

Session 15

Exile

- The last chapters of 2nd Kings, chapters 23-25, describe the fall of the southern Kingdom of Judah.
- In the spring of 597 BC, the capital of Jerusalem was conquered. The royal family, including King Jehoiachin, surrendered and were deported to Babylon, along with many other Judeans (2 Kgs 24:10-17). The king of Babylon then installed Zedekiah as King of Judah (2 Kgs 24:17).
- Under Zedekiah, Judah remains under Babylonian domination, paying tribute to King Nebuchadnezzar. **But Zedekiah, influenced by the patriots of Judah, who long to be free of foreign occupation, disobeys God, who spoke through the prophet Jeremiah, commanding Zedekiah to accept the yoke of Babylon as penitential discipline for their past sins.** Therefore, Zedekiah, ignoring Jeremiah and trusting in the false prophet Hananiah, rebels against Babylon, and Nebuchadnezzar sent an army to Jerusalem to punish him.
- Zedekiah leads his city in a religious renewal in manipulative attempt to curry favor with God, all the while ignoring God speaking through Jeremiah. To please God, Zedekiah declares a Jubilee, by which all Judeans not only promise to release their slaves, but also promise to forgive all debts. But the Judeans renege, and this renegeing is the last straw. **You reap what you sow, and therefore Judah, who oppresses slaves and the poor, will themselves be oppressed slaves in Babylon.**
- Though the immediate fate of Judah is sealed, **Jeremiah offers some hope for the distant future, that the Judeans/Jews will someday return to the Promised Land in a second Exodus (Jer 32:17-23), and that the Kingdom of Judah will someday be restored by the Messiah-King (Christ).**
- Zedekiah, refusing to listen to Jeremiah's pleas to surrender, causes unnecessary slaughter and destruction, as Jerusalem, after a very long siege and a terrible famine, is utterly destroyed, including the Temple, which is burned to the ground.
- Zedekiah and the remnant of his army escapes Jerusalem at night, but suffers a humiliating defeat on the plains of Jericho. There the Babylonians slay Zedekiah's sons before his very eyes, and then blind him by poking out his eyes, so that his last sight was seeing the end of his kingly line. **All seems lost, including the kingly dynasty, from which will come the Messiah-King, the Christ.**
- **The Jews' miserable plight is a total reversal of fortune.** They march from Jericho, the city first conquered by their Israelite ancestors when they crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land. They march east as slaves and exiles to Babylon, returning to the very land abandoned by their father Abraham, traveling the very same road traveled by him from Ur, only in the opposite direction. **This mirrors their spiritual state because they are exiled from God through sin.**

Daniel

- **The prophet Daniel is a new Joseph, in that Joseph is a type (foreshadowing) of Daniel.** Like Joseph, Daniel is a young man taken into slavery into a foreign nation. Also, like Joseph, Daniel is honored in the pagan royal court for his gift of understanding dreams. **These and other parallels set the stage for a new Exodus, as Babylon is a new Egypt and the Babylonian kings are new pharaohs, but God will again redeem His People.**
- **In Daniel 2, by interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel prophesies the approximate time of the restoration of the Davidic Kingdom by the Messiah-King, as following four great empires.** Of course, the Kingdom of the Messiah-King, which will be the Church, is not to be of this world (John 18:36), but will be a **supernatural kingdom**, based on the **supernatural means** of the Sacraments and the preaching of the Gospel, with the **supernatural end** of Heaven.
- **In Daniel 7, the four great empires reappear in a dream dreamt by Daniel himself. At the end of this dream, he sees a revelation of the Most Holy Trinity, in which the Son of Man (divine Messiah-King) comes upon the clouds (Holy Spirit), to receive an eternal and universal Kingdom from the Ancient of Days (Eternal Father).** Importantly, Christ made a direct reference to this prophecy before Caiphas and the Sanhedrin during His trial on the eve of His Passion, claiming Himself to be the Son of Man in this prophecy, and it was this divine claim, rejected by the Jews as blasphemy, that led directly to His Crucifixion (Mt 26:63-66).
- **In Daniel 9:24-27, the similar prophecies in Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 are given by the Archangel Gabriel a timeline for fulfillment, which shall be 70 weeks of years (70 x 7 = 490 years).** This can be interpreted symbolically, as a liturgical-calendrical reckoning of ten jubilees (49 years x 10 jubilees = 490), **but it can also be interpreted literally as 490 years.**
- Understood literally, the timeline begins in 457 BC with the decree of the King of Persia, named Artaxerxes I, to Ezra the priest-scribe. As the prophecy reads, "You shall know, therefore, and understand, **that from the going forth of the word to build up Jerusalem again unto Christ the prince**, there shall be seven weeks (of years) and sixty-two weeks (of years) (69 x 7 = 483 years) (Dn 9:25). If you subtract 483 years from 457 BC, then the 70th week of years is the time period of 26 AD – 33 AD. During this time period, Christ shall be killed in His Passion, as the prophecy continues, "And after the 62 weeks, **the Christ shall be slain**, and the people that shall deny him shall not be his (Dn 9:26)." Further, the prophecy continues, prophesying that the Christ, after 3 ½ years of public ministry, ratifies the New Covenant by His once-for-all-time Sacrifice of the Cross, which renders the Old Covenant sacrificial system obsolete, as it reads, "**And he shall confirm the covenant with many**, in one week (of years) and in the half of the week (of years), the victim and the sacrifice shall fail (Dn 9:27)."
- **Significantly, the Archangel Gabriel disappears from the story of salvation history until the completion of the 490 years is imminent**, as Gabriel next appears to announce the miraculous conception of the forerunner of the Christ called John the Baptist (Lk 1:5-25). Next, Gabriel is sent by God to the Holy Virgin, to ask her to be the Mother of the Christ (Lk 1:26-38). **Also significantly, according to the timeline in the Gospel of Luke, there are 490 days from the conception of John the Baptist in the womb of Elizabeth to the Presentation of the Christ Child in the Temple**, as follows:

Day 1	Elizabeth conceives forerunner of the Christ (Lk 1:24)
Day 180	Mary conceives Christ Child (6 months x 30 days = 180 days) (Lk 1:26)
Day 450	Birth of Christ Child at Christmas (9 months x 30 days = 270 + 180 = 450 days)
Day 490	Presentation of Christ Child in Temple forty days after birth (Lk 2:22-24)

