

Sunday School Lesson

A. D. Cann

June 22, 1947

THE FALL OF THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM

Lesson: 2 Kings 25:1-12

Golden Text: Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

Proverbs 14:34

Zedekiah was the last king of Judah and was another son of the good king Josiah. He was young when he came to the throne and proved to be a very wicked king. Zedekiah was not made king by the voice of the people but was placed there by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

JERUSALEM WARNED BY THE FIRST AND SECOND CAPTIVITY

(1) The first captivity. It occurred about the year 605 B. C. in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim. It was at this time that Daniel and his friends were carried captives to Babylon. Daniel 1:1-6. The first captivity was a voice of warning from God for the nation to repent of its sins and receive God's mercy. (2) The second captivity: It occurred about 597 B. C., during the reign of Jehoiachin. The city of Jerusalem was captured. A large number of people were taken down to Babylon. Treasure was taken from the palace and from the temple. Notice that Jerusalem was captured, but not destroyed. There were devastations of the country from which a few years would be sufficient to recover. The judgments came slowly and in mercy, giving time for repentance and reformation. Prophets were sent to warn and entreat, but sad to say they were of little avail.

JERUSALEM DESTROYED DURING THE THIRD CAPTIVITY

The immediate occasion of Jerusalem's downfall was a foolish rebellion of Zedekiah against Babylon. The cause of her destruction was as follows: (1) Zedekiah makes a covenant with Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, then enters into a league with neighbouring princes, especially Egypt. Afterwards he revolts against Babylon. For this deceitful, treacherous conduct he is reproved by Ezekiel. See chapter 17:13-20. (2) Nebuchadnezzar plans another invasion of Judah, and leads thither a large army. (3) Egypt redeems her pledge by bringing aid to Zedekiah. (4) Evidently the Egyptians were defeated for the siege against Judah was continued. (5) In the year 586 the famine in Jerusalem became severe. See Lam. 4:3-10. The people were so destitute for food that cannibalism was not unknown and human flesh was eaten. (6) At this point Jerusalem fell a victim to her enemies.

THE FATE OF ZEDEKIAH

"The city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden (now the Chaldees were against the city round about) and the king went the way toward the plain." A breach was made in the wall by the Chaldeans, and at night Zedekiah and his men of war fled from a south gate. They are pursued by the Chaldeans and overtaken near Jericho. Zedekiah's sons were slain in his presence, the last thing he sees in this world—and then his own eyes are put out. His treachery was rewarded with fearful punishment. To complete the destruction of Jerusalem a short time later, a general under Nebuchadnezzar burns the temple, all the houses of value in the city and breaks down the wall. The sacred vessels and all the valuable metals are carried to Babylon. All the people are also taken except the very poorest. Zedekiah remained a prisoner in Babylon until the day of his death. Jer. 52:11.

June 29, 1947

ENDURING CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE NATION

Lesson: Psalm 119:105; Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 6:1-8

Golden Text: He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths. Isaiah 2:3

The lesson today is more or less a review of the past quarter. Our lesson title suggests a discussion of the chief factors which make Israel's history of value to us still.

OUR HERITAGE FROM ISRAEL'S HISTORY

The history of the Old Testament was written for our admonition. I. Cor. 10:11. In reviewing the history of Israel from the time it became a centralized nation we have (1) The rejection of Saul because of his disobedience. (2) The apostasy of Solomon led to the rending of the kingdom from his son Rehoboam. (3) The failure of Jeroboam led to the extinction of his dynasty. (4) The sins of the Northern Kingdom led to its captivity and destruction. (5) The sins of Judah paved the way for its destruction. On the other hand let us remember that while Jerusalem was destroyed, the Jews were not extinguished. God still has a work for the converted Jew to do. The Jew as well as the Gentile has a bright future providing salvation through Christ is accepted. God's dealings with the Jew should be an object lesson to us. We are more responsible for truth than they were, because we have their example which we can observe and profit by.

OUR HERITAGE FROM ISRAEL'S FAITH

Outside of Israel the world was full of Polytheism. The worship of these "many gods" was often attended by immoral rites of the most degrading kind. In Israel Jehovah was recognized as the One Supreme Being; the only true God. Said David—"Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light unto my path." As a light is indispensable in darkness so God's Word is indispensable to truth and guidance. Israel's standard of faith as set forth by its accredited leaders was her heritage and ours. Idolatry was the outstanding sin that caused the Jews to be led into captivity. Since that time the monotheism of the Jews has been unwavering. Yes, we owe our ideas of God to the Jew. Let it be remembered, however, that the Jews were cut off because of their unbelief. The root sin, that condemns both Jew and Gentile is unbelief in God. The Jews cherished that unbelief and hence their separation from their national home. Let us not cherish that unbelief lest we be likewise punished.

OUR HERITAGE FROM ISRAEL'S LITERATURE

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." This verse has been called the climax of Old Testament ethics. It is the holiness of Jesus Christ inwrought in the heart of the believer that makes such ethics possible in the life of the Christian. Perhaps our greatest heritage in the realm of literature is from the prophet Isaiah. He saw beyond his own generation and described the salvation of our own day procured through Jesus Christ. Reaching still farther he makes known to us the earthly reign of Christ when—"he shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." This is future time and cannot be fulfilled until such time as sin is destroyed from the hearts of men. We might add that such national relations cannot be realized by human legislation alone. It can and will be gloriously true, however, when men's hearts are governed by the Prince of Peace.

TEMPERED TRUTHS

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the prey. If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness and comfort myself, I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that Thou wilt not hold me innocent. If I be wicked, why then labor I in vain? If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt Thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me. For He is not a man as I am that I should answer Him, and we should come together in Judgment. Neither is there any Daysman betwixt us that He might lay His hand upon us both. Let Him take His rod away from me, and let not His fear terrify me; then would I speak and not fear Him, but it is not so with me." I suggest that until a man's faith has discovered the "Daysman" that Job apparently had not discovered, thoughts of God cannot be otherwise than terrifying to him. Hence the admonition, "Believe also in Me." Faith in Christ is the cure for troubled hearts. God's holiness terrifies until man in Christ is reconciled. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Christ is, "The Way" to God; "The Truth", or manifestation of God; and "The Life" which makes possible our becoming "sons of God." The man who has only mastered enough truth to say, "I believe in God", is left where Isaiah was when he cried, "I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts!"

Happy is the man who is able to say, "I believe in God the Father Almighty; Maker of Heaven and Earth, And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost; born of the virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead." Happy is the man, who by the Holy Ghost can say, "That Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Christ is the Manifestation of the Father; Christ is the Way unto the Father; Christ is the basis of all spiritual life; Christ is the Cure for troubled hearts. "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me."

OBITUARY

The death of Mona Pauline Farnham occurred at the home of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Farnham, Victoria, on Friday afternoon, May 30. Miss Farnham was 29 years of age on March 2nd and had been in failing health for over 6 months.

She is survived by her parents, three brothers, Ronald, Dean and Vince, and five sisters, Miss Avis Farnham, Mrs. Earl London, Mrs. Clifton London, Mrs. Paul Robertson, and Miss Gene Farnham, besides many other relatives and friends.

The funeral service was conducted on Sunday afternoon at the home and the Reformed Baptist Church at Victoria of which Miss Farnham was a member. The pastor, Rev. A. D. Cann was assisted by Rev. H. C. Mullen. The Hartland Reformed Baptist choir sang appropriate selections. It is hard to understand why this young woman was cut down in the prime of life, but it is comforting to know that she was ready to meet her Lord.