

Jer. 39, The Fall of Jerusalem
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Overview

1. The general theme of this chapter is the fulfillment of everything that Jer has been preaching. Fulfillment is the sign of a true prophet (Deut. 18:21,22).

Much of this prophecy has to do with the suffering that comes on the nation because of their sin:

- a) the siege under Neb;
- b) the fall of the city;
- c) the capture of the king;
- d) the destruction of Jerusalem.

But Jer's preaching has not all been negative. He has promised God's faithful care, and we have evidence of that here too:

- a) God's care for the poor;
- b) specifically, his faithfulness to Jer
- c) and to those who trust in him.

2. General structure: three paragraphs.

- a) 1, The Siege of Jerusalem
- b) 2-14, The Fall of Jerusalem
- c) 15-18, The Promise to Ebed-Melech

A. 1, The Siege of Jerusalem

Reminds us that early on, Jer had trouble persuading people even that another nation would come against them. cf. 8:13-17; 19:9 for the prophecy. As part of the judgments of Lev. 26, they face invasion and siege.

Lev. 26 shows that the siege is only the first step to the fall of the city, and that also comes to pass, as God has promised.

B. 2-14, The Fall of Jerusalem

First, we see Neb take his place as the ruler of Jer. Then we see two examples of his rule. One shows us his wrath; the other his mercy. What we have already heard in Jer shows us that in both cases he does not act independently, but as the agent of God, Prov. 21:1; cf. Rom. 13. Neb is probably not intentionally trying to obey the Lord; no reason to think that his conversion, Dan. 4, has happened by this time.

1. 2-3, Neb. rules over Jerusalem.

At the very beginning of the book, this terrible vision was before Jer, in the inaugural visions that accompanied his call, 1:15. Think how seeing the fulfillment must have stirred his heart as he remembered these earliest visions.

The next two paragraphs are chiastic: specific and general

manifestations of Neb's wrath; general and specific manifestations of his mercy.

2. 4-9, Neb's wrath as the rod of God

This paragraph moves from specific to general, treating first the king and then the city as a whole.

a) 4-7, his specific judgment on Zed

- 1) Jer prophesied this in 34:3, but did not foresee the blinding.
- 2) Ezek 12:13 did anticipate the blinding.
- 3) So the last memory that Zed carries with him is the death of his children.

b) 8-9, his general destruction in the city

- 1) Jer's prophecies of this: 34:2; 37:8,10; 38:18
- 2) Destruction of the walls is important: it removes the ability of a city to make war. Recall in Neh the political complications that surrounded the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. A settlement without walls is just a town, guaranteed to be under someone else. With walls, it becomes a city-state, capable of some claim to independence.

So both in his dealings with Zed and his general disposition of the city, Neb is simply the agent of God, carrying out what he has prophesied through his servant Jer. But Jer has promised more than just judgment, and Neb serves the Lord in this as well.

3. 10-14, Neb's mercy as God's protection for his own.

Again we have both specific and general, this time in the reverse order. Neb does what the kings of Judah have not done, and has mercy on the poor, and specifically makes provision for Jer. Again, all of this is in accordance with what God has already showed Jer.

a) 10, his general care for the poor enriched.

To understand how Jer has prophesied this, we need to develop some context.

- 1) 22:3, care for the poor and oppressed is a hallmark of biblical piety.
- 2) 22:15-16, such behavior characterized the godly king Josiah, the last good king before the captivity.
- 3) But now the nation neglects these duties: 5:28.
- 4) Yet when men forget the needy, God does not. 20:13, at the end of Jer's lament to the Lord, he praises him for being a God who delivers the poor out of the hand of evildoers.

b) 11-14, specifically, Neb cares for Jer.

This is a specific fulfillment of 15:11-14. The Hebrew is obscure, but the KJV captures well the positive sense. It is a promise that the Babylonians will treat him well, and that they (v.14) (NOT HE) will return to their own land. See also 40:1-4 for the liberty that Jer enjoys under the occupation government.

4. *Application:* Prov. 21:1, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turns it whithersoever he will." We ought never to fear that human rulers, however cruel and however godless, are beyond the control of our Lord. He will prevail.

The final section of the chapter continues the theme of the fulfillment of God's promises.

C. **15-18, The Promise to Ebed-Melech**

1. 15, the time: while Jer was still locked up, thus before the fall of the city. He has nothing with which to repay Ebed-Melech, but the Lord whom he serves does, and here presents it, even while the city is still under siege.
2. The promise: Ebed-Melech will see the disaster that is to fall, but it will not touch him, because in spite of his inability to become a member of the Jewish nation, yet his heart trusts in the Lord.
3. The prophecy: this section echoes 17:5-8.
 - a) That earlier portion pointed out the futility of trusting in man and the blessedness of trusting in the Lord. Now the nobles of the city, who trusted in Pharaoh to deliver them, are destroyed, while this humble slave is guaranteed his life.
 - b) Even the style of 17-18 echoes 17:7-8, with its alternation of negated antonym paraphrases.

D. **Summary**

God's word stands forever. This chapter stands like a capstone over the earlier prophecies of Jer to prove that heaven and earth may pass away, but God's Word will not pass away. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

1. His word is sure in judgment. He promised the siege of Jerusalem, the rule of foreigners in Jerusalem's gate, the destruction of the city, the captivity of the people, and the capture and deportation of Zedekiah, and all came to pass.
2. At the same time, and even in the midst of these horrible judgments and suffering, his word is sure in caring for his people. He defends the poor when men who should let them down. He delivers his faithful prophet Jer. And his care for Ebed-Melech is a striking example of how he protects and watches over those who put their trust in him.
3. All of this he is able to do even by the hand of a pagan king, for our God is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He rules among the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth, and no one is able to stay his hand, or challenge what he does.

Psalm: 102

Analysis

39, The Fall of Jerusalem

A. The Siege: cf. 19:9

39:1 B.A/\$.FNFH HA/T.:\$I(IYT L:/CID:QIY.FHW. MELEK:-Y:HW.DFH
B.A/XODE\$ HF/(:A&IRIY B.F) N:BW.KAD:RE)C.AR MELEK:-B.FBEL
W:/KFL-X"YL/OW)EL-Y:RW.\$FLAIM WA/Y.FCURW. (FLEY/HF S

B. The conquest: ampl p

1. text: 39:2 B.:/(A\$:T."Y-(E&:R"H \$FNFH L:/CID:QIY.FHW. B.A/XODE\$
HF/R:BIY(IY B.:/TI\$: (FH LA/XODE\$ HFB:Q: (FH HF/(IYR

2. ampl

a) Neb rules over Jer: 1:15

1) 39:3 WA/Y.FBO)W. K.OL &FR"Y MELEK:-B.FBEL

2) WA/Y."\$:BW. B.:/\$A(AR HA/T.FWEK: N"R:GAL &AR-)ECER
SAM:G.AR-N:BW. &AR-S:KIYM RAB-SFRIYS N"R:GAL &AR-)ECER
RAB-MFG W:/KFL-\$:) "RIYT &FR"Y MELEK: B.FBEL

b) contrast p

1) thesis: generalization p: Neb's wrath

a> specific: treatment of Zed: 34:3

1> temporal p: Zed flees

a: time: 39:4 WA/Y:HIY K.A/):A\$ER RF)FM CID:QIY.FHW.
MELEK:-Y:HW.DFH W:/KOL)AN:\$"Y HA/M.IL:XFMFH

b: text: ampl p

1: text: WA/Y.IB:R:XW.

2: ampl:

A. WA/Y."C:)W. LAY:LFH MIN-HF/(IYR D.EREK: G.AN
HA/M.ELEK: B.:/\$A(AR B."YN HA/XOMOTFYIM

B. WA/Y."C") D.EREK: HF/(:ARFBFH

2> Zed is captured

a: 39:5 WA/Y.IR:D.:PW. X"YL-K.A&:D.IYM)AX:AR"Y/HEM

b: WA/Y.A&.IGW.)ET-CID:QIY.FHW. B.:/(AR:BOWT Y:R"XOW

c: WA/Y.IQ:XW.)OT/OW

d: WA/Y.A(:ALU/HW.)EL-N:BW.KAD:RE)C.AR MELEK:-B.FBEL
RIB:LFTFH B.:/)EREC X:AMFT

e: WA/Y:DAB."R)IT./OW MI\$:P.F+IYM

f: chiastic p: death of the nobles

1: 39:6 WA/Y.I\$:XA+ MELEK: B.FBEL)ET-B.:N"Y
CID:QIY.FHW. B.:/RIB:LFH L:/("YNFY/W

2: W:/)"T K.FL-XOR"Y Y:HW.DFH \$FXA+ MELEK: B.FBEL

g: 39:7 W:/)ET-("YN"Y CID:QIY.FHW. (IW."R

h: purpose p

1: text: WA/Y.A)AS:R/"HW. B.A/N:XU\$:T.AYIM

2: purpose: LF/BIY))OT/OW B.FBEL/FH

b> general: Other destruction in the city: 34:2; 37:8,10;
38:18

1> houses burned: 39:8 W:/)ET-B."YT HA/M.ELEK:

W:/)ET-B."YT HF/(FM &FR:PW. HA/K.A&:D.IYM B.F/)"\$

2> walls destroyed: W:/)ET-XOMOWT Y:RW.\$FLAIM NFTFCW.

3> people captive: 39:9 W:/)"T YETER HF/(FM

HA/N.IŠ:)FRIYM B.F/(IYR W:/)ET-HA/N.OP:LIYM):AŠER
NFP:LW. (FLFY/W W:/)"T YETER HF/(FM HA/N.IŠ:)FRIYM
HEG:LFH N:BW.ZAR-):ADFN RAB-+AB.FXIYM B.FBEL

- 2) antithesis: specification p: Neb's mercy
a> general: poor enriched: Jer. 5:28; 7:6; 22:3; 20:13
1> 39:10 W./MIN-HF/(FM HA/D.AL.IYM):AŠER)"YN-L/FHEM
M:)W.MFH HIŠ:)IYR N:BW.ZAR:):ADFN RAB-+AB.FXIYM
B.:/)EREC Y:HW.DFH
2> WA/Y.IT."N L/FHEM K.:RFMIYM WI/YG"BIYM B.A/Y.OWM
HA/HW.)
b> specific: execution p: Neb's Provision for Jer: 15:11-14
1> command: quote p:
a: quote f: 39:11 WA/Y:CAW N:BW.KAD:RE)C.AR
MELEK:-B.FBEL (AL-YIR:M:YFHW. B.:/YAD
N:BW.ZAR:):ADFN RAB-+AB.FXIYM L"/)MOR
b: quote:
1: 39:12 QFX/EN.W.
2: W:/("YNEY/KF &IYM (FLFY/W
3: contrast p
A. thesis: W:/)AL-T.A(A& L/OW M:)W.MFH R.F(
B. antithesis: K.IY {}IM} [ZZ] manner p
1. manner: K.A/):AŠER Y:DAB."R)"LEY/KF
2. text: K."N (:A&"H (IM./OW
2> execution:
a: 39:13 WA/Y.IŠ:LAX N:BW.ZAR:):ADFN RAB-+AB.FXIYM
W./N:BW.ŠAZ:B.FN RAB-SFRIYS W:/N"R:GAL &AR-)ECER
RAB-MFG W:/KOL RAB."Y MELEK:-B.FBEL
b: 39:14 WA/Y.IŠ:L:XW.
c: WA/Y.IQ:XW.)ET-YIR:M:YFHW. M"/X:ACAR HA/M.A+.FRFH
d: purpose p
1: text: WA/Y.IT.:NW.)OT/OW)EL-G.:DAL:YFHW.
B.EN-):AXIYQFM B.EN-ŠFPFN
2: purpose: L:/HOWCI)/"HW.)EL-HA/B.FYIT
e: WA/Y."ŠEB B.:/TOWK: HF/(FM S

C. quote p: The Promise to Ebed-Melech

1. quote f: 39:15 W:/)EL-YIR:M:YFHW. HFYFH D:BAR-Y:HWFH
B.I/H:YOT/OW (FCW.R B.A/X:ACAR HA/M.A+.FRFH (thus before the fall
of the city) L"/)MOR 39:16 HFLOWK: W:/)FMAR:T.F L:/(EBED-MELEK:
HA/K.W.ŠIY L"/)MOR K.OH-)FMAR Y:HWFH C:BF)OWT):ELOH"Y YI&:RF)"L
2. quote: contrast p
a) thesis: (see ref's above)
1) HIN/:NIY {M"BIY} [M"BIY)])ET-D.:BFR/AY)EL-HF/(IYR
HA/Z.O)T L:/RF(FH W:/LO) L:/+OWBFH
2) W:/HFYW. L:/PFNEY/KF B.A/Y.OWM HA/HW.)
b) antithesis: reason p: cf. 17:5-8 (and stylistic similarity to
17:7-8)
1) text: chiastic NAP
a> text: 39:17 W:/HIC.AL:T.IY/KF BA/Y.OWM-HA/HW.)
N:)UM-Y:HWFH
b> NA: W:/LO) TIN.FT"N B.:/YAD HF/):ANFŠIYM):AŠER-)AT.FH
YFGOWR MI/P.:N"Y/HEM

c> text: 39:18 K.IY MAL."+):AMAL.E+/:KF
d> NA: W./BA/XEREB LO) TIP.OL
e> W:/HFY:TFH L/:KF NAP:\$/:KF L:/\$FLFL
2) reason: K.IY-BF+AX:T.F B./IY N:)UM-Y:HWFH S