

In the last installments, the subject of the fall of nations has been the focus. Over the millenniums, why do nations rise and fall? In the last installment, the rise and fall of nations are established by God, ruled by God, and removed by God based upon their conduct and refusal to obey the voice of the Creator.

In this installment, our attention returns to the prophet Zephaniah (3:2) and a fifth indicator related to the fall of Jerusalem: “she received not correction.”

Correction is defined as, “properly chastisement; figuratively reproof, warning or instruction” (Strong’s). To chastise is often received as negative, or abusive. However, the Psalmist sheds this light upon chastisement: “He that chastiseth the nations, shall not he correct, Even he that teacheth man knowledge?” (94:10) One of the uses of correction is to restrain evil. The Targum (any of several translations of the Hebrew Bible or portions of it into the Aramaic language) puts it this way, “is it possible that he should give the law to his people, and, when they have sinned, should they not be corrected?” Solomon put it this way: “My son, despise not the chastening of Jehovah; Neither be weary of his reproof: For whom Jehovah loveth he reproveth; Even as a father the son in whom he delighteth” (Prov. 3:11-12). In the letter to the Hebrews the prophets further states, concerning the instruction of Solomon: “It is for chastening that ye endure; God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not? But if ye are without chastening, whereof all have been made partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed good to them; but he for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness. All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness. Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the palsied knees; and make straight paths for your feet, that that which is lame be not turned out of the way, but rather be healed” (12:7-13). Thus, the words of Solomon continue to ring true: “A fool despiseth his father's correction; But he that regardeth reproof getteth prudence” (Prov. 15:5).

As for Jerusalem, Jehovah said, through the prophet Jeremiah, “Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall; at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith Jehovah. Thus saith Jehovah, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way; and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls: but they said, We will not walk therein” (Jer. 6:15-16). And fall they did.

As apostle of Jesus Christ, Paul had this to say about correction: “But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully, as knowing this, that law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and unruly” (1 Tim. 1:8-9). Law is a tool that restrains the evil doer from doing their evil to you. However, times do not change “For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts” (2 Tim. 4:3). Ross Triplett