

## September 22

**Scriptures:** Read Jeremiah 52

**Key Verse:** “So Jehoiachin changed from his prison garments, and he ate bread regularly before the king all the days of his life. “ (Jeremiah 52:33)

### Overview

The compiler of Jeremiah’s prophecies makes it clear that Jeremiah did not write this last chapter of the historical appendix by ending chapter 51 with the words: “Thus far are the words of Jeremiah” (51:64). Chapter 52 is almost identical with 2 Kings 24:18-25:30, and the material from 2 Kings that is omitted here is recorded in Jeremiah 40 through 43. The placing of this historical account here may have been for the purpose of showing that Jeremiah’s prophecies did indeed come to fulfillment, and it would serve as an historical background. Another reason was that it could serve as a warning to any who live in disobedience to God and are influenced by the wicked (cf. 2 Pet. 3:17-18).

The appointed time of the Lord’s wrath upon Judah had arrived (52:3). When the Babylonians finally broke through the walls of Jerusalem, the wicked and weak King Zedekiah tried to escape with his sons and some other nobles, but they were caught, for the Lord had purposed to punish them. Jeremiah had repeatedly forewarned King Zedekiah that if he did not surrender the city when it was first put under siege, all these terrible things would happen to him personally, as well as to the city (38:17-23). When Zedekiah was brought before Nebuchadnezzar, he had to suffer the penalty of a low-class criminal. His eyes were put out and throughout the rest of his miserable life he would always remember the last thing he ever saw — the death of his young sons.

One month later, the captain of the guard returned to complete the task for which God had sent the army of Babylon: he took a great number of God’s people away captive and destroyed the city, including the Temple, which the people of Jerusalem had defiled. Before burning the Temple, the Babylonians stripped it of everything valuable, including the larger Temple furnishings and even the huge ornate bronze pillars back to Babylon to erect them in the temple of their god (52:20-23). How sad that Israel’s failure to keep the covenant of the Lord became such a terrible testimony to the nations (cf. 1 Kings 9:6-9).

Throughout the centuries, in contrast to the disobedient and exiled people of Judah, whoever has persevered with determination to remain loyal to the Lord has been made an overcomer whom the Lord will make “a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more” (Rev. 3:12). Faithful believers in Jesus will become permanent citizens of the New Jerusalem, and no enemy, no matter how powerful, will be able to remove them. As the book of Jeremiah closes, let us take heed to the warnings and receive the encouragement of God’s promises of restoration for His people. Although the Lord is a God of recompense, He is also a God of mercy, as is evident from the last few verses of the book. The Lord did not want His inspired message to end with the grim facts of the three different deportations of the people of Judah (52:24-30); therefore it ends on a note of hope. In the providence of God, Nebuchadnezzar’s son and successor, Evil-Merodach, showed grace and kindness to the last living earthly king upon the throne of David, Jehoiachin

(52:31-34). This is a testimony to the care and everlasting love that God has for the weak remnant of His people. Although we may have gone far from God, if we humbly repent and seek Him, He will be found, for He will never forsake His own.

### **Prayer**

We praise You, oh God, for You are abundant in mercy. As You freed King Jehoiachin to enjoy life after 37 years in prison, please set free those who have spent a lifetime in the prisons of their sin, that they may enjoy the abundant life available through Jesus Christ.