

# GOD'S UNSEARCHABLE WAYS

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God has many purposes for what He does, and His wisdom, knowledge, judgment and ways are unsearchable and past finding out (Rom 11:33). In the Old Testament, God sent a remnant of the people of Israel into captivity in Babylon. He did this to bring the people to repentance. He also used the presence of the Israelites among their captors for their spiritual benefit.

## **God's plans for the remnant of his people**

Jeremiah 24:1-7 says, "The Lord showed me, and, behold, two baskets of figs were set before the temple of the Lord, after that

Nebuchadnezzar 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. 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. 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. Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, 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.* 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. *And I will give them a 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 "good figs" were the people God would bring to repentance in captivity, and ultimately return them to their land.

## **God's plans for other nations**

The Lord also had plans to use the captive Israelites as a blessing to other nations. In Jeremiah 12:16-17, God said, "*And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, The Lord lives; as they taught my people to swear by Baal; then shall they be built in the midst of my people.* But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, saith the Lord." God intended for the "good figs" to be a good influence on those they were in the midst of, teaching them about Jehovah and His ways.

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(continued)

## God's work with King of Babylon and the Persians

God's hopes were indeed fulfilled. For example, from Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, learned about Jehovah and was converted to serving Him, step-by-step. After God revealed Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation to the prophet Daniel, the king said, "*Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets*" (Dan 2:47). After this, the king made Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego rulers in the province of Babylon (Dan 2:48-49). Next, after God delivered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, "Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because *there is no other God that can deliver after this sort*. Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon" (Dan 3:28-30). In Daniel 4, the last step was taken as God drove Nebuchadnezzar from his kingdom until he learned that God is the one who rules in the kingdoms of men. "And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he does according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honor and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. *Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase*" (Dan 4:34-37). The Persians became the world empire after Babylon, and when Esther was queen, God delivered the Jews from the evil plans of Haman. After that, "*many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them*" (Est 8:17).