

Exile and the Promise of Restoration

WEEK 9 Old Testament (Multiply, pp. 237-250)

Sept. 29, 2013

DAY 1: God's Faithfulness and Israel's Disobedience

1. When I was a young Christian I was excited to read about the OT heroes of the faith. I didn't discover ANY superstars. Instead, I saw little parts of my heart lived out in the lives of a lot of O.T. people. The bible served as a mirror to help me see *in me* what I could not see on my own.
2. In spite of leading the people out of Egyptian slavery, deliverance from the Egyptian army, the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, the giving of the Ten Commandments, feeding and watering the people for forty years in a desert, giving them the Promised Land, defeating their surrounding enemies, the people slowly drew away from God and built their lives around themselves.
3. AT THE BEGINNING, God clearly spelled out the consequences that were inevitable!
Underline the ones that strike you the most.

Deuteronomy 28:15 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 upon you and overtake you: ¹⁶ You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the country. ¹⁷ Your basket and your kneading trough will be cursed. ¹⁸ The fruit of your womb will be cursed, and the crops of your land, and the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks. ¹⁹ You will be cursed when you come in and cursed when you go out. ²⁰ The LORD will send on you curses, confusion and rebuke in everything you put your hand to, until you are destroyed and come to sudden ruin because of the evil you have done in forsaking him. ²¹ The LORD will plague you with diseases until he has destroyed you from the land you are entering to possess. ²² The LORD will strike you with wasting disease, with fever and inflammation, with scorching heat and drought, with blight and mildew, which will plague you until you perish. ²³ The sky over your head will be bronze, the ground beneath you iron. ²⁴ The LORD will turn the rain of your country into dust and powder; it will come down from the skies until you are destroyed. ²⁵ The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. You will come at them from one direction but flee from them in seven, and you will become a thing of horror to all the kingdoms on earth. ²⁶ Your carcasses will be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and there will be no one to frighten them away. ²⁷ The LORD will afflict you with the boils of Egypt and with tumors, festering sores and the itch, from which you cannot be cured. ²⁸ The LORD will afflict you with madness, blindness and confusion of mind. ²⁹ At midday you will grope about like a blind man in the dark. You will be unsuccessful in everything you do; day after day you will be oppressed and robbed, with no one to rescue you. ³⁰ You will be pledged to be married to a woman, but another will take her and ravish her. You will build a house, but you will not live in it. You will plant a vineyard, but you will not even begin to enjoy its fruit. ³¹ Your ox will be slaughtered before your eyes, but you will eat none of it. Your donkey will be forcibly taken from you and will not be returned. Your sheep will be given to your enemies, and no one will rescue them. ³² Your sons and daughters will be given to another nation, and you will wear out your eyes watching for them day after day, powerless to lift a hand. ³³ A people that you do not know will eat what your land and labor produce, and you will have nothing but cruel oppression all your days. ³⁴ The sights you see will drive you mad. ³⁵ The LORD will afflict your knees and legs with painful boils that cannot be cured, spreading from the soles of your feet to the top of your head.

DAY 2: The Promise of Exile

1. Yesterday's reading was eye-opening! And we didn't even read all the warnings! The worst one we'll read now.

Deuteronomy 28:36 The LORD will drive you and the king you set over you to a nation unknown to you or your fathers. There you will worship other gods, gods of wood and stone. ³⁷ You will become a thing of horror and an object of scorn and ridicule to all the nations where the LORD will drive you. All these curses will come upon you. They will pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the LORD your God and observe the commands and decrees he gave you. ⁴⁶ They will be a sign and a wonder to you and your descendants forever. ⁴⁷ Because you did not serve the LORD your God joyfully and gladly in the time of prosperity, ⁴⁸ therefore in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and dire poverty, you will serve the enemies the LORD sends against you. He will put an iron yoke on your neck until he has destroyed you.

2. What struck you the most from this passage?

3. Were there any consequences that struck a chord with you? Was there anything close to what you have gone through? What was it.

4. This warning was given *before* the people entered the land!!! It's wasn't a situation where they "suddenly found themselves" in trouble. That passage of warning was as specific and crystal clear as could be. What strikes you about the timing of the warning?

5. Over the course of centuries, the people's response to the warnings of the prophets ranged from, "Who, us? What did we do to deserve anything like this?" to ANGER!!!! "How dare you bring this kind of bad news on good people!!!"

When you hear warnings from the bible what is your response?

- a. Doesn't apply to me.
- b. That was for another time, long ago.
- c. "I'm a good guy. Why would something like that happen to me?"
- d. "Uh oh. I hope God doesn't notice me."
- e. "God, is there something you're trying to uncover and expose? Help me to be humble."

DAY 3: A Divided and Defeated Kingdom

1. During the second generation after David, Israel split into two kingdoms: Israel and Judah. Israel immediately went into spiritual meltdown. Every king was evil and led the nation into ever-increasing evil. The prophets continued to speak to Israel, but the leaders and the people ignored the warnings. In 722 BC, Assyria invaded Israel, conquered the nation and led them back into captivity. If you were living in the other nation, Judah, and had prophets warning you that the same thing could happen to Judah and to you, what would your response have been?

2. **Underline** every reason you can find for Assyria's invasion and captivity of Israel:

2 Kings 17:3 Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up to attack Hoshea, who had been Shalmaneser's vassal and had paid him tribute. ⁴ But the king of Assyria discovered that Hoshea was a traitor, for he had sent envoys to So king of Egypt, and he no longer paid tribute to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year. Therefore Shalmaneser seized him and put him in prison. ⁵ The king of Assyria invaded the entire land, marched against Samaria and laid siege to it for three years. ⁶ In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and deported the Israelites to Assyria.... ⁷ All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of Egypt from under the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They worshiped other gods ⁸ and followed the practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before them, as well as the practices that the kings of Israel had introduced. ⁹ The Israelites secretly did things against the LORD their God that were not right. From watchtower to fortified city they built themselves high places in all their towns. ¹⁰ They set up sacred stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree. ¹¹ At every high place they burned incense, as the nations whom the LORD had driven out before them had done. They did wicked things that provoked the LORD to anger. ¹² They worshiped idols, though the LORD had said, "You shall not do this." ¹³ The LORD warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets and seers: "Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees, in accordance with the entire Law that I commanded your fathers to obey and that I delivered to you through my servants the prophets." ¹⁴ But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their fathers, who did not trust in the LORD their God. ¹⁵ They rejected his decrees and the covenant he had made with their fathers and the warnings he had given them. They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless. They imitated the nations around them although the LORD had ordered them, "Do not do as they do," and they did the things the LORD had forbidden them to do. ¹⁶ They forsook all the commands of the LORD their God ... ¹⁷ They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. They practiced divination and sorcery and sold themselves to do evil in the eyes of the LORD, provoking him to anger. ¹⁸ So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from his presence. Only the tribe of Judah was left, ¹⁹ and even Judah did not keep the commands of the LORD their God. They followed the practices Israel had introduced. ²⁰ Therefore the LORD rejected all the people of Israel; he afflicted them and gave them into the hands of plunderers, until he thrust them from his presence. ²¹ When he tore Israel away from the house of David, they made Jeroboam son of Nebat their king. Jeroboam enticed Israel away from following the LORD and caused them to commit a great sin. ²² The Israelites persisted in all the sins of Jeroboam and did not turn away from them ²³ until the LORD removed them from his presence, as he had warned through all his servants the prophets. So the people of Israel were taken from their homeland into exile in Assyria, and they are still there.

DAY 4: Israel in Exile

1. God refined the people through the suffering of exile and captivity. Ezekiel prophesies reminders about why the people are in exile. Underline the ones that stand out to you:

Ezekiel 36:16 Again the word of the LORD came to me: ¹⁷ "Son of man, when the people of Israel were living in their own land, they defiled it by their conduct and their actions. Their conduct was like a woman's monthly uncleanness in my sight. ¹⁸ So I poured out my wrath on them because they had shed blood in the land and because they had defiled it with their idols. ¹⁹ I dispersed them among the nations, and they were scattered through the countries; I judged them according to their conduct and their actions. ²⁰ And wherever they went among the nations they profaned my holy name, for it was said of them, 'These are the LORD's people, and yet they had to leave his land.' ²¹ I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel profaned among the nations where they had gone. ²² "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. ²³ I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them.

2. Ezekiel then prophesies about an upcoming future back in their homeland! Underline everything God would do for His people:

*Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes. ²⁴ "For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. ²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. ²⁶ **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.** ²⁸ You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God. ²⁹ I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you. ³⁰ I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine. ³¹ Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices. ³² I want you to know that I am not doing this for your sake, declares the Sovereign LORD. Be ashamed and disgraced for your conduct, O house of Israel! ³³ "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will resettle your towns, and the ruins will be rebuilt. ³⁴ The desolate land will be cultivated instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass through it. ³⁵ They will say, "This land that was laid waste has become like the garden of Eden; the cities that were lying in ruins, desolate and destroyed, are now fortified and inhabited." ³⁶ Then the nations around you that remain will know that I the LORD have rebuilt what was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate. I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it.' ³⁷ "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Once again I will yield to the plea of the house of Israel and do this for them: I will make their people as numerous as sheep, ³⁸ as numerous as the flocks for offerings at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts. So will the ruined cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the LORD."*

3. Why is 36:26-27 so important?

4. Thank God for this very work IN you!!!!

DAY 5: The New Covenant

1. What should have been apparent since Genesis 3 was this: "There is something wrong inside me. I don't want to do what I know I should do. I do want to do what I know I shouldn't do. I sense a pride in me that overcomes any felt need for God--either to make my life work like I want or to impact my world in a way that is meaningful and lasting. God, without Your help, I'll never be different!"

But, the "something wrong in me" 'creature' rarely allows me to admit any of that!!

So... God takes the initiative to do something about that problem within me...

Jeremiah 31:31 "The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. ³³ "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ³⁴ No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

2. What "NEW" thing does God set out to do? (31:31)

3. God handed Moses two stone tablets with His law written on them. What will God do for EVERY person by their birth? (31:33)

4. Let's look at yesterday's key verses:

Ezekiel 36:26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

5. What things does God promise those who come to Him?

6. What are these things so crucial?

7. Re-read question #1. How much do you resonate with that "testimony?" Jot down your thoughts...

8. Thank God for HIS work in your heart.