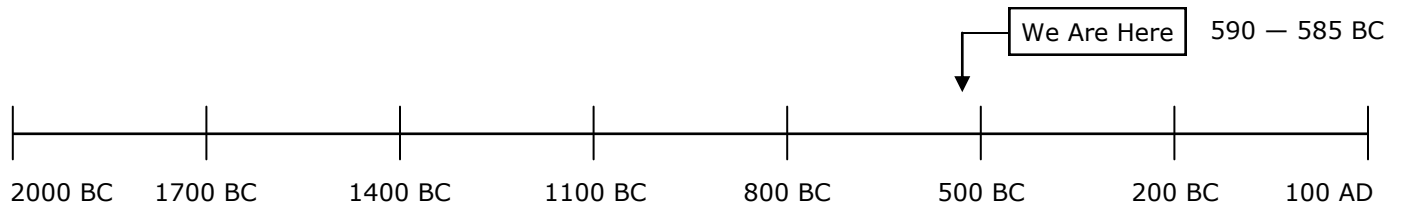


The Blind Leading the Blind

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Week 34: August 20-26 — *Ezek. 17-31; 2 Kings 24, 25; Jeremiah*

65% Complete — 127 Days to Go



Helpful Resources

Overview of Bible History (p.37)

Making Sense of It All

- The Big Picture

We have read about it for weeks, even months; now it has happened — God’s judgment has fallen on Judah. Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians had been merciful in their dealings with the holy city, but in their rebellion, God’s people invited destruction. After besieging Jerusalem twice before (608, 597), Neb was back (588); this time, he would finish God’s people for good. After two years of famine (586), the people of Jerusalem could no longer hold the city. The Babylonians broke in and destroyed everything. All was lost — the city walls, the palace, the Temple and all of its sacred objects, the important buildings, the treasures of the city, the people, the king and his officials, and the Spirit of the Lord and His protection. All was gone. All that remained of the once thriving capital of Judah was rubble and ashes, save for a few poor people left behind to tend the fields. Jeremiah was there, but only to mourn. The evidence of God’s judgment remained visible in that pile of rubbish for 70 years. The Temple lay ruined until Zerubbabel returned in 538; then, not until 444, when Nehemiah returned, were the walls rebuilt. Judah’s sin lay in a smoldering heap for all to see for generations.

- Personal Application

King Zedekiah was Judah’s last chance to halt or reverse the swift decay of Jewish culture, but it was not meant to be, as he led the people straight into God’s judgment. The prophecies concerning this foolish king were fulfilled as Zedekiah lost his throne, lost his people, lost his sons, lost his sight, and, ultimately, lost his life. However, long before Zedekiah was blinded physically, he was blinded spiritually; his poor example caused unpleasant consequences.

What were the causes of Zedekiah’s blindness?

1. **He neglected God’s words and warnings.** Though God sent Jeremiah numerous times, Zedekiah refused him. It is the fool who recognizes the importance of the Bible but never takes time to obey it. How can one live as God intended, if he knows not His intentions?
2. **He indulged in his own evil desires and worshiped the gods of the people.** Whatever his people wanted, that’s what Zedekiah allowed them to do. He never took a stand against the evil of his day. As Christians, we are not to bend to the wind of cultural fads and prevailing ideas; we are not to be conformed to this world but to stand against it.

3. **He executed his own agenda without consideration of what was best for others.** It is a small person who believes that life revolves around him. We are here for the glory of God and the good of others; He is not concerned with our comfort or convenience.
4. **He solely relied upon the ungodly counsel of ambitious men.** Rather than seeking the God who had all the answers, Zedekiah sought wisdom from those who thought they had the answers. When we place more attention and interest in others' counsel and help over the Lord's, we are setting ourselves up for a terrible fall.

What were the effects of Zedekiah's blindness? What will be the effect of our own blindness?

1. **We sacrifice our relationship and intimacy with God.** We cannot run from Him; He will pursue us in His love and bring us to the end of ourselves, exposing our limitations and need for Him.
 2. **We live as slaves to our Enemy and our own selfish ambitions.** Although Zedekiah thought he was in control, he was a Babylonian puppet, bound by their will. We cannot live the free and abundant Christian life when we chain ourselves to our own passions.
 3. **We make foolish decisions that we'll regret later.** Getting counsel from sources other than the Bible is not bad, but when it conflicts with Scripture, we have a problem. Many dumb decisions are results of unbiblical advice from man-centered sources.
 4. **We hurt those around us, causing them pain and suffering.** When we are in a state of rebellion to God, we jeopardize those in our sphere of influence, especially the Church. Like a body, when one part suffers the whole suffers. Thus it is with one who is apostate or backslidden; many others could be affected negatively by our poor spiritual discipline.
 5. **We hurt our families and lead them astray.** As leaders of our families (fathers, mothers, grandparents, etc.), we are responsible for the innocent ones in our care. Can we live with the guilt of throwing away their lives because of our foolishness? We must be faithful to God and avoid forfeiting them to be slaughtered by the Enemy.
- Prophetic Passages
 1. **Fall of Tyre or Lucifer?** (*Ezek. 28:1-19*): A double meaning, referring to the impending judgment on Tyre and the fall of Lucifer (see *Isaiah 14:3-23*). Satan's grandeur and responsibilities are spelled out, as well as his presumption of God's throne and glory, his judgment, and his getting cast to earth by God.
 2. **Jeremiah's Purchased Land** (*Jer. 32:6-15; 32:36-44; 33:1-26*): God instructed Jeremiah to buy land in Judah as a demonstration that He is faithful; He would carry out His promise to bring the Jews back; it was fulfilled 70 years later.

The Bottom Line

When we follow our *pride*, we become *blind* and *foolish*.

Questions to Consider

1. Where is the line between joining worldly fads or trends and worshiping worldly idols?
2. Can you recall a time when seeking counsel from ungodly sources bit you in the end?