

Jer. 24:1 ¶ The LORD shewed me, and, behold, two baskets of figs *were* set before the temple of the LORD, after that Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, and the princes of Judah, with the carpenters and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon.

Jer. 24:2 One basket *had* very good figs, *even* like the figs *that are* first ripe: and the other basket *had* very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad.

This prophecy is said to have occurred after Jeconiah was taken captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, along with other royalty and a group of skilled workmen; history identifies the year as 597 BC. The prophet Ezekiel was part of this group; Daniel had been taken previously. This event is described in 2Kings.

*2 Kings 24:12–16 “And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign. And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king’s house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said. And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, **even ten thousand captives**, and all the craftsmen and smiths: **none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land**. And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king’s mother, and the king’s wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. And all the men of might, **even seven thousand**, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand, all that were strong and apt for war, **even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon.**”*

It seems that this prophecy came in the form of a vision that accompanied the LORD’s communication with Jeremiah. He sees one basket of really good, ripe figs and another basket of figs that were so bad they weren’t fit to be eaten.

I decided to look at Burton Coffman’s comments before moving on to the next chapter, and he made an interesting observation that I completely missed: “The great lesson here, which is missed by many of the commentators, has nothing whatever to do with first-fruits. The lesson that thunders from the parable is that proximity to the temple is no sign whatever of the holiness or acceptability of the people living in the vicinity of the Jewish temple. The people in Jerusalem were close to the temple, all right, but they were not close to God! They were exactly like that basket of rotten figs on the very steps of the temple.”

Jer. 24:3 Then said the LORD unto me, What seest thou, Jeremiah? And I said, Figs; the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.

The LORD asks Jeremiah to describe what he sees. Jeremiah promptly answers that he sees some very good figs and some figs that are so bad that they can’t be eaten.

Jer. 24:4 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Jer. 24:5 Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for *their* good.

The LORD, with emphasis on the fact that He is the God of Israel, now explains the vision; His covenant with Abraham will be fulfilled. He compares those taken captive to Babylon to the good figs; they have been sent into captivity for their good, to their benefit. This would seem to be contrary to normal expectation; one would think that being taken captive was a bad thing. God's purposes and actions are often misunderstood by those who refuse to listen to His word.

Jer. 24:6 For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull *them* down; and I will plant them, and not pluck *them* up.

Jer. 24:7 And I will give them an heart to know me, that I *am* the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.

The LORD explains that it is His plan for these captives to settle down in Babylon and grow and prosper. He will eventually bring them or their children back to the land of Israel. The time in captivity is meant to bring about repentance and the reestablishment of fellowship between the LORD and His people. He is going to do a special work in their heart to accomplish this purpose.

Jer. 24:8 And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil; surely thus saith the LORD, So will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt:

Jer. 24:9 And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for *their* hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them.

Jer. 24:10 And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers.

As for the evil figs, they picture Zedekiah and those that remained in Jerusalem or had fled to Egypt seeking refuge. They too will eventually be taken captive, but they will suffer in captivity and will never be allowed to return to Jerusalem. They will either die in captivity or by the sword of the enemy, or by famine or disease. The LORD is careful to emphasize that everything will be happening according to His purposes, His judgment.

Verse 9 seems to be worded ("all the kingdoms of the earth") so as to also have application to the future worldwide dispersion of the Jews mandated by Rome after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. The atrocities committed against the Jews by the nations, especially at the hands of the Catholic Church, the Communists in Russia, the Nazis in Germany and even the Palestinian/ Islamic

terrorists of today, all give evidence to the truth of the prophecy in this verse.