

# Come to Understanding

**They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,  
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24**

December 1, 2012

Volume 11 Number 23

## Thoughts of Peace

These words that Yahweh spoke to the people of Judah, before He sent the king of Babylon to bring them to ruin, are widely quoted as a message intended to give us great comfort:

11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says Yahweh, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. -Jeremiah 29

When they are taken out of the context in which they were written, these words promise peace in the absence of trials or even repentance. They appear to be the kind of smooth-sounding words that many of us love to hear. However, when we read them in context, they tell us that it is because Yahweh had “thoughts of peace, and not of evil” toward them, that He would bring them to “an expected end.” He would do this by humbling them to the point that they would prayerfully repent and trust Him with all of their hearts for their salvation.

However, before they could realize their “expected end,” they needed to go through terrible trials during which many of the survivors of invasions by the king of Babylon would be carried away as captives. Many of those would die in their captivity, while the others as well as their descendents, would remain there for seventy years! Only after these seventy years were completed would Yahweh finally perform His “good word” toward them and allow them to return to their homeland:

10 For thus says Yahweh, That after seventy years are accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. -Jeremiah 29

It was only after they had been sufficiently humbled before Yahweh that He would listen to their prayers:

12 Then shall you call upon me, and you shall go and pray unto me, and I will listen to you. -Jeremiah 29

Until they were afflicted, the people of Judah refused to believe the words of Yahweh and He refused to hear their prayers, or even prayers offered on their behalf:

14 Therefore pray not you for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear *them* in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble. -Jeremiah 11

The prophet Daniel was among those that were taken captive into Babylon. He knew from the prophecies of Jeremiah that when the seventy years of captivity were completed, Yahweh would finally hear his petitions on behalf of the people of Judah. Therefore, he humbled himself in repentant prayer:

2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

3 And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

4 And I prayed unto Yahweh my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

5 We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from your precepts and from your judgments:

6 Neither have we listened to your servants the prophets, which spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. -Daniel 9

Daniel’s prayer was different from those that were prayed by the people of Judah before the Babylonian invasions. His prayer was offered in humbled repentance, whereas the prayers of the proud people of Judah had been full of empty words that came from their mouths and lips, but not from their hearts. Because they had refused to receive instruction from Yahweh through His word, they were only going through the motions of prayer, saying the things that others had taught them to say:

13 Therefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near *me* with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: -Isaiah 29

They were copying the man-made system of false worship that had led Israel to destruction:

19 Also Judah kept not the commandments of Yahweh their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. -2 Kings 17

**So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,  
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8**

## Come to Understanding

Israel had made up their own religious system, which included idol worship:

- 10 And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree:
- 11 And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as *did* the heathen whom Yahweh carried away before them; and worked wicked things to provoke Yahweh to anger:
- 12 For they served idols, whereof Yahweh had said to them, You shall not do this thing. -2 Kings 17

They had invented their own feast days, their own rituals, and even sang songs and played music that were not pleasing to Yahweh:

- 21 I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.
- 22 Though you offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept *them*: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.
- 23 Take you away from me the noise of your songs; for I will not hear the melody of your viols. -Amos 5

As Judah copied Israel, Yahweh rejected their worship and refused to hear the prayers that they offered:

- 11 To what purpose *is* the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? says Yahweh: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.
- 12 When you come to appear before me, who has required this at your hand, to tread my courts?
- 13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot endure it; *it is* iniquity, even the solemn meeting.
- 14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear *them*.
- 15 And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide my eyes from you: yes, when you make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. -Isaiah 1

It took a major trial, which Yahweh sent upon them through the king of Babylon, to refocus their hearts upon Him. That was when, Yahweh said, those that seek

Him would find Him. That is when He would answer prayers, such as those offered by Daniel, and would release them from their captivity and allow them to return back to the land of Judah:

- 13 And you shall seek me, and find *me*, when you shall search for me with all your heart.
- 14 And I will be found by you, says Yahweh: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places where I have driven you, says Yahweh; and I will bring you again into the place *from* where I caused you to be carried away captive. -Jeremiah 29

It was because of Yahweh's love for Judah that He sent the Babylonians to humble them so that they would search for Him with all of their hearts and finally find Him.

Just as Yahweh sent the king of Babylon to try Judah, He allows us to go through many difficult times, during which we experience, as Peter calls it, "heaviness through manifold temptations." These are trials of our faith:

- 6 Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations:
- 7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it is tried with fire, might be found to praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Yahshua the Messiah:
- 8 Whom having not seen, you love; in whom, though now you see *him* not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: -1 Peter 1

When gold is refined in a hot fire, the impurities that are within it are melted away. Even though our faith is much more precious than gold, it must also be refined. The trial of our faith burns away the impurities of prideful doubt within our hearts. It establishes the kind of total faith, completely trusting in Yahweh through Yahshua the Messiah, through which He clothes us in His righteousness. The "expected end," which is the "end," or completion of our faith, is the salvation of our souls!

- 9 Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls. -1 Peter 1

James says that we should "count it all joy" when we find ourselves in the midst of such dreadful trials and temptations. Through them we will develop the patience to trust God and know that He will ultimately deliver us:

- 2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations;
- 3 Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith works patience.
- 4 But let patience have *her* perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. -James 1

Judah waited seventy years for their deliverance. If we fully trust Yahweh, then we will also wait for His deliverance from the trials of our faith. It is through this process that we can realize Yahweh's "thoughts of peace" as we rejoice in His "expected end," which is our salvation.

*Come to Understanding* is sent out twice per month free of charge. To add someone to our list of readers, please contact us at:

Institute for Biblical and Historical Studies  
P.O. Box 12, 114 East Main Street  
Addison, Michigan 49220 U.S.A.  
biblical@ibiblical.org

You may view this and past editions online at: [www.ibiblical.org](http://www.ibiblical.org)  
Scriptures are from the:  
Proper Name Version of the King James Bible.



©2012 Institute for Biblical and Historical Studies. All rights reserved.  
You may freely copy this publication, provided you acknowledge its source and inform us of your use.