

7. The Decline of Judah: The Final Chapter

Paralleling the events in Israel is the story of what was happening in Judah, the Southern Kingdom of two tribes, who remained loyal to the line of David. While Judah began reasonably well and, unlike Israel, knew periods of revival, still her destiny was to be as tragic as that of the Northern Kingdom, and for the same reason - disobedience to the Covenant of God.

7.1 Read 2 Chronicles 12-15, 20. Early in its history apart from Israel Judah showed positive inclinations toward the LORD.

7.11 Summarize the content of these chapters. What do they have to say to us about the unifying threads of revelation?

7.12 What evidence of Covenant consciousness do you see on the part of the early kings of Judah? How did this benefit both them and the people of Judah?

7.13 What signs do you see that the nation is heading for trouble?

7.14 What is the role of the leadership of the nation in this situation?

7.2 read 2 Chronicles 23-26 and Isaiah 1. In this section we see God's people struggling to remain faithful to Him.

7.21 Summarize the content of these chapters. What do we learn from them about God's Covenant?

7.22 What temptations did the kings of Judah face during this period? How should they have responded?

7.23 What was the role of the prophets during this period?

7.24 How does Isaiah's message in Isaiah 1 remind us of the combined ministries of Elijah and Elisha?

7.25 How does this kind of message address the concerns of the unifying threads of revelation?

7.3 Read 2 Chronicles 39-32 and Isaiah 36 and 37. Here we get a look at a godly king in action.

7.31 Summarize the content of these chapters. How do they help us in understanding the unifying threads of revelation?

7.32 How would you describe the relationship between prophet and king that exists in these chapters?

7.33 Compare the actions of Hezekiah in this section with those of Saul in 1 Samuel 13.1-13. How can Hezekiah, as opposed to Saul, be seen to be acting within the framework of God's overall Covenant economy?

7.34 In what ways do both Hezekiah and Isaiah show that they are conscious both of God's Covenant and of the unifying threads of revelation?

7.4 Read 2 Chronicles 34-36 and Micah 6, 7. Judah fell for the same reasons that Israel did.

7.41 Summarize the content of these chapters. What do we learn from them about God's Covenant or the unifying threads of revelation?

7.42 What made Josiah a good king? In what ways was he like the good kings David, Hezekiah, etc. - before him?

7.43 What seems to have motivated the deed that was his undoing (2 Chronicles 35.20-27)? What lesson is there in this for leaders of the people of God?

7.44 How did Josiah's successors fail in their Covenant responsibility?

7.45 In what ways is the message of the prophet Micah similar to that of Isaiah? What does this suggest to us about the work of the prophets in the nation of Judah?

7.5 Read Jeremiah 1-3, 7, and 11. Jeremiah held forth the LORD during the final days of Judah's decline.

7.51 Summarize the message of these chapters. In what ways can you see the unifying threads of revelation being emphasized?

7.52 How do the words of Jeremiah fairly ring with recollections of God's Covenant faithfulness and Judah's irresponsibility?

7.53 What does this tell us about the role of prophets?

7.54 What happens to Jeremiah? Why? What should this say to those who would venture to speak God's Word to sinful men?

7.6 Read Lamentations. Jeremiah mourns the fall of Jerusalem.

7.61 Summarize the content of this book. In what ways can you see the unifying threads of revelation being emphasized?

7.62 To what does Jeremiah attribute the fall of Jerusalem?

7.63 According to Jeremiah, what responsibility did the false prophets have in this tragedy? What warning is there in this for God's people today?

7.64 To what hope does Jeremiah cling (3.19-40)?

7.65 How does this hope (as well as 5.19-22) look forward to further development in the unifying threads of revelation?

7.7 Read Isaiah 7.10-16; 9.1-7; 11.1-10; 40.1-8; 51.4-16; 53.1-12; and Jeremiah 31.31-34.
Toward the end of her days Jerusalem was filled with the preaching of hope.

7.71 Summarize the content of these sections. How can we see the unifying threads of revelation coming into focus here?

7.72 Who is the central figure in these passages? How is He described, and what is His role in the Covenant of God?

7.73 What did God promise to provide in the New Covenant? Compare the readings from Isaiah with that from Jeremiah 31.31-34. How was this going to be done?

7.74 How was the New Covenant going to be different from the Old?

Final exercise: The Decline of Judah

Describe the role of the prophets in helping Judah to sustain her Covenant relationship with God. How did the good kings of Judah work with the prophets to that end? What can we learn from the failure of God's people about the weakness inherent in the Old Covenant? What lessons and what warnings are implicit in the story of Judah for the people of God today?