

Concerning the House of David

22: 1-9

DIG: What principles of good government did YHVH list as conditions for His blessing? What consequences were promised if the king did not obey God? What message did Jeremiah repeat to the rulers? Does this message seem like one addressed to a particular king, or a timeless message, applicable to all those in David's royal line? Why or why not? What three oppressed groups of people are mentioned? What do they have in common (Exodus 22:21-24)? Why does the king's security depend upon how he treats them? Although Judah and Jerusalem had been special in God's sight, what reason would be given for the disgrace and destruction of Judah?

REFLECT: Does the LORD care about how governments rule? How did the early believers feel about pagan kings (First Timothy 2:1-2; Romans 13:1-5)? How do you feel about the "kings" of today? Which world leader (religious or secular) has made the greatest impact on you by their life? Death? How do you react when a public champion of peace and justice is assassinated?

609 BC during the three-month reign of Jehoahaz

This oracle is addressed to the house of David generally. Josiah's three sons, Jehoahaz (Bm), Jehoiakim (Ca) and Jehoiachin (Du) would all be disasters and offer little leadership for the people of Judah. The section is driven by the question in verse 8.

This is what ADONAI says: Go down to the place of the king of Judah and proclaim this message there: Hear the word of the LORD, you who sit on David's throne - you, your officials and your people who come through these gates (22:1-2). Y'hudah's royal line was, and is, a Davidic line. It will be restored as such (see the commentary on **Revelation Fi - The Government of the Messianic Kingdom**). But Judah's kings during the days of Jeremiah were not like King David, men after God's own heart (First Samuel 13:14), nor did they follow his example in repenting of their sins (Psalm 51). The prophet was to also direct his attention to the state officials and the people at large, who were not less guilty, though they still worshiped at the Temple.

God's First Message: This is what the LORD says: Do what is just and right. These two words taken together characterize the power and practice of taking care of the poor and marginalized in society (Psalm 72; Proverbs 8:20). The rest of the verse gives details of what justice (Hebrew: *mishpat*) and righteousness (Hebrew: *tsedaqah*) require. The language of which closely parallels that of 7:5-7. This was the responsibility of the king of Judah. Rescue from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place (22:3). Judah was a religious state and the kings were responsible for the spiritual and material welfare of their people (Deuteronomy 17:18). The continuance of the royal house depended on a wholehearted acceptance of the commission that Jeremiah had laid before the king:

For if you are careful to carry out these commands, then kings who sit on David's throne will come through the gates of this place, riding in chariots and on horses, accompanied by their officials and their people. There will be blessings for obedience.

But if you do not obey these commands, declares the LORD, then I swear by myself that this place will become a ruin (22:4-5). What is conditional now becomes unavoidable later (see Fj - [God Rejects Zedekiah's Request](#)).

It was their duty to enforce the moral, civic, and ceremonial legislation of God's commonwealth, particularly to establish social justice. To this day the public administration of civic righteousness and justice by government and citizens is one of the fundamentals of civic welfare and prosperity. The righteous exalts a nation, but sin condemns any people (Proverbs 14:34).

God's Second Message: As a result of the failure to live by the standards above, there would be judgment on the royal house of David. The king, like everyone else, was subject to the demands of the Torah. For this is what ADONAI says about the palace of the king of Judah. You are like Gilead to Me, like the summit of Lebanon. Gilead, the land of fertile pastures and stately forests, and Lebanon, covered with cedars and capped with everlasting snow, were symbols of the beauty, that majestic power and permanence that YHVH had in mind for His people if they would only keep His commandments (Deuteronomy 7:1-26, 28:1-14).¹⁰⁶ But because of disobedience, both of these would become a desert. But I will surely make you like a wasteland, like towns not inhabited. I will send destroyers against you, each man with his weapons, and the Babylonians will cut up your fine cedar beams and throw them into the fire (22:6-7). The time for a positive choice has passed. Judah and her kings were at a point of no return. There is no invitation to repent found here.

People from many nations will pass by this city and see the destruction, they will ask one another, "Why has Ha'Shem done such a thing to this great city?" And the answer was simple: God judged Yerushalayim because the people had forsaken the covenant of ADONAI their God and have worshiped and served other gods (Jeremiah 22:8-9; Deuteronomy 29:24-26; First Kings 9:8-9). The main point is that even such a powerful institution as the monarchy must meet elemental requirements of human compassion and responsibility to survive. Both were glaringly absent in **Jerusalem**. The consequences were unavoidable and should not come as a surprise. Each subsequent generation needed to reflect on the uncompromising standard set by YHVH.¹⁰⁷