

was ever afterward intensely monotheistic, unswervingly loyal to Jehovah. (6) It restored the Sabbaths and produced a deep missionary enthusiasm for the faith; the nation's isolation was broken and tribal distinctions were blotted out.—*Rev. A. Inwood, Seattle, Wash.*

The captivity in Babylon was a severe discipline, but it brought forth good fruits. 1. It purged the nation of idolatry, and firmly entrenched them in a monotheistic faith. 2. It sifted the people, and led to the selection of a Gideon's band for the work of reconstruction. 3. It united the tribes in one body, and restored national harmony. 4. It led to more spiritual views of the divine nature, and made worship less formal and more heartsome. 5. It strengthened confidence in the fulfillment of prophecy. 6. It opened the fountain of almsgiving, and brought charity to the front as a religious duty. 7. It broadened the mental horizon of the nation, and prepared for enlarged conceptions of truth.—*Rev. Willis P. Odell, A.M., Buffalo, N. Y.*

From Egypt to the restoration idolatry was the cardinal sin of the Jewish people. Under the theocracy they were free, but by a strange perversity they became uneasy and clamored for a king. Jehovah "gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul." With heathen royalty came heathen idolatry. But the cure began while they were under the Babylonian yoke, the three Hebrew children standing firm before the golden image, and Daniel going down three times a day on his knees with his face toward Jerusalem. From the restoration to the advent they were free, else Christ would have accused them. Without question the captivity was the greatest of blessings. It eradicated both the habit and spirit of idol-worship, for never since, amid every vicissitude of their checkered, scattered, isolated selfhood, have they been guilty of that besetting sin which drove them from the promised land and caused all their misfortunes.—*Dr. Quest.*

1. It cured them of their itch after idolatry, by bringing them face to face with its ripened and bitter fruits. 2. It united the nation more firmly through the suffering of the captivity. Nothing unites a nation like suffering. Herein is found one secret of the enduring nationality of the Jews. 3. They were led to remember the goodness of God, and the blessings they enjoyed when walking in his statutes. Read Psalm 137. 4. In order to prepare for the gospel dispensation, it was necessary to remove much of the external glory of the Jewish Church. This was accomplished by the captivity. The temple was destroyed, and though rebuilt it was never as before. The temporal power of the house of David was removed (Ezek. 21, 26, 27). The two tables

of stone were lost, as were also the Urin and Thummim. The Shekinah had departed, and fire no longer burned upon the altar. The removal of these would lead the people to look earnestly for the promised Messiah.—*Rev. Henry C. Jameson, Fostoria, O.*

## Analytical and Biblical Outline.

### Results of National Sin.

#### I. WAR.

*Came....all his army.* v. 1.

"I will bring a nation." Jer. 5, 15-17.

"Shall hear of wars." Matt. 24, 6.

#### II. SUFFERING.

*Besieged it....broken up.* v. 1, 2.

"How doth the city sit solitary." Lam. 1, 1.

"Shall be great tribulation." Matt. 24, 21.

#### III. SORROW.

*Slew the sons....before his eyes.* v. 6.

"Fallen by the sword." Lam. 2, 21.

"Weep....for the slain." Jer. 9, 1.

#### IV. BLINDNESS.

*Put out Zedekiah's eyes.* v. 7.

"Shall he not see it." Ezek. 12, 13.

"Your iniquities have separated." Isa. 59, 1, 2.

#### V. DESTRUCTION.

*Burned....brake down.* v. 8.

"Jerusalem shall become heaps." Jer. 26, 18.

"Not be left here one stone." Matt. 24, 2.

#### VI. CAPTIVITY.

*Carried away captive.* v. 9.

"For their good." Jer. 24, 5.

"I will visit you." Jer. 29, 10.

## Thoughts for Young People.

### Zedekiah's Message to Us.

Poor Zedekiah! How can he deliver any message after seeing his nation destroyed, his capital overthrown, his people taken captive, and his children put to death, and then suffering the loss of his own eye-sight? He preaches loudly to us, nevertheless, and here are some of the lessons we may draw from his career:

1. *When God means to punish a sinner, no wall or weapon avails to protect him.* Zedekiah might have slipped away from Nebuchadnezzar, but he could not from God.

2. *Weakness of will produces quite as much of sin and calamity as is produced by strong bad will.* Few sinners at the outset deliberately intend to be sinners. They slip by moral weakness into a course of sin, and he who would glorify God must do it by a strong will. Thank God! the weakest will becomes strong when linked with the Almighty purpose.

3. *Nobody can be bad without plunging others into suffering.* Zedekiah himself suffered partly