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Called to Speak for the Lord – the Book of Jeremiah

God is Sovereign Over the
Nations

May 2, 2021

Sermon Text: Jeremiah 27-29

Scripture Reading: Daniel 2:31-49

We come to a section of Jeremiah this morning which consists of three chapters which must be dealt with together. So we are going to begin by reading all three, and then we will look at the very important principles we find in them – principles which have direct and crucial application for us today.

Follow along then as I read, beginning in chapter 27:

Jer 27:1-22 In the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD. (2) Thus the

LORD said to me: “Make yourself straps and yoke-bars, and put them on your neck.

(3) Send word to the king of Edom, the king of Moab, the king of the sons of Ammon, the king of Tyre, and the king of Sidon by the hand of the envoys who have come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah king of Judah. (4) Give them this charge for their masters: ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: This is what you shall say to your masters: (5) **“It is I who by my great power and my outstretched arm have made the earth, with the men and animals that are on the earth, and I give it to whomever it seems right to me. (6) Now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and I have given him also the beasts of the field to serve him.**

(7) All the nations shall serve him and his son and his grandson, until the time of his own land comes. Then many nations and great kings shall make him their slave. (8) **““But if any nation or kingdom will not serve this**

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, I will punish that nation with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence, declares the LORD, until I have consumed it by his hand.

(9) So do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your dreamers, your fortune-tellers, or your sorcerers, who are saying to you, 'You shall not serve the king of Babylon.' (10) For it is a lie that they are prophesying to you, with the result that you will be removed far from your land, and I will drive you out, and you will perish.

(11) But any nation that will bring its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I will leave on its own land, to work it and dwell there, declares the LORD.'"

(12) To Zedekiah king of Judah I spoke in like manner: "Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people and live. (13) Why will you and your people die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence, as the LORD has spoken concerning any nation that will not serve the king of Babylon?

(14) Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are saying to you, 'You shall not serve the king of Babylon,' for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you. (15) I have not sent them, declares the LORD, but they are prophesying falsely in my name, with the result that I will drive you out and you will perish, you and the prophets who are prophesying to you."

(16) Then I spoke to the priests and to all this people, saying, "Thus says the LORD: Do not listen to the words of your prophets who are prophesying to you, saying, 'Behold, the vessels of the LORD's house will now shortly be brought back from Babylon,' for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you. (17) Do not listen to them; serve the king of Babylon and live. Why should this city become a desolation? (18) If they are prophets, and if the word of the LORD is with them, then let them intercede with the LORD of hosts, that the vessels that are left in the house of the LORD, in the house of the king of Judah, and in Jerusalem may not go to Babylon. (19) For thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the pillars, the sea, the stands, and the rest of the vessels that are left in this city, (20) which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon did

not take away, when he took into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem— (21) thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning the vessels that are left in the house of the LORD, in the house of the king of Judah, and in Jerusalem: (22) They shall be carried to Babylon and remain there until the day when I visit them, declares the LORD. Then I will bring them back and restore them to this place.”

Hananiah the False Prophet

Jer 28:1-17 In that same year, at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fifth month of the fourth year, Hananiah the son of Azzur, the prophet from Gibeon, **spoke to me in the house of the LORD, in the presence of the priests and all the people, saying, (2) “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon.** (3) Within two years I will bring back to this place all the vessels of the LORD's house, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place and carried to Babylon. (4) I will also bring back to

this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and all the exiles from Judah who went to Babylon, declares the LORD, for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.”

(5) Then the prophet Jeremiah spoke to Hananiah the prophet in the presence of the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the LORD, (6) and the prophet Jeremiah said, “Amen! May the LORD do so; may the LORD make the words that you have prophesied come true, and bring back to this place from Babylon the vessels of the house of the LORD, and all the exiles.

(7) Yet hear now this word that I speak in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people. (8) The prophets who preceded you and me from ancient times prophesied war, famine, and pestilence against many countries and great kingdoms. (9) As for the prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of that prophet comes to pass, then it will be known that the LORD has truly sent the prophet.”

(10) Then the prophet Hananiah took the yoke-bars from the neck of Jeremiah the prophet and broke them. (11) And Hananiah spoke in the

presence of all the people, saying, “Thus says the LORD: Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all the nations within two years.” But Jeremiah the prophet went his way.

(12) Sometime after the prophet Hananiah had broken the yoke-bars from off the neck of Jeremiah the prophet, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: (13) “Go, tell Hananiah, ‘Thus says the LORD: You have broken wooden bars, but you have made in their place bars of iron. (14) For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: **I have put upon the neck of all these nations an iron yoke to serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and they shall serve him, for I have given to him even the beasts of the field.**”

(15) And Jeremiah the prophet said to the prophet Hananiah, “Listen, Hananiah, **the LORD has not sent you, and you have made this people trust in a lie.** (16) Therefore thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I will remove you from the face of the earth. This year you shall die, because you have uttered rebellion against the LORD.’” (17) In that same year, in the seventh month, the prophet Hananiah died.

Obedying the Lord in Babylon

Jer 29:1-32 These are the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders of the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. (2) This was after King Jeconiah and the queen mother, the eunuchs, the officials of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen, and the metal workers had departed from Jerusalem. (3) The letter was sent by the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. It said:

(4) “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: **(5) Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. (6) Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. (7) But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD**

on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

(8) For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: **Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, (9) for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the LORD.**

(10) “For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. (11) For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. (12) Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. (13) You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. (14) I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

(15) “Because you have said, ‘The LORD has raised up prophets for us in

Babylon,’ (16) thus says the LORD concerning the king who sits on the throne of David, **and concerning all the people who dwell in this city, your kinsmen who did not go out with you into exile:** (17) ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, behold, I am sending on them sword, famine, and pestilence, and I will make them like vile figs that are so rotten they cannot be eaten. (18) I will pursue them with sword, famine, and pestilence, and will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, a terror, a hissing, and a reproach among all the nations where I have driven them, (19) because they did not pay attention to my words, declares the LORD, that I persistently sent to you by my servants the prophets, but you would not listen, declares the LORD.’

(20) Hear the word of the LORD, all you exiles whom I sent away from Jerusalem to Babylon: (21) ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning Ahab the son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, **who are prophesying a lie to you in my name:** Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall strike them down before your eyes. (22) Because of them this curse shall be used by all the exiles from Judah in Babylon: “The LORD

make you like Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire,” (23) because they have done an outrageous thing in Israel, they have committed adultery with their neighbors' wives, **and they have spoken in my name lying words that I did not command them. I am the one who knows, and I am witness, declares the LORD.”**

(24) To Shemaiah of Nehelam you shall say: (25) “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: You have sent letters in your name to all the people who are in Jerusalem, and to Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, and to all the priests, saying, (26) ‘The LORD has made you priest instead of Jehoiada the priest, to have charge in the house of the LORD over every madman who prophesies, to put him in the stocks and neck irons. (27) Now why have you not rebuked Jeremiah of Anathoth who is prophesying to you? (28) For he has sent to us in Babylon, saying, “Your exile will be long; build houses and live in them, and plant gardens and eat their produce.”’” (29) Zephaniah the priest read this letter in the hearing of Jeremiah the prophet.

(30) Then the word of the LORD came

to Jeremiah: (31) “Send to all the exiles, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD concerning Shemaiah of Nehelam: Because Shemaiah had prophesied to you when I did not send him, and has made you trust in a lie, (32) therefore thus says the LORD: Behold, I will punish Shemaiah of Nehelam and his descendants. He shall not have anyone living among this people, and he shall not see the good that I will do to my people, declares the LORD, for he has spoken rebellion against the LORD.’”

There are at least two major themes in these chapters – which we have seen before in earlier portions of Jeremiah:

1. The sovereignty of God over all nations,
2. The prevalence of false prophets arising from within the church.

God had chosen Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon as His servant to punish sinful, wicked, unrepentant Judah. Over a period of years, culminating in the final destruction of Jerusalem in 587BC, Nebuchadnezzar conquered the land, carried off exiles to Babylon (Daniel and his friends, for instance), and wiped out the rest.

Jeremiah had been warning the people of Judah about this coming judgment if they did not repent of their habitual, wicked, ongoing evil sins. But as you know, they would not listen. They spurned the Lord's kind and patient warnings and persecuted His prophet, Jeremiah.

And all through this time of warning, there was this plague of false prophets opposing the Word that God gave Jeremiah to preach.

Jer 7:3-10 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you dwell in this place. (4) Do not trust in these deceptive words: 'This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.' (5) "For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly execute justice one with another, (6) if you do not oppress the sojourner, the fatherless, or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own harm, (7) then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers forever. (8) "Behold, you trust in deceptive words to no avail. (9) Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal,

and go after other gods that you have not known, (10) and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, 'We are delivered!'—only to go on doing all these abominations?

Chapter 23 in particular confronts these false prophets and the ear-tickling message they announced.

God is *sovereign* over the nations. We use that word as a name for a king – the sovereign. Here is the dictionary on this word:

: one possessing or held to possess supreme political power or [sovereignty](#)
b: one that exercises supreme authority within a limited [sphere](#)
c: an acknowledged leader : **ARBITER**
2: any of various gold coins of the United Kingdom

Power. Authority. Earthly kings have limited sovereignty, but God has total, perfect, and complete authority over all the nations.

Psa 33:8-11 Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him! (9) For he spoke, and it came to be; he

commanded, and it stood firm. (10) The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; he frustrates the plans of the peoples. (11) The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations.

The Bible is filled with this doctrine.

Pro 21:1 The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will.

The world in which we live is increasingly wicked and in chaos, and it is particularly important for us to remind ourselves that the scene of human history is playing out according to plan.

Mat 24:4-6 And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. (5) For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray. (6) And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. **See that you are not alarmed**, for this must take place, but the end is not yet.

Hab 3:16-19 I hear, and my body trembles; my lips quiver at the sound; rottenness enters into my bones; my legs tremble beneath me. Yet I will

quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us. (17) **Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, (18) yet I will rejoice in the LORD;** I will take joy in the God of my salvation. (19) GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places. To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments.

You can see many professing Christians today in turmoil. Certainly there is nothing wrong with being incensed about the injustices and evil going on all around us. We do hunger and thirst for righteousness. And there is a time to stand up against evil. But as God's people, *we must never act as if the Lord is not in control*, and one prevalent danger of doing so leads us into the next major theme here in Jeremiah – false prophets. *And the danger of us embracing and preaching their false words.*

False Prophets

Look at Jesus' words again-

Mat 24:4-11 And Jesus answered them, **“See that no one leads you astray. (5) For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray. (6) And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. (7) For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. (8) All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. (9) “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. (10) And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. (11) And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray.**

See it! It is the very same thing we are seeing here in these chapters of Jeremiah – false preachers all over the place. *And what is their sermon? That God is not sovereign over the nations – THEY ARE!* It is THEIR message that is “God’s Word.”

God declared that, for Judah’s sin, they were going to be conquered and survivors carried away to Babylon for

70 years. But in their sin, these prophets denied it and, claiming to speak for the Lord, minimized what was going to happen. Two years at most and we will be back here blessed by God.

This is not difficult to translate into our own day, though we must take care in making applications.

It is always a false message that God is going to bless America (or any nation) while the people refuse to humble themselves before Him and repent of their sin.

And it is a false hope to put our faith in anyone who preaches a message of divine blessing upon us when they fail to expose sin and call for repentance from it.

We do not know what the Lord’s specific plans are for our own nation. But we do know these things with certainty:

1. The Lord is not going to keep blessing any nation whose people insist on walking in sin and defying Him,
2. There are and will be religious leaders and preachers today who preach a false message, and many

will be deceived by them. Their message will be one that pleases the masses.

3. Those who truly do represent the Lord's Word are going to be hated and persecuted.
4. But in it all, God is sovereign. He preserves His true people. He directs every thought and word and decision of kings. His Son is the King of them all.

shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.”

Dan 2:21 He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding;

And one day, all is going to be set right by Christ.

Dan 2:44-45 And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, (45) just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what