

### The Cup of God's Wrath

#### Jeremiah 25:12-38

**Jeremiah 25:12-29** - *“Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,’ says the Lord; ‘and I will make it a perpetual desolation. <sup>13</sup> So I will bring on that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied concerning all the nations. <sup>14</sup> (For many nations and great kings shall be served by them also; and I will repay them according to their deeds and according to the works of their own hands.)”*

*<sup>15</sup> For thus says the Lord God of Israel to me: “Take this wine cup of fury from My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it. <sup>16</sup> And they will drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them.”*

*<sup>17</sup> Then I took the cup from the Lord's hand, and made all the nations drink, to whom the Lord had sent me: <sup>18</sup> Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, its kings and its princes, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, a hissing, and a curse, as it is this day; <sup>19</sup> Pharaoh king of Egypt, his servants, his princes, and all his people; <sup>20</sup> all the mixed multitude, all the kings of the land of Uz, all the kings of the land of the Philistines (namely, Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod); <sup>21</sup> Edom, Moab, and the people of Ammon; <sup>22</sup> all the kings of Tyre, all the kings of Sidon, and the kings of the coastlands which are across the sea; <sup>23</sup> Dedan, Tema, Buz, and all who are in the farthest corners; <sup>24</sup> all the kings of Arabia and all the kings of the mixed multitude who dwell in the desert; <sup>25</sup> all the kings of Zimri, all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Medes; <sup>26</sup> all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another; and all the kingdoms of the world which are on the face of the earth. Also the king of Sheshach shall drink after them.*

*<sup>27</sup> “Therefore you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Drink, be drunk, and vomit! Fall and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you.”’ <sup>28</sup> And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup from your hand to drink, then you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: “You shall certainly drink! <sup>29</sup> For behold, I begin to bring calamity on the city that is called by My name, and should you be utterly unpunished? You shall not be unpunished, for I will call for a sword on all the inhabitants of the earth,” says the Lord of hosts.”’*

#### Background Notes

The object lesson of the good figs and the bad figs was discussed in Jeremiah 24. The good ripe figs represented the Jewish captives who were taken to Babylon. There they were purged from their idolatry. There they copied and preserved the Scriptures. Meanwhile, the bad rotten figs represented the people who were not taken away, but remained in the land of Judah. They continued on in their idolatry. Those who escaped to Egypt continued in idolatry there, and they died in Egypt.

In the first half of Jeremiah 25 the Lord revealed that the Babylonian captivity would last for 70 years: *“And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years”* (v11).

There are two ways to calculate the 70 years of the Babylonian captivity:

- Start with 605 BC, when Nebuchadnezzar made his first attack on Jerusalem and carried away the first wave of captives, including Daniel. 70 years later, in 536 BC, the Jewish captives who were allowed to return from Babylon began the reconstruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.
- Start with 586 BC and the third attack on Jerusalem, when the Temple was destroyed and the rest of the captives were taken to Babylon. 70 years later, in 516 BC, the reconstructed Temple was completed.

In the second half of Jeremiah 25 the Lord revealed what would take place in reference to Babylon and the other nations after the 70 years of exile were completed.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. The nations of Jeremiah’s day experienced “the cup of God’s wrath.”

Even though God used the Babylonians to discipline His people, this did not justify their power-hungry conquest of Judah and other sovereign nations. Therefore, after Israel’s 70-year captivity, God would punish Babylon by bringing other nations against her, according to the prophecies of Jeremiah. *“Then it will come to pass, when seventy years are completed, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,’ says the Lord; ‘and I will make it a perpetual desolation. So I will bring on that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied concerning all the nations. (For many nations and great kings shall be served by them also; and I will repay them according to their deeds and according to the works of their own hands.)”*

This came true with the conquest of Babylon by the Medes and the Persians, and the nations that were allied with the Persian king, Cyrus the Great, at that time. There is also an End Time aspect to this prophecy, as we’ll see in the next doctrinal point.

Verses 15-26 revealed that in addition to Babylon, God was going to judge many nations in Jeremiah’s day because of their evil ways. The Lord showed Jeremiah a symbolic “cup of wrath.” He was to take this “cup” from the Lord’s hand, and symbolically give it to the nations to drink. These many nations and cities were listed in verses 18-26, beginning with Judah and ending with Sheshach - probably a code name for Babylon. Drinking the cup of God’s wrath would cause

these nations to stagger and fall like a drunken man (v16 & 27). No nation would be allowed to refuse to drink from the cup of God's wrath: *"And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup from your hand to drink, then you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "You shall certainly drink!" (v28).* The nations of Jeremiah's day experienced the cup of God's wrath.

## 2. The nations of the Last Days will experience "the sword of God's anger."

**Jeremiah 25:30-38** - *"Therefore prophesy against them all these words, and say to them:*

*'The Lord will roar from on high, and utter His voice from His holy habitation. He will roar mightily against His fold. He will give a shout, as those who tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. <sup>31</sup> A noise will come to the ends of the earth—for the Lord has a controversy with the nations; He will plead His case with all flesh. He will give those who are wicked to the sword,' says the Lord."*

*<sup>32</sup> Thus says the Lord of hosts: "Behold, disaster shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the farthest parts of the earth.*

*<sup>33</sup> And at that day the slain of the Lord shall be from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth. They shall not be lamented, or gathered, or buried; they shall become refuse on the ground.*

*<sup>34</sup> "Wail, shepherds, and cry! Roll about in the ashes, you leaders of the flock! For the days of your slaughter and your dispersions are fulfilled. You shall fall like a precious vessel. <sup>35</sup> And the shepherds will have no way to flee, nor the leaders of the flock to escape. <sup>36</sup> A voice of the cry of the shepherds, and a wailing of the leaders to the flock will be heard. For the Lord has plundered their pasture, <sup>37</sup> and the peaceful dwellings are cut down because of the fierce anger of the Lord. <sup>38</sup> He has left His lair like the lion. For their land is desolate because of the fierceness of the Oppressor, and because of His fierce anger."*

In verse 29, a transition was made from Jeremiah's day to the last days of the End Times. Notice the typical eschatological phrase used for the End Times: *"in that day"* (v33). God's judgment against the nations for their sin was only beginning in Jeremiah's day.

In verses 30-38 Jeremiah's prophecy of judgment moved on to the End Time, when God will fully judge all the nations of the earth. Notice the universal scope of this prophecy – against *all the inhabitants of the earth* (v29-30), to *the ends of the earth* (v31), the judgment of *all flesh* (v31), from *the remotest parts of the earth* (v32), and *from one end of the earth to the other* (v33).

These verses were written in Hebrew poetry (this is shown in most translations). God was pictured as a lion coming out of His den on high to attack the ungodly nations of the earth (v30 & 38). Another metaphor used was that of God treading on the nations as in a *winepress* (v30). The *sword of God's anger* will fall on the wicked. So many people will die that the

many bodies will lie unburied on the face of the ground: *“And at that day the slain of the Lord shall be from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth. They shall not be lamented, or gathered, or buried; they shall become refuse on the ground.”* (v33).

This sounds a lot like the book of Revelation, doesn't it? Well, no wonder! These verses describe the judgments of the future Tribulation period that are covered in the book of Revelation.

In that day, the leaders (*shepherds*) of the nations will not be able to escape. They will die along with their sheep: *“Wail, shepherds, and cry! Roll about in the ashes, you leaders of the flock! For the days of your slaughter and your dispersions are fulfilled. You shall fall like a precious vessel. And the shepherds will have no way to flee, nor the leaders of the flock to escape. A voice of the cry of the shepherds, and a wailing of the leaders to the flock will be heard. For the Lord has plundered their pasture, and the peaceful dwellings are cut down because of the fierce anger of the Lord”* (v34-37).

Notice that the phrase *“fierce anger of the Lord”* was used twice in verses 37-38: *“For the Lord has plundered their pasture, and the peaceful dwellings are cut down because of the fierce anger of the Lord. He has left His lair like the lion. For their land is desolate because of the fierceness of the Oppressor, and because of His fierce anger.”* The nations of the last days will experience the sword of God's anger.

## Practical Application

### Keep your eye on Babylon!

In verse 12 God said that Babylon would be destroyed and desolate forever – *“a perpetual desolation.”* But Babylon was never completely destroyed! When the Persians invaded, they didn't destroy Babylon - they just took it over. It was largely deserted for many years, but in fact Babylon exists today, and it is being rebuilt!

So how are we to explain verse 12 and the prophecy that Babylon would be destroyed and a “perpetual desolation”?

Answer: ***the prophecies about Babylon are not yet completely fulfilled.*** There is an eschatological aspect to these prophecies that is waiting until the End Times.

The book of Revelation discusses End Time Babylon and its final destruction. Read Revelation 17 and 18. Some Bible commentators have proposed that End Times “Babylon” in the book of Revelation is probably a code name for Rome. However, it now appears that the literal city of Babylon may actually emerge more and more in the coming days. Babylon will possibly be the center for the one-world government and one-world religion of the Last Days.

So - keep your eye on Babylon!