

August 13

Jeremiah 50

Hey everyone, Online Campus Pastor Robert Murphy, and I have the privilege of doing the Daily Accelerator for today, August 13. We're focusing in on Jeremiah chapter 50.

The main focus here, of course, is upon Babylon, the instrument of God's punishment against Judah which will herself be judged by God when He has accomplished his purposes through her.

Even though God may choose to use a wicked nation (or an individual for that matter) to accomplish His purpose in judging another nation or individual, that does not excuse the injustices that His instrument commits or relieve them of the responsibility that they bear for their own ungodly choices. Babylon was used by God to do exactly what He planned, but she was still responsible for what she had done. That may be a new concept for someone listening to this or it may be a difficult concept for others who though they have heard it before have still not come to terms with the fact that even though God works through and even ordains the actions of wicked men and works out His perfect will through their deeds, He still holds them accountable for what they have done.

It is, of course, a part of the larger problem of how men and women can be free and responsible moral agents while at the very same time, God is sovereign and ordains that some should be vessels of honor and others vessels of wrath and destruction so that His glory and name might be seen throughout the earth. We have talked about this problem before, noting that it is an antinomy- an apparent contradiction or paradox that does indeed have a resolution but which we cannot fully comprehend because we are limited by our own finitude. We are creatures and no matter how hard we try we cannot understand all that is done by an infinite creator God. In the end when we have said all that we can and thought as deeply as we are able about this matter, we will simply have to trust that God is good and that both of these things are absolutely true: God is sovereign- He does ordain the actions of men and nations, AND man is responsible- he makes true moral choices and must be held accountable for the results of what he truly chooses to do.

For more on this topic, I'd encourage you to check out the Spiritual Discovery page on the Christ Community Church website, CCCOmaha.org. There you can find videos of Lead Pastor Mark Ashton discussing topics like this.

Babylon did exactly what God wanted done AND Babylon would be held accountable for the choices it made and the atrocities it committed. God still uses nations to accomplish His eternal plans.

I am sure that you noted some similarities between the things that Jeremiah wrote here and the things that Isaiah his predecessor had already written about Babylon. The fact that the Holy Spirit caused Jeremiah to remember and reaffirm what an earlier prophet had said is totally consistent with the pattern we have seen throughout the whole Old Testament. Each succeeding writer builds upon what has gone before.

All that is said here about the future of Babylon was not accomplished for several centuries. Jeremiah, for example, says, as did Isaiah before him, that the day will come when Babylon will not be inhabited at all but will be a place of terrible desolation- a wilderness, a desert, a place where the desert creatures like hyenas and jackals make their dens. After its fall to Cyrus, the city of Babylon did not become uninhabited immediately. It remained as an important city for a long time, but eventually the Euphrates River changed its course, the area around the great city of Babylon became a desert and it fell into ruins. Thus it has remained in accordance with the Word of God.

May we remember that God is sovereign and has everything under control for his purposes.