

Message #31**Jeremiah 27:1-22**

When the corona virus first hit in 2020, there were various opinions as to how the church should respond. We met as leaders here and we read this text from I Peter: “Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right, for such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king” (I Peter 2:13-17).

Based on those verses, we decided we should do our best to submit to what our governor mandated. There were churches that did not do it, but we did. We did not like it. We did not agree with it. But we concluded this is what God’s word does say so we did it.

Now it is easy to obey the word of God when it is positive. But when it demands that we submit ourselves to something we don’t like, then it becomes another story. I can tell you this, by submitting to the word of God we did experience the blessings of God. Our offerings last year were at record levels and this year is on track to be higher. Not one person that we know of got the Corona Virus from this church. Some did get it from outside the church; but no one got it in the church. More people joined the church. So it does seem as though God honored us for obeying His word. That is what God always does.

God is sovereign even when ruthless people are politically in power. In this text God demands that His own people submit themselves to and serve Nebuchadnezzar, whom God again called “my servant” (Jer. 27:6; 25:9; 43:10).

God was going to use a heathen political leader for His own purposes to punish His own people. God chose the heathen leader and He demanded that His people submit to him. If they would at least listen to God on this point, they could live. If not, they would die.

GOD DEMANDS THAT HIS PEOPLE SUBMIT THEMSELVES TO HIS APPOINTED GENTILE LEADER SO THEY MAY LIVE AND HE ALSO DEMANDS THAT THEY NOT LISTEN TO FALSE RELIGIOUS LEADERS WHO TEACH OTHERWISE OR ELSE THEY WILL DIE.

God is completely sovereign in this world of ours and He expects His people to believe that and obey His word no matter what is happening and no matter who is ruling. In fact, God wants all nations to realize that He is sovereign over every nation in the world.

Now this is a fascinating text comprised of three main warnings:

WARNING #1 – God warns the nations. **27:1-11**

We learn from **verse 1** that again God’s word came to Jeremiah in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah. Now this does not mean this came on day one. In fact, according to Jeremiah 28:1, the actual time of this was the fourth year of Zedekiah’s reign.

Zedekiah began his reign over Judah in 597 BC so the fourth year of his reign would be 593 BC, just about seven years before Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon would conquer this part of the world.

According to **verse 2**, God wanted Jeremiah, His prophet, to perform an odd symbolic act for the nations. God wanted Jeremiah to make bonds of leather straps and yokes of wood for crossbars for himself and put it on his own neck.

The ox yoke was a wooden bar that was fastened onto the neck of an animal by leather straps. The word “yokes” is plural which would indicate that there is an upper part to the yoke and an under part to the yoke.

By virtue of the fact that God uses the plural “yokes,” He is referring to more than just Israel. He is referring to multiple nations who will be brought under the dominant power of the Babylonians.

Obviously, being in a yoke immediately implies the captivity and submission of the thing that is yoked. The reason that you put a yoke on an animal is to get the animal to submit to the task, which is plowing or pulling.

According to **verse 3**, Jeremiah was to send word to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon by messengers, ambassadors and envoys who had come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah. They were probably there discussing what to do about the pending Babylonian threat.

They would have seen Jeremiah wearing this yoke and you could not help but wonder what that all meant. So as Jeremiah explained it, they needed to return back and tell their respective kings. **What they did not need was a strategy formed with Zedekiah. What they did need was a submission to the sovereign God and His word.**

So all of the leaders from various nations would see Jeremiah, the prophet of God, wearing a yoke and God wanted these leaders to go back to their nations and tell them what they had seen.

God wanted these messengers to go back to all of these kings and relay specific messages:

Message #1 - The LORD of hosts and God of Israel is commanding this message. **27:4**

God is sovereign over everything and God is the God of Israel and the nations need to understand this.

Message #2 - God has made the earth. **27:5a**

God says I made the earth.

Message #3 - God has made the men on the earth. **27:5b**

God says I make all people on the earth.

Message #4 - God has made the beasts on the earth. **27:5c**

God says I made all the animals on the earth.

Message #5 - God will give His great power to one who pleases Him. **27:5d**

God says I will give My power to one who pleases Me on the earth. You will become the most powerful person you can ever become if you make your ambition in life to please God. If God's people had made it their goal in life to please God, they would have never been in this mess.

Message #6 - God has given all of the lands to Nebuchadnezzar. **27:6**

Now it cannot be that God has given Nebuchadnezzar this power because he pleases God because Nebuchadnezzar was a God-mocking heathen.

But what God is saying is it has pleased Me to raise up Nebuchadnezzar to rule over all people and God says I demand that all people submit to Nebuchadnezzar.

Message #7 - God will permit all nations to serve him until He causes another power to control them. **27:7**

By referring to his son and grandson, it refers to quite a long time, which we know to be 70 years. God says I control the time that I permit one to reign.

Message #8 - God will punish any nation who refuses to serve Nebuchadnezzar. **27:8**

God has a warning for any who refused to submit to Him and His word. God will punish the people with a sword (military), with famine (starvation), with pestilence (sickness). He will permit these things to last until He destroys any nation who refuses to submit to Him.

Message #9 - God warns nations not to listen to false religious leaders who say things contrary to His word. **27:9-10**

False religious leaders plague the world. They were a plague in Jeremiah's day and they are in our day. God warns all people of all nations to not listen to false prophets who lie and do not tell the truth.

They were telling people that God would not punish His own people. They told them that God would not ever destroy Jerusalem. God loved His people just the way they were. They were telling people that these were messages from God.

They had false prophets who prophesied things not true. They had dreamers who said they had revelatory dreams from God and could interpret them. They had soothsayers who claimed they could contact the unseen world. They had sorcerers who were involved in the occult.

All of these were religious frauds and liars. Now specifically what they tell people is what they want to hear. They tell them nice, positive messages. They tell people they are secure; they are loved by God, nothing bad will happen and they don't need to surrender to the Babylonians.

God says don't listen to them.

Message #10 - God will permit nations who listen to Him to live a good life in their land. **27:11**

This is a fascinating text because it shows that God is the One who permits people to live in different nations and He controls the specific blessings of that nation.

Now logic would say that we cannot be delivered by submitting to some foreign power. Logic would say the way to being delivered is to resist. God says the way to be delivered is to submit.

God says if you will submit to Me and My word even when you are living in a foreign land, I will bless you and prosper you.

WARNING #2 – God warns King Zedekiah. **27:12-15**

Zedekiah was a pathetic evil king of Judah (II Kings 24:18-20). As we mentioned, he reigned from 597 BC to 686 B.C. He must have been thinking about some national rebellion or refusal to submit to the Babylonians. He refused to pay tribute to the Babylonians.

According to **verse 12**, Jeremiah specifically spoke direct messages to Zedekiah:

Message #1 - Submit yourselves to the king of Babylon and serve him and you will live. **27:12**

The fact is listening to the word of God is the way of life.

Message #2 - If you do not submit to the king of Babylon you will die. **27:13**

God will cause them to die by sword, famine and pestilence.

Message #3 - Do not listen to false prophets who tell you anything other than this truth.
27:14-15

There are religious leaders and ministers who will lead you away from the truth of God's word and right into judgment. They are respectful and polished and they are all liars.

God tells His people do not listen to them. So God wants people listening to His word and not listening to those who are saying things contrary to His word.

WARNING #3 – God warns the priests and all His people. **27:16-22**

After Jeremiah spoke to the nations and Zedekiah, he went to the priests and the people:

Message #1 - Do not listen to the false prophets who are trying to convince you that God's blessings will shortly be brought back to God's Temple. **27:16**

Leaders and people are warned by God to not listen to false teachers. They would tell people that their troubles were just temporary so don't submit to Babylon because everything soon will be brought back. It would be nearly 70 years until God would bring the items back (Ezra 1:7-11).

Since Zedekiah reigned from 597-586 BC and since Nebuchadnezzar started removing Temple items around 605 BC, those items had been missing from the Temple for about 10-15 years. The false prophets were telling the people they were soon to come back, which was a lie. From this point they were looking at 50 more years.

Phony religious leaders will tell you what you want to hear. They are more interested in having you believe their tales rather than the truth.

Message #2 - Do not listen to the false prophets who tell you not to serve the king of Babylon. **27:17**

Just imagine Jeremiah saying, don't listen to your minister because he is preaching what is false. But the fact is the only chance God's people had was to listen to the word of God and submit to Nebuchadnezzar. If they listened to their false prophets they would die.

Message #3 - Let the false prophets pray that God will not let the Temple vessels to be removed. **27:18**

The reasons why Jeremiah asked the false prophets to pray this is because he knew that God would not answer their prayers and the people would be able to see it. God was going to let the vessels be removed and this would prove even their prayer life to be a lie. True people of God move God in prayer. Phony people never move God to do anything.

Message #4 - God will permit all remaining vessels to be taken to Babylon. **27:19-22a**

God says just the opposite of what the false prophets are saying will happen.

Message #5 - God will eventually bring back all the Temple vessels to the Temple. **27:22b**

God says I will not quickly bring these things back, but I will eventually bring them back. Years later, God moved Cyrus to bring back all of the Temple items (Ezra 1:7-11). The chapter closes with hope for the people of Israel. One day all will be well.