

Why Jerusalem Fell V

There is a great deal of general concern for the path being taken regarding the nation within which we live (presently, regardless of what nation that may be). We began the installments with two quotes regarding the fall of nations throughout history, i.e., declining moral values: decadence of the people, rapid increase in divorce and fall of the family: all of which are rapidly increasing. The purpose of these installment rests upon the increase of these in our society. However, the focus has been, not upon what the historians have to say about the fall of nations, but rather what God has to say, which was accomplished through the prophets.

The prophet Zephaniah was selected to cry out to the people of Judah in the early part of the reign of Josiah while he was yet young, and before his reforms. Another prophet also began his work not many years hence: Jeremiah (approximately 628), when Josiah began to execute reforms in Judah. In hindsight, it is evident the inhabitants of Jerusalem did not heed the words of Jehovah, spoken by Zephaniah. There was a lull, if you will, when Josiah began his reforms in approximately 621 B.C.: they were short lived (relatively speaking). Josiah was killed by Pharaoh Necho in 609 B.C. and his son Jehoiakim ultimately began to reign, and did so “eleven years in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah his God,” (II Chron. 36:5) as did Zedekiah who was to follow.

As Jeremiah’s work came about on the heels of Zephaniah, it is relatively safe to get the mind set of the inhabitants of Jerusalem pre and post-Zephaniah, and it was the same type of attitude that ushered in the fall of Jerusalem, as such an attitude has ushered in the fall of (historically) all nations. Therefore, what was the attitude of the people in reference to their God? Zephaniah 3:2 – “obeyed not the voice,” i.e., the voice of Jehovah as was spoken by the prophets: Zephaniah and ultimately Jeremiah.

In Jeremiah 7:23-29, Jehovah said, “this thing I commanded them, saying, Hearken unto my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people; and walk ye in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in their own counsels and in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward. Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them: yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff: they did worse than their fathers. And thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee. And thou shalt say unto them, This is the nation that hath not hearkened to the voice of Jehovah their God, nor received instruction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth. Cut off thy hair, O Jerusalem, and cast it away, and take up a lamentation on the bare heights; for Jehovah hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.”

The warning issued to the inhabitants of Jerusalem is one that transcends the ages: Jesus said, “Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matt. 7:21-23).