

Sunday, August 27, 2023

Mark Moser

Off to Exile: The Climax (and End?) of the Story of Israel

The Story of Israel, Episode 9 of 10

Jeremiah 7

The story of Israel is (true) history, it is sacred history, and it is our family history. We are telling this story in ten episodes: Promise, Salvation, Law, Land, Covenant, Temple, Division, Prophets, Exile, and Restoration. Today is episode #9, as sinful Judah goes into exile in Babylon.

The Assyrians invade, and the Northern Kingdom of Israel is no more. (722 BC)

- But what about the Southern Kingdom of Judah? See Isaiah 36-37.

Later, the Babylonians invade Judah and destroy much... but will Jerusalem survive again? (587 BC)

1. Some of our episodes suggest the answer is yes: Promise, Salvation, Covenant, Temple. *God is gracious and protective of His people and holy city of Jerusalem!*
 2. Other episodes suggest the opposite: Law, Land, Division. God is Holy and will not sponsor sin!
- So, which is it? For the answer, read Jeremiah 7 and 2 Kings 25:8-11.

The takeaway: You cannot manipulate God's promises, salvation, or blessings as a cover for evil. God is Holy and will not sponsor sin.

- Yet His promises will be fulfilled! But in *righteousness*.
 - And yes, He will do this even for unworthy sinners who repent and believe!
- We are to reflect this in our own lives. We don't need to sin 'to get the job done.'

Is this the end of God's people?

- Consider something dug up in Babylon... confirming 2 Kings 25:27-30.

Questions for Further Reflection and Application

1. Read Jeremiah 7.
 - a. What did the people mean by saying "The Temple of the Lord!" three times?
 - b. What did Jeremiah say about this? Would the temple provide adequate protection? Why not?
2. One lesson is this: God will not sponsor evil.
 - a. Reflect on how the story teaches this.
 - b. How should this inform the way you live your life and use the resources and blessings He has provided? Pray about this.
3. Yet God will keep His promises to Abraham (Gen 12:3) and David (2 Sam 7)—yet through righteousness. How should this inspire us to live likewise?