

SURRENDER TO THE YOKE

(Jer 27:1-22) 10/03/18

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I. CONTEXT

- A. *Most scholars believe that chapters 27-29 are linked in background and contents. Chapters 27-28 attack the false optimism of the prophets of Judah and are dated by the majority of scholars in the fourth year of Zedekiah (594-593 B.C.). Foreign envoys were coming to Jerusalem to promote a confederacy against Nebuchadnezzar. Neighboring countries were apparently trying to involve Judah in a rebellion against Babylon, an enterprise encouraged by the false prophets at Jerusalem. The contemplated rebellion failed because of Nebuchadnezzar's forthright action.*
- B. *Chapters 27-29 were written to dispel the erroneous view that Babylon was just a passing power, not to be reckoned with. From Jer 51:59 we may infer that Zedekiah was called to Babylon to explain what part he had in the unsuccessful plot against Nebuchadnezzar (EXP).*

II. MAKE BONDS AND YOKES (Jer 27:1-8)

- A. Reign of Zedekiah (1)
 - 1. Some English versions follow the majority of manuscripts which read "Jehoiakim" instead of "**Zedekiah**" (KJV, ASV). However, this alternate view is written in the margin.
 - 2. Older Hebrew (3), Syrian, and Arabic manuscripts read "Zedekiah." It is suspected that Jehoiakim's name was interpolated to sync with the context of Chapter 26.
 - 3. Zedekiah was the last in the dynasty of the kings of Judah (597-586, total 11yrs). He was in his fourth year of reign (594-593 B.C.) when Jeremiah's prophecy came to him. Zedekiah was warned not to stand against Nebuchadnezzar.
- B. Make Bonds and Yokes (2) - Jeremiah was told to begin to make **bonds and yokes**. This was prophetic symbolism revealing that Zedekiah would be taken captive and placed in bonds. It appears that Jeremiah actually did put a yoke around his neck as seen in the presence of Hananiah (Jer 28:10-11).
- C. Send Word to the Kings (3) - Just as Jeremiah probably did not make cups of wrath dispensing them to the kings of the land, likewise, he probably did not make yokes for each king. However, Jeremiah would have warned the kings verbally. They were the kings from **Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, Sidon, and Jerusalem** (Zedekiah).
- D. Go to Your Masters (4) - Jeremiah would have sent word to the kings through **messengers** (vs. 3). They were to go back to their **Masters** (kings) and report the word of the Lord from Jeremiah.
- E. Lord Possess All Power (5)
 - 1. The message that the envoys were to give to the kings was that the Lord is Creator and Sovereign Ruler among men. He has made everything on the face of the earth by His **great power and outstretched arm**.
 - 2. The Lord's point was that He gives His power to whomever He **pleases** to accomplish His purposes. The Lord will work through the righteous as well as the wicked (Pro 21:1).
- F. Lord Gave Power to Nebuchadnezzar (6) - The Lord was giving **Nebuchadnezzar** power over the kingdoms, inhabitants, and the **wild animals**. This does not suggest that Nebuchadnezzar was righteous, but He was going to be an instrument to dispense judgment upon the wicked, which included Judah.
- G. Nations will Serve Him (7)
 - 1. The Lord's plan was that Babylon would rule for a time and **all the nations** would serve it. However, after a time, other kings would rule and would make Babylon their servant.
 - 2. Babylonian rule would last until the rule of Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, Belshazzar. Belshazzar was the son of Nitocris (Nebuchadnezzar's daughter) who married Nabonidus. Nabonidus made Belshazzar co-regent from 553-539. This is why Belshazzar was called "king" (Dan 5:1) and why Belshazzar called Nebuchadnezzar his "father," meaning ancestor (Dan 5:2, 13).
 - 3. Babylon was captured by the Medes and Persians under Cyrus as predicted by the prophet Daniel (Dan 5:30), and the Babylonian Empire would come to an end in 539 BC.
- H. A Yoke for the Anarchists (8) - Those who resisted Nebuchadnezzar's rule will be punished by **sword, famine, and pestilence**. On a human level, virtually all the nations would attempt an alliance against Babylon and Babylon would defeat them. On a divine level, those who resisted Babylon were wicked nations who would be punished not for their alliances but for their wickedness.

III. STOP LISTENING TO FALSE PROPHETS (Jer 27:9-15)

- A. Stop Listening to False Prophets (9)
 - 1. Jeremiah's message to the nations was that they were to listen to the Lord and stop listening to their false seers.
 - 2. Jeremiah listed five types of false seers. They were: 1) your **prophets**, 2) your **diviners**, 3) your **dreamers**, 4) your **soothsayers**, and 5) your **sorcerers**. These were denounced by the Lord in Deu 18:9-13.
 - B. They Prophesy a Lie (10) - As all false prophets do, they **prophesied lies**. They were lies because: 1) they were not the words of the Lord, 2) their prophecies did not come true, and 3) they were drawing people away from the true God. The motive of the false prophets was to **drive out** the inhabitants of the land. They may not have been doing this knowingly, but that was exactly what was going to happen from the Lord.
 - C. Submit and Be Spared (11) - The nations that listened to the Lord and submitted to Babylon would dwell in the land and be spared. Not only was this a gesture of mercy from the Lord to Jerusalem, but also to all the nations.
 - D. Zedekiah Must Submit to the Yoke (12) - The message that Jeremiah had sent to the kings of the land was the same message that he gave to Zedekiah. If he submitted to the yoke of Babylon, Judah would be spared.
 - E. Why Choose the Sword? (13) - The Lord appealed with wisdom. Why die by the sword when you can serve the king of Babylon and live?
 - F. Do Not Listen to Prophets (14) - The false prophets were prophesying that the kings should **not serve the king of Babylon**. No one should ever listen to false prophets. As for these nations, listening to false seers would be deadly.
 - G. They Prophesy Falsely (15) - Zedekiah should have known all these things about false prophets, but he was spiritually blind. He needed to be told that the false prophets were **not sent** from the Lord even though they prophesied in the Lord's **name**. Jeremiah reiterates the hidden motive (known or unknown) of false prophets, which was to drive out the inhabitants.
- IV. VESSELS IN THE TEMPLE (Jer 27:16-22)
- A. Warning to Priests (16)
 - 1. Jeremiah spoke to the **priests** in regard to the **vessels of the Lord's house**. The false prophets were even declaring that the confiscated temple vessels would be returned from Babylon.
 - 2. Some of the temple vessels had been taken under Jehoiakim's reign in the first wave of deportation in 605 BC (2Ch 36:5-7). Other temple vessels were removed under Jehoiachin's reign in the second deportation in 597 BC (Jer 27:19-20; 2Ki 24:13). The remaining vessels would be seized in Zedekiah's reign in the third and final deportation in 586 BC (Jer 27:22; 2Ki 25:13).
 - B. Serve Nebuchadnezzar (17) - Though there may have been animosity against the Babylonians for removing some of the temple vessels, Judah had to submit to them. The Lord was behind the scenes attempting to get Judah to return to Him. Otherwise, the **city** would come to **ruin**.
 - C. Let False Prophets Entreat the Lord (18) - True prophets would know the Lord's will through His words. The true prophets would act accordingly. In this case, they would **intreat the Lord** to keep the current temple vessels and not let them be taken to **Babylon**.
 - D. Remaining Vessels in Temple (19-20)
 - 1. Three of the vessels or articles were still in the Temple and were mentioned by Jeremiah.
 - 2. First, there were the **pillars**. These were columns 27 ft in height and made of bronze. They were placed in front of the Temple (1Ki 7:15-22 cf. Jer 52:17).
 - 3. Second, there was the **sea (basin)**. This was a large cast basin used for the washings of the priests. The basin was supported by the backs of twelve cast oxen (1Ki 7:23-26).
 - 4. The third group of items that were still in the temple were the mobile **stands** upon which large lavers were placed (1Ki 7:27-37; 2Ch 4:6). The lavers were used for washing animal parts to be burned.
 - E. Vessels Taken to Babylon (21-22)
 - 1. The Babylonians had not taken the last three items in their first two invasions. Perhaps because these pieces were large and not made of gold, they were left behind for the third and final invasion.
 - 2. But contrary to the message of the false prophets, these last items would be **carried to Babylon**.
 - 3. Nevertheless, in God's mercy, many of the vessels and articles that had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar would be returned (cf. Ezr 1:7-11).

V. OBSERVATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

A. Listening to False Prophets

1. *To underestimate the power of a lie in times of national distress is sheer folly* (Feinberg).
2. Listening to false prophets can be deadly spiritually and physically. Think of those who followed false prophets and ended up in mass suicide. However, following false prophets can be just as deadly spiritually and it can happen to the masses.
3. False prophets are removing people from their spiritual ground. We talk about grounding a believer in the Word, in doctrine, and in theology. The reason is so that they are not carried away by every wind of doctrine by false teachers (Eph 4:14).
4. The other half of this truth is if one is following a false prophesy or lie, then they are not following God's word and God's will.
5. *To resist the known will of God is always spiritual suicide.* Feinberg

B. Surrender to the Yoke of the Lord

1. Jesus compels us to come to Him and take His yoke upon us (Mat 11:28-30). We first come to Jesus in salvation by faith in His work on the cross.
2. Then we must learn from Him and learn His Word. We learn that He is gentle and humble in heart. He has not placed us back under the Law but made us experience His grace.
3. Therefore, we ought to serve Him. We ought to take His yoke upon us. We ought to submit to Him at all times, even if we do not understand how He is working in situations.
4. We can also trust Him because He is the Sovereign Ruler among men. He will work through all situations. He will work through the righteous and the unrighteous.