

## A Merciful Warning

**Jeremiah vi. 8.**

**Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited.**

THESE words are a merciful warning from God to the people of Israel by the prophet Jeremiah, the last prophet that God sent to them before their captivity in Babylon. The time of his prophecy was of a long continuance, above the space of forty years, viz. from the thirteenth year of king Josiah, to the eleventh year of king Zedekiah, the year in which Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

This I observe, to shew the great patience of GOD to a sinful nation. And this is much the same space of time that God gave warning by our blessed Saviour and his apostles to the same people of the Jews concerning their final destruction.

For it was about forty years after the prediction of our Saviour concerning it, just before his death, that the terrible destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation was executed upon them by the Romans, or rather chiefly by themselves; as I shall presently shew.

Of which dreadful desolation, the first taking of Jerusalem by, Nebuchadnezzar, and their captivity into Babylon was a kind of type and forerunner. For as Josephus observes, the taking of Jerusalem by Titus Vespasian did happen in the very same month, and on the very same day of the month in which Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, viz. upon our tenth of August.

And it is not unworthy of our observation, that the time of God's warning is wont to hold some sort of proportion with the extent of his judgments. Before the universal deluge which destroyed the whole world, Noah and his family only excepted, GOD gave a much longer warning by the preaching of Noah, for the space of an hundred and twenty years.

Before the destruction of a particular nation, if we may judge by God's dealing with the Jews, his time of warning is forty years. And before the destruction of a particular city, if we may conclude any thing from the single example of Nineveh, the time of God's warning is yet much shorter, the space of forty days.

(Sermons on Several Subjects and Occasions... by John Tillotson, Vol. 3, London, MDCCLVII, 53-54, From Chapter XXXVII: The Way to Prevent the Ruin of a Sinful People, Text and paragraph structure modified)