

Jeremiah 49:34-39 The Rise and Fall of My Throne Falls Ch. AM 7/16/2023

Have you heard the phrase “The Fertile Crescent”? Fertile means a good healthy garden, growing well. It was shaped like a boomerang, upside down. The Fertile Crescent is that area of the world in the Middle East that, when starting in Jerusalem and traveling East, rather than go straight through the famous and deathly-dangerous Arabian desert, travelers would veer North, and stay close to moist and green areas, making an arc shape as they traveled East.

Today the trip would start in Egypt, then go through Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Kuwait and then finally Iran. Your non-desert path would start at the Nile River, go north along the Mediterranean Sea, then go east along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, following them south until the Persian Gulf.

I say all that to tell you that Elam’s appearance here in the list of nations in chapter 49 is a little surprising, because they were not involved with the people of Israel during the lifetime of our prophet Jeremiah. And that is for a geographical reason. Elam was very, very far away! The point is: **Christ The King’s dominion overcomes the strongest thrones in the farthest locations with His judgment and His salvation.**

1. Hearing God announce what He will do to my strong throne. (v.34-37)

What is being emphasized here at the end of chapter 49, is that God is over all nations. This emphasis is supported by the frequent use of the word “I” in this passage. The fact that God is the One who is doing the avenging is more prominent in this passage than it was in any of the other passages in chapter 49. Listen to these quotes from our passage to show you this point, *“I will break the bow, I will scatter them, I will terrify them, I will bring disaster upon them...”*

The long distance that Elam is removed from other countries, does not remove Elam from God’s area of influence. This is a point that God has made before, through the words of His prophet Jeremiah, such as in Jeremiah 23:23-24, *““Am I a God at hand, declares the Lord, and not a God far away? Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the Lord. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the Lord.”*

God’s area of influence is everywhere. We have this truth in the children’s catechism – for example, question 10, Where is God? God is everywhere, question 11, Can you see God? No. I cannot see God, but he always sees me, question 12, does God know all things? Yes. Nothing can be hidden from God.

God sees each person in each place, hears all words, sees all actions, and even knows all the thoughts of minds and motives of hearts of each person and the decisions of ruling councils of each nation.

In verse 35, God is actually proclaiming a message to all of mankind, *“I will break the bow of Elam, the mainstay of their might.”* God will focus on the main source of power for each nation. Is a nation strong with horses, good with chariots,

and skilled with arrows? It is like the classic challenge in the movies – pick your weapon. I’ll beat you with whatever weapons you decide for us to use for our fight.

For Elam, their strongest military skillset was their archers – their soldiers who were specially trained and uniquely capable with bows and arrows. The nation of Elam had often relied on these soldiers, these bows, these arrows to protect them from foreign attacks. It was well-known in the ancient world, as we see from one line by the Prophet Isaiah, in Isaiah 22:6, “*Elam bore the quiver with chariots and horsemen...*”

Today we call it a superpower. It is the nations that have the fastest fighter jets, or the capability of surface-to-air missiles or nuclear bombs. We even use the word superpower to refer to the strength of a person. If a person is not very smooth socially, but he is a whiz at math, we have taken to saying that math is his superpower. Or, she is awkward, but she can solve the rubics cube in 20 seconds, one-handed, with a blindfold, so she is accepted by the cool kids. Her superpower.

For both countries and individuals, whatever that strongest skillset is, God wants you to know that it cannot be used to defend you against the coming onslaught of God’s judgment.

Verse 36, I will scatter them. Elam will suffer an exile! But unlike the people of God who are brought to one destination of Babylon, the people of Elam will have many destinations. In fact, there will not be a nation where Elam’s exiles do not end up!

Verse 36, the metaphor of the four winds scattering people to the four winds is a way of saying that God will use overwhelming force to produce a devastating result. Even Elam at the ends of the earth will suffer a massive exile, and be spread out to the whole world in their exile! Scattered! Exiled!

In verse 37, we read the phrase “declares the LORD.”

But Elam is mentioned 7 times in our passage. Who has authority?

2. Envisioning the victorious throne of Christ. (v.38)

The answer is best pictured in verse 38, *I will set My throne in Elam...* This follows the ancient practice of a victorious king demonstrating His victory and power by setting up a portable throne in a prominent place in a defeated city. Ancient kings would set up their own throne in a central and visible place in town, after they had conquered a land and a city. For example, in Jeremiah 43:9-23, God said Nebuchadnezzar’s throne would be set up in Egypt after he conquered it – where? “*at the entrance to Pharaoh’s palace.*” The king of Babylon would have his throne at the entrance to palace of the king of Egypt! SI – think of it – what if they announced that they are moving the white house, and it is going to be right in front of the Kremlin! The throne of God in Elam is a stark picture of God’s authority.

The righteous God will set up His righteous throne in the middle of each nation, in order to judge each nation. God will also use His authority to bless all nations. Consider the words of Jesus in Matthew 28:18, “*All authority in heaven and earth has been given to Me, therefore go and make disciples of all nations...*” God will use His authority to bless all nations with missionaries to come and turn people from rebellious sinners about to receive judgment into obedient disciples about to receive blessings.

Consider how Jeremiah summed up this concept earlier, back in Jeremiah chapter 9:23-24, “*Thus says the Lord: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord.”*”

3. Enjoying our restoration by The LORD God. (v.39)

Every verb in this passage has had God as its subject! God said, I will break the bow, I will scatter them, I will terrify Elam, I will set My throne in Elam...

After all of that the massive devastation, God adds one more action, one more active verb. Here God said, Verse 39, *I will restore the fortunes of Elam...* God’s ultimate resolve is the well-being, even of Elam! But that well-being and that future for Elam can only happen when God’s throne has been firmly established in that faraway land of Elam, and all other rivals to the throne have been eliminated, as we see in v.39.

The four winds of destruction cannot have the last word. God has another message. The same God who scatters and exiles using the four winds, uses the resurrection of Jesus Christ to gather His people and bring them in, bring them home to His worship and His family.

Even the final promise of restoration is an action of God Himself. Sure enough, residents from Elam were among those who heard the preaching of the gospel by the apostles on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2.

God is the savior not just of His people the Jews, but of the Gentiles as well. (This is the statement of God through Paul in Rom 3:29).

What is God doing behind the curtain of divine action? We cannot always see what God is doing, and how God is acting as the God of the Gentiles. But in Acts 2, God lifted the curtain for a moment, and shares what God is doing and how God is doing it. God was sharing His Word with all nations. First in a central conference with translation, then in dispatching missionaries to every nation of the world. People from Elam were at the initial central conference. Listen for Elamites in Acts 2:8-11, “*And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of*

Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, 11 both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.”

God knew the sins of Elam. And God is the Judge of Elam. But God also knew the language of Elam. And God is the Savior of Elam. So, God caused people from Elam to hear the good news of grace in their own language, on the Day of Pentecost! God has not stopped offering restoration to the people of those lands. The gospel of Jesus Christ continues to spread among the people of Iran to this day. There are many Christians in Iran, and hundreds of thousands of Iranian Christians in the United States! We churches in America now have a wonderful opportunity to join with God in sharing His grace to sinners from the end of the earth! God’s grace is to be scattered to every people, tribe and language!

Conclusion:

1. Be comforted that faraway places of the world will all give account to God.

This is a comfort to us whenever world events are troubling. Everyone who rules by terror, perverts justice, traffics in drugs or humans, hires assassins, promotes abortion, destroys what God has created, stockpiles or uses biological or chemical weapons, will all face God for their crimes. All active shooters must give an account to God. All world leaders give account to God. It consoles us to remember that God sees them, and that God will make right. No one gets away with anything! No matter how great and powerful their empires were, and no matter how sophisticated their policies, no matter how brilliant their government officials, God will hold all of them accountable. Be comforted in that.

2. Remember that in Jesus, we were already judged by God, we are already in the New Covenant, and our pathway to restoration is to keep repenting and believing.

The death brought by God’s judgment leads to the new life of restoration for those who turn back to God in repentance! Jesus said to His disciples after His resurrection while walking with them on the Road to Emmaus in Luke 24:25, “*O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?*” Jesus came to experience the fullness of judgment due to Israel and due to us! Do not trust the wrong thing to help you make it through life – your savings to provide for your needs, your cleverness to beat the system or manipulate everything for your own advantage, your personal charm, your desire and ability to go it alone and not rely on anyone else, or your own toughness. It is damaging to believe the illusion of our own resources, our own superpower, to get us through. Like the Ammonites, we become foodies and we center ourselves on finding and enjoying good food. Like the Edomites, we build up our homes higher and higher on the hill, as it were. Like the wandering Bedouins, we demand our space. And

like the Elamites, we rely on our own strength. We think that God's final evaluation will not find us guilty of any of these ancient errors. We cannot outsmart, maneuver, or buy our way out of facing God in the end. So we need to make a change and believe instead in God's power and God's resources through Christ's death and resurrection! We too, suffered with Christ and died with Christ, and we, too, live with Christ. Listen to Galatians 2:20, "*I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*" We have already been judged by God. We already have been brought into the restoration of God, the fulfillment of the promises of God through Jeremiah and other prophets. Jesus already reigns over us now! The New covenant we studied in Jeremiah 31-33 has already begun, and we are living in it by faith! We already have the law of God written on our hearts! We already have forgiveness of our sins!

3. Understand that the heart of God is in world-wide missions! God is as concerned with people I know nothing about, as God is concerned with me. God is concerned about people at the farthest away places on earth! Daniel, one of the exiles in Babylon, wrote in Daniel 7:14, the vision of God is that "...*all peoples nations and languages should serve [God].*" and in Revelation 5: 9-10 we read that Christ has ransomed by His blood people "...*for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.*" Our God is concerned with each and every one of the persons in each and every country! SI - if I were to put a globe of the world in front of you that had no country names on it, for how many nations of the 195 nations, could you fill in the name? For some of the people, we don't speak their language, and we know nothing about them. But God is concerned enough to send missionaries everywhere, to tell each wicked sinner about His mercy to them in Jesus. God is ready to forgive, ready to restore, ready to renew. The heart of God is in world-wide missions!