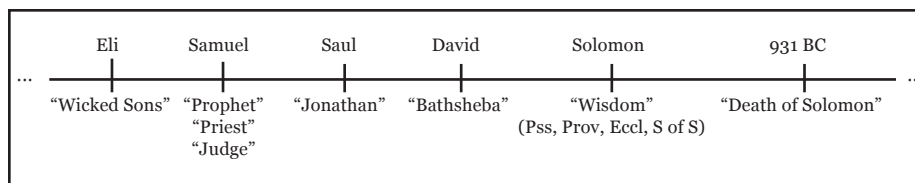
SESSION 1

Introduction to the Exile

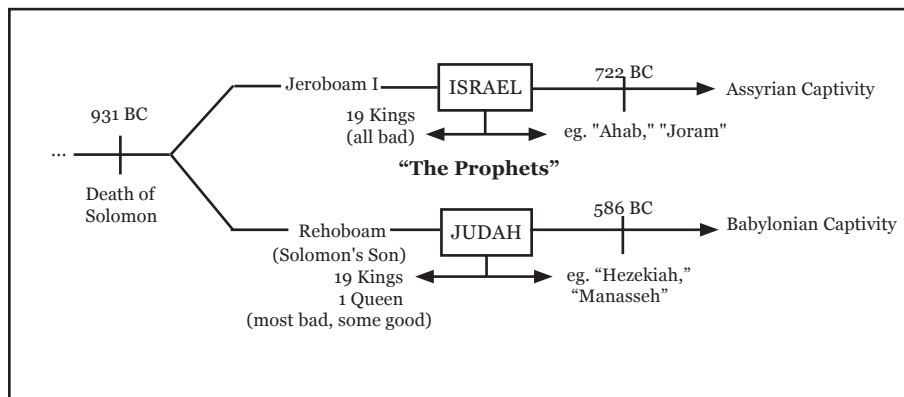
I. PRAYER

II. PANORAMA OF THE BIBLE: MOVEMENTS 6-8

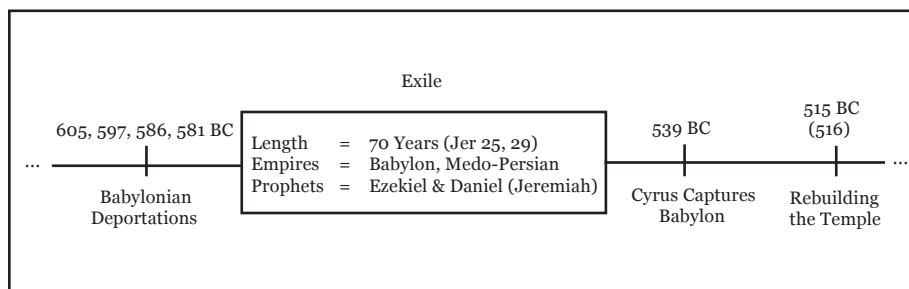
A. Movement 6: Kingship: United Monarchy



B. Movement 7: Kingship: Divided Monarchy



C. Movement 8: Exile



III. PANORAMA “TIMELINE” OVERVIEW (MOVEMENT 8)

The following overview follows the basic Panorama

Timeline. The biblical, historical narrative of the exile is brief. Some extra-biblical sources will be cited in this study. Also, the prophets Ezekiel and Daniel will provide some important source data for this period of the nation’s history.

Note carefully. Each of the following major points corresponds to an element of the Timeline (see page 7); the Timeline is a crucial component of the Panorama of the Bible series.

A. Deportations to Babylon

1. First Deportation (605 BC)

Daniel 1:1-2 (Daniel’s deportation)

In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. ² And the LORD delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried off to the temple of his god in Babylonia and put in the treasure house of his god.

The length of the “exile” was to be seventy years. This was made clear by the prophet Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 25:11-12

This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. ¹² “But when the seventy years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, the land of the Babylonians, for their guilt,” declares the LORD, “and will make it desolate forever.

Jeremiah 29:10

This is what the LORD says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place.”

However, historically the Jews were allowed to return to their homeland by Cyrus, the Persian conqueror of the Babylonians. His decree was recorded by Ezra the Scribe.

Ezra 1:1-5

In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and also to put it in writing: ²“This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: “‘The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. ³Any of his people among you may go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem, and may their God be with them. ⁴And in any locality where survivors may now be living, the people are to provide them with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for the temple of God in Jerusalem.’” ⁵Then the family heads of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and Levites—everyone whose heart God had moved—prepared to go up and build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem.

Thus, the first deportation began in 605 BC and ended in 538 BC, a time frame of about 67 years (or more if a partial year is counted as a full one). This number is rounded off by the prophets as seventy years, a not uncommon practice. (Recall that the Israelites wandered “forty years” in the wilderness, a round number for the actual thirty-eight plus years).

2. Second Deportation (597 BC) (Ezekiel’s deportation)

The second deportation took place during the brief reign of young King Jehoiachin (598-597 BC).

2 Kings 24:8-14

Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. His mother's name was Nehushta daughter of Elnathan; she was from Jerusalem. ⁹ He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father had done. ¹⁰ At that time the officers of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon advanced on Jerusalem and laid siege to it, ¹¹ and Nebuchadnezzar himself came up to the city while his officers were besieging it. ¹² Jehoiachin king of Judah, his mother, his attendants, his nobles and his officials all surrendered to him. In the eighth year of the reign of the king of Babylon, he took Jehoiachin prisoner. ¹³ As the LORD had declared, Nebuchadnezzar removed the treasures from the temple of the LORD and from the royal palace, and cut up the gold articles that Solomon king of Israel had made for the temple of the LORD. ¹⁴ He carried all Jerusalem into exile: all the officers and fighting men, and all the skilled workers and artisans—a total of ten thousand. Only the poorest people of the land were left.

Thousands of Jews were taken captive including soldiers, craftsmen, and leading citizens of the nation. Among those was Ezekiel, the prophet, who was called to prophetic ministry while in exile and prophesied from around 593-571 BC.

Ezekiel 1:1-3

In my thirtieth year, in the fourth month on the fifth day, while I was among the exiles by the Kebar River, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. ² On the fifth of the month—it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin—³ the word of the LORD came to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, by the Kebar River in the land of the Babylonians. There the hand of the LORD was on him.

3. Third Deportation (586 BC - Destruction of Jerusalem)

The utter destruction of Jerusalem (including the Temple) occurred in 586 BC. Once again, due to the rebellion of King Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar returned in fury to Jerusalem.

2 Kings 24:15, 17-20

Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin captive to Babylon. He also took from Jerusalem to Babylon the king's mother, his wives, his officials and the prominent people of the land... ¹⁷He made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle, king in his place and changed his name to Zedekiah. ¹⁸Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. His mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah; she was from Libnah. ¹⁹He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, just as Jehoiakim had done. ²⁰It was because of the LORD's anger that all this happened to Jerusalem and Judah, and in the end he thrust them from his presence. Now Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

2 Kings 25:1-7

So in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his whole army. He encamped outside the city and built siege works all around it. ²The city was kept under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. ³By the ninth day of the fourth month the famine in the city had become so severe that there was no food for the people to eat. ⁴Then the city wall was broken through, and the whole army fled at night through the gate between the two walls near the king's garden, though the Babylonians were surrounding the city. They fled toward the Arabah, ⁵but the Babylonian army pursued the king and overtook him in the plains of Jericho. All his soldiers were separated from him and scattered, ⁶and he was captured. He was taken to the king of Babylon at Riblah, where sentence was pronounced on him. ⁷They killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes. Then they put out his eyes, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon.

Exile away from the Promised Land was the ultimate act of divine discipline heaped upon a rebellious, obstinate people. Moses had prophesied this very thing would happen if the people of God were stubbornly rebellious and disobedient.

Deuteronomy 30:15-18

See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. ¹⁶For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. ¹⁷But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, ¹⁸I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.

4. Fourth Deportation (581 BC)

The prophet Jeremiah records the appointment by Nebuchadnezzar of Gedaliah as governor (not king) of Judah (Jer 40). But Gedaliah was assassinated by zealous Jewish nationalists who fled toward Ammon. This action caused Nebuchadnezzar to once again order that a number of additional Jews be taken into exile to Babylon (Jer 52:30).

B. Exile “Box”

Note again the Panorama timeline for Movement 8 (see page 7). On the chart, following the dates of the four major deportations, comes a summary “box” of key data for the Exile. This box includes three important facts for consideration in Movement 8: Length, Empires, and Prophets (LEP).

1. Length (of Exile)... 70 years

As noted previously, Jeremiah the prophet had recorded the Lord Almighty’s decree that the exile would last 70 years (Jer 25:11-12; Jer 29:10-12).

The exile began in 605 BC with Nebuchadnezzar’s defeat of the Egyptian armies at Carchemish and subsequent turn south to attack, ransack, and deport some Jewish people of Jerusalem back to Babylon. Later in 539 BC, the Babylonians were defeated by the Medo-Persians. Within a year, an imperial decree was issued by Cyrus, the king of Persia (see Ezra 1:1-4), to allow the first

Jewish exiles to return to the homeland in 538 BC. This, then, established the approximate length of the exile at about 70 years (a round number).

2. Empires: Babylonia and Medo-Persia

Two empires figure prominently in the exile period of Judah's captivity. A brief overview of each is given.

a. Babylonia

1. The nation was located in the southern regions of Mesopotamia between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers (see page 5).
2. The nation's rise and fall in prominence occurred approximately from 2000-500 BC. The first biblical reference to Babylon is found in Genesis 10:8-10 where Nimrod (some scholars equate him with Sargon the Great) is linked to Babylon (ca. 2300 BC).
3. The nation's chief antagonist was Assyria. Around 1270 BC, Assyria defeated Babylon, thus relegating the once powerful nation to a second-class status as an empire.
4. The nation spurred by Nabopolassar later broke free of Assyria in 626 BC and the king led the nation to again becoming a great and powerful empire. His son, Nebuchadnezzar, led the nation to its greatest heights. He used the spoils of war to build Babylon, the capital city, into a leading city of the ancient world. The hanging gardens of Babylon were considered one of the seven ancient wonders of the world.
5. The nation's religion (by around 1100 BC onward) was centered around the god, Marduk. This worship was effected by the temple rituals and festivals and attended by a specific priesthood.
6. The nation's cultural contributions included literature (eg. Enuma Elish, Gilgamesh Epic) and law (the Code of Hammurapi or Hammurabi as it often appears).

- b. Medo-Persia
 1. The nation (Media) was located south of the Caspian Sea, east of Assyria and north of the Persian Gulf.
 2. The Medes were of Indo-European stock; in the ninth and eighth centuries BC the Assyrians campaigned against the Medes and ultimately forced tribute upon Media, now a vassal state of Assyria (as evidenced with Sargon II's victory over the Medes in 710 BC).
 3. The Medes later joined forces with rising Babylon to defeat Assyria by capturing the ancient capital city of Asshur in 614 BC and the current capital of Nineveh in 612 BC. This brought down the powerful Assyrian empire (cf. Nah 2:3; 3:19).
 4. The Median empire reached its peak around the time of Nebuchanezzar of Babylon to the time of Jeremiah (605-552 BC).
 5. The Persian king, Cyrus II, defeated Media in 549 BC. Cyrus was known for his humane treatment of conquered peoples (eg. the Jews return to Jerusalem) and forged Media into a kind of dual nation, thus the Medo-Persians.
 6. Cyrus II conquered Babylon in 539 BC and thus ended the Babylonian rule over exiled Jews. A subsequent decree would allow the willing Jews to return to their homeland.
3. Prophets: Ezekiel, Daniel (also Jeremiah in part)
 - a. Ezekiel

Ezekiel was a priest taken to Babylon in the second deportation of Jews into exile (597 BC). While in Babylon he received his call to be a prophet (Ezek 2). The Book of Ezekiel contains the visions and oracles that he received while in captivity ("the exile"). Likely he heard of the destruction of Jerusalem (586 BC) while living in Babylon and this may be reflected in the last third of the book (temple visions of Ezek 40-48).

b. Daniel

Daniel with his three friends (and others) were captives taken in the first deportation (605 BC). He with his companions were trained to serve in the Babylonian court (Dan 1:1-6). As a prophet, Daniel was Spirit-enabled to interpret dreams (e.g. Nebuchadnezzar—see Dan 2) and further received divine revelation concerning future events. Of special note is the prophecy of the Statue (Dan 2) and the Four Beasts (Dan 7), each of which pointed prophetically to empires that would exert authority over the Jews (Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome/ Revised Roman empire).

c. Jeremiah

Jeremiah was called to be a prophet before even he was in his mother's womb (Jer 1:5). His prophetic ministry overlapped the last three kings of Judah (Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin [or Jeconiah as he was called], and Zedekiah). The prophet saw the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, lived through the brief governorship of Gedaliah, and prophesied in the early years of the exile. He was taken to Egypt against his will (Jer 43:4-7) and may have died there (so thought certain of the church fathers; some rabbinic writings suggest he was taken with Baruch his secretary to Babylon where he died there).

C. Final Key Dates of the Exile

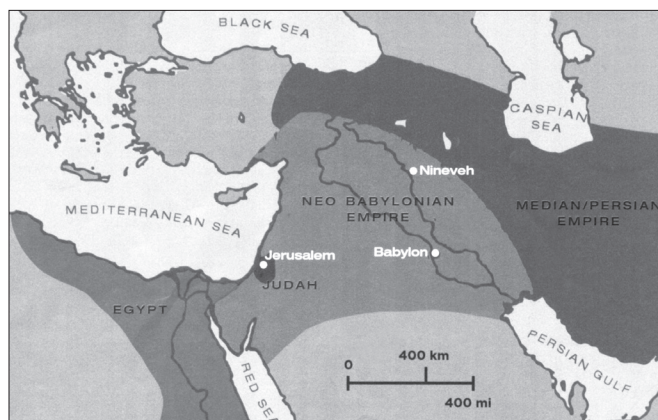
Refer again to Movement 8 ("The Exile") and the Timeline on page 7. Two final dates are of key importance to this movement.

1. 539 BC

- a. "The first submission of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 605 BC ushered in a period described by Jeremiah as the seventy-year captivity, a period that began in that year AND ENDED WITH THE OVERTHROW OF BABYLON IN 539 BC" (caps used for emphasis) (E. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 469).

- b. Cyrus II (the Great) defeated Babylon in 539 BC. Nabonidus, the last of the Kings of the Neo-Babylonian empire, was an absent king. For fourteen years prior to the defeat of Babylon, this king had left the leadership and government of the empire to his less capable son, Belshazzar. He then pursued other interests outside that of kingdom rule. In October of 539 BC, the forces of the Medo-Persians entered Babylon, Belshazzar was slain (cf. Dan 5), and thus, this momentous event would precede the soon royal decree of Cyrus II to allow willing Jews to return to their homeland (thus ending the captivity).
2. 516 BC
- a. The "Return from Exile" (Movement 9) began with the issuing of the decree of Cyrus II in 538 BC (cf. Ez 1:1-14). Exiled Jews returned to their home.
 - b. Upon returning to devastated Jerusalem and the desecrated Temple, the people began to lay the foundations to rebuild the destroyed Temple. Due to conflicts and harassment, the work was impeded for 16 years.
 - c. The Temple was finally completed in 516-15 BC. (This will be covered in more detail in Movement 9: Return from Exile).

IV. MAP: BABYLONIAN EMPIRE: TIME OF THE "EXILE"



V. BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

A. An Overview

1. Date: 586 BC (Judah defeated and Jerusalem ransacked)
2. Babylonians (or Neo-Babylonians) conquered the Assyrian capital of Nineveh in 612 BC; Nabopolassar placed his son, Nebuchadnezzar as co-regent of the Empire.
3. Nebuchadnezzar defeated Egyptian Pharaoh Neco at Carchemish in 605 BC and proceeded to Jerusalem where he defeated the Jews and took Daniel and his companions captive (back to Babylon).
4. Jeremiah the prophet would later chronicle three further deportations to Babylon (597, 586, 581 BC); refer to Jeremiah 52:27^b-30.
5. Treatment in Babylon was difficult but not harsh (as a concentration camp). Law-abiding captives could own homes, engage in commerce and be a part of the overall culture (Jer 29:4-7; Ezek 8:1; 12:1-7).
6. Religiously, some Jews fully assimilated into the culture while others were more separatist. During this time away from the Temple and certain religious feasts/observances, the Synagogue emerged as a place for study of the Law.

(Taken from Cupp, *Panorama of the Bible*, Rev., 145)

B. Lament and Sorrow over the Exile

1. Psalm 137
*By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept
when we remembered Zion.*
²*There on the poplars
we hung our harps,*
³*for there our captors asked us for songs,
our tormentors demanded songs of joy;
they said, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"*

⁴*How can we sing the songs of the Lord
while in a foreign land?*
⁵*If I forget you, Jerusalem,
may my right hand forget its skill.*

⁶ *May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth
if I do not remember you,
if I do not consider Jerusalem
my highest joy.*

⁷ *Remember, LORD, what the Edomites did
on the day Jerusalem fell.
"Tear it down," they cried,
"tear it down to its foundations!"*

⁸ *Daughter Babylon, doomed to destruction,
happy is the one who repays you
according to what you have done to us.*

⁹ *Happy is the one who seizes your infants
and dashes them against the rocks.*

2. Lamentations (selections)

a. Lamentations 1:1-3

*How deserted lies the city,
once so full of people!
How like a widow is she,
who once was great among the nations!
She who was queen among the provinces
has now become a slave.*

² *Bitterly she weeps at night,
tears are on her cheeks.
Among all her lovers
there is no one to comfort her.
All her friends have betrayed her;
they have become her enemies.*

³ *After affliction and harsh labor,
Judah has gone into exile.
She dwells among the nations;
she finds no resting place.
All who pursue her have overtaken her
in the midst of her distress.*

b. Lamentations 1:7-8

*In the days of her affliction and wandering
Jerusalem remembers all the treasures
that were hers in days of old.
When her people fell into enemy hands,*

*there was no one to help her.
Her enemies looked at her
and laughed at her destruction.*

*⁸ Jerusalem has sinned greatly
and so has become unclean.
All who honored her despise her,
for they have all seen her naked;
she herself groans
and turns away.*

c. Lamentations 2:1-3

*How the LORD has covered Daughter Zion
with the cloud of his anger!
He has hurled down the splendor of Israel
from heaven to earth;
he has not remembered his footstool
in the day of his anger.*

*² Without pity the LORD has swallowed up
all the dwellings of Jacob;
in his wrath he has torn down
the strongholds of Daughter Judah.
He has brought her kingdom and its princes
down to the ground in dishonor.*

*³ In fierce anger he has cut off
every horn of Israel.
He has withdrawn his right hand
at the approach of the enemy.
He has burned in Jacob like a flaming fire
that consumes everything around it.*

d. Lamentations 2:14, 17-18

*The visions of your prophets
were false and worthless;
they did not expose your sin
to ward off your captivity.
The prophecies they gave you
were false and misleading.*

*¹⁷ The LORD has done what he planned;
he has fulfilled his word,*

*which he decreed long ago.
He has overthrown you without pity,
he has let the enemy gloat over you,
he has exalted the horn of your foes.*

¹⁸ *The hearts of the people
cry out to the LORD.
You walls of Daughter Zion,
let your tears flow like a river
day and night;
give yourself no relief,
your eyes no rest.*

e. Lamentations 3:19-24

*I remember my affliction and my wandering,
the bitterness and the gall.*

²⁰ *I well remember them,
and my soul is downcast within me.*

²¹ *Yet this I call to mind
and therefore I have hope:*

²² *Because of the LORD's great love we are not
consumed,
for his compassions never fail.*

²³ *They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.*

²⁴ *I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion;
therefore I will wait for him."*

f. Lamentations 5:19-22

*You, LORD, reign forever;
your throne endures from generation to generation.*

²⁰ *Why do you always forget us?
Why do you forsake us so long?*

²¹ *Restore us to yourself, LORD, that we may return;
renew our days as of old*

²² *unless you have utterly rejected us
and are angry with us beyond measure.*

VI. JEREMIAH AND THE “EXILE”

A. Pre-exilic Ministry

Jeremiah, often called the “weeping prophet,” began his prophetic ministry around 626 BC. He warned the southern nation of Judah of the dire consequences of continuing to rebel against the Lord.

1. Jeremiah 2:1-5

The word of the LORD came to me: ² “Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem:

“This is what the LORD says:

*“‘I remember the devotion of your youth,
how as a bride you loved me
and followed me through the wilderness,
through a land not sown.*

*³ Israel was holy to the LORD,
the firstfruits of his harvest;
all who devoured her were held guilty,
and disaster overtook them,’”
declares the LORD.*

*⁴ Hear the word of the LORD, you descendants of Jacob,
all you clans of Israel.*

⁵ This is what the LORD says:

*“What fault did your ancestors find in me,
that they strayed so far from me?
They followed worthless idols
and became worthless themselves.*

2. Jeremiah 2:13,19

*“My people have committed two sins:
They have forsaken me,
the spring of living water,
and have dug their own cisterns,
broken cisterns that cannot hold water...*

*¹⁹ Your wickedness will punish you;
your backsliding will rebuke you.
Consider then and realize
how evil and bitter it is for you*

*when you forsake the LORD your God
and have no awe of me,”
declares the LORD, the LORD Almighty.*

Yet, the nation did not heed the prophet’s message. What followed was the prediction of God’s judgment and coming disaster (namely, the arrival of the Babylonian invaders).

3. Jeremiah 4:13-18

*Look! He advances like the clouds,
his chariots come like a whirlwind,
his horses are swifter than eagles.
Woe to us! We are ruined!*

¹⁴ *Jerusalem, wash the evil from your heart and be saved.
How long will you harbor wicked thoughts?*

¹⁵ *A voice is announcing from Dan,
proclaiming disaster from the hills of Ephraim.*

¹⁶ *“Tell this to the nations,
proclaim concerning Jerusalem:*

*‘A besieging army is coming from a distant land,
raising a war cry against the cities of Judah.*

¹⁷ *They surround her like men guarding a field,
because she has rebelled against me,’”
declares the LORD.*

¹⁸ *“Your own conduct and actions
have brought this on you.
This is your punishment.
How bitter it is!
How it pierces to the heart!”*

B. Fall of Jerusalem

Jeremiah describes the fall of the city to the Babylonian armies.

1. Jeremiah 39:1-4

In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his whole army and laid siege to it. ² And on the ninth day of the fourth month of Zedekiah’s eleventh year, the city wall was broken through. ³ Then all the officials of the king of Babylon came and took seats in the Middle Gate: Nergal-

Sharezer of Samgar, Nebo-Sarsekim a chief officer, Nergal-Sharezer a high official and all the other officials of the king of Babylon. ⁴ When Zedekiah king of Judah and all the soldiers saw them, they fled; they left the city at night by way of the king's garden, through the gate between the two walls, and headed toward the Arabah.

When the king of Judah, Zedekiah, saw the walls breached, he fled with his soldiers toward Arabah (Jordan Valley). However, his flight did not succeed as he was overtaken and brutally treated by the Babylonian victors (cf. Jer 39:5-7). Next, Jerusalem was destroyed.

2. Jeremiah 39: 8-10

The Babylonians set fire to the royal palace and the houses of the people and broke down the walls of Jerusalem. ⁹ Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard carried into exile to Babylon the people who remained in the city, along with those who had gone over to him, and the rest of the people. ¹⁰ But Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard left behind in the land of Judah some of the poor people, who owned nothing; and at that time he gave them vineyards and fields.

C. Exilic Ministry

- a. Jeremiah was spared by Nebuchadnezzar and given his freedom (Jer 40:1-6).
- b. Jeremiah recorded the brief governorship of Gedaliah and his assassination (Jer 40:7 ff).
- c. Jeremiah prophesied to the remnant that the Lord directed them to stay in the land and not flee elsewhere.

Jeremiah 42:13-18

"However, if you say, 'We will not stay in this land,' and so disobey the LORD your God, ¹⁴ and if you say, 'No, we will go and live in Egypt, where we will not see war or hear the trumpet or be hungry for bread,' ¹⁵ then hear the word of the LORD, you remnant of Judah. This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'If you are determined to go to Egypt and you do go to settle there,

¹⁶ then the sword you fear will overtake you there, and the famine you dread will follow you into Egypt, and there you will die. ¹⁷ Indeed, all who are determined to go to Egypt to settle there will die by the sword, famine and plague; not one of them will survive or escape the disaster I will bring on them.' ¹⁸ This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'As my anger and wrath have been poured out on those who lived in Jerusalem, so will my wrath be poured out on you when you go to Egypt. You will be a curse and an object of horror, a curse and an object of reproach; you will never see this place again.' "

VII. TAKEAWAYS

A. Theological Observation

The Exile was not a haphazard historical event without true theological meaning. God's covenant people had consistently sinned against God's will and ways and the captivity was His hand of judgment.

Deuteronomy 28:15, 49-52

However, if you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come on you and overtake you... ⁴⁹ The LORD will bring a nation against you from far away, from the ends of the earth, like an eagle swooping down, a nation whose language you will not understand, ⁵⁰ a fierce-looking nation without respect for the old or pity for the young. ⁵¹ They will devour the young of your livestock and the crops of your land until you are destroyed. They will leave you no grain, new wine or olive oil, nor any calves of your herds or lambs of your flocks until you are ruined. ⁵² They will lay siege to all the cities throughout your land until the high fortified walls in which you trust fall down. They will besiege all the cities throughout the land the LORD your God is giving you.

B. Biblical Life Principle: Confession and Repentance

However, judgment would not be final if the people of God repented.

Deuteronomy 30:1-3

When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come on you and you take them to heart wherever the LORD your God disperses you among the nations,² and when you and your children return to the LORD your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today,³ then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you.

Note well! This principle applies to Christian living as well. Because of our sin God may discipline us (Heb 12:7-11), but through confession and repentance we may be restored (1 Jn 1:9).

C. Examples and Warnings

Biblical history has great value for believers today. Hear the Apostle Paul's insight in this regard.

1 Corinthians 10:6-12

Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.⁷ Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry."⁸ We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died.⁹ We should not test Christ, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes.¹⁰ And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.¹¹ These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come.¹² So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!