

1 AND 2 CHRONICLES: GAINING DIRECTION OUT OF THE AIMLESSNESS OF APOSTASY

Part V: Gaining Direction From God's Work In The Rest Of Judah's Dynasty, 2 Chronicles 13-36

W. Learning The Evidences God Gives To Identify His True Messengers

(2 Chronicles 36:11-21 et al.)

I. Introduction

- A. In our era of questionable leaders, people are tempted to doubt even the true words of God's messengers. That is a mistake, for God will judge men by the messages of His messengers (2 Tim. 4:1-2; Rom. 2:16).
- B. To address this need, 2 Chronicles 36:11-21 et al. reveals God's evidences of His true messages:

II. Learning The Evidences God Gives To Identify His True Messengers, 2 Chronicles 36:11-21 et al.

- A. Judah's king Zedekiah did what was evil in God's eyes as "He did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke from the mouth of the Lord," 2 Chronicles 36:11-12 ESV.
- B. At first glance, one might say Zedekiah had a problem discerning the true message, for Jeremiah 27:12-15 reveals a battle between Jeremiah and many false prophets as to the right message Judah was to receive!
- C. Yet, the interactions between Zedekiah and Jeremiah show God gave discernment signals to Zedekiah:
 - 1. Jeremiah was originally called **and empowered** by God to warn Judah **consistently** and **stoutly** that God would let Babylon conquer Judah for its sin against Him, cf. Jeremiah 1:11-19 with 3:18.
 - 2. Armed with this message that he **consistently** and **stoutly** gave **throughout** his **40-year ministry** (cf. Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978 ed., p. 1045), Jeremiah (in Jeremiah 37:7-8) had always warned Judah and its kings that Babylon would take Jerusalem though it was then retreating before Egypt's forces.
 - 3. We recall that this **message conforms** to what the **Law** and the **godly prophetess**, Huldah had given to Zezekiah's **father**, Josiah, when Josiah had repented at the **reading** of the **Law**, cf. 2 Chron. 34:18-28.
 - 4. As the Babylonians withdrew, Jeremiah was leaving the city to get his share of property in Benjamin when officials charged him with traitorously trying to join the Babylonians, a charge he denied, 37:11ff.
 - 5. They captured Jeremiah, put him in a dungeon, and Zedekiah secretly called him out to ask him if he had a message from the Lord, Jeremiah 37:16-17a. Jeremiah replied that there was such a message, his **same old** message that the Babylonians would return to capture him, Jeremiah 37:17b! His **stout** refusal to relent from his initial negative message when it was in Zedekiah's power to harm him shows the credibility of Jeremiah and his message, and reveals he ministered by God's motivation, 1:17-19!
 - 6. Jeremiah further reminded Zedekiah of the now obviously **failed** words of his **false** prophets who had previously predicted that Babylon **never would** come against Jerusalem, Jer. 37:18-19 with 27:2-15.
 - 7. Jeremiah thus asked Zedekiah not to release him to the residence of Jonathan the scribe lest he die there; Zedekiah complied, releasing him to the court of the guard, showing that Zedekiah evidently was convinced at the time that Jeremiah might be telling God's true message to him, Jeremiah 37:20-21.
 - 8. Later, when the princes reacted to Jeremiah's **continued** warning that Babylon would take Jerusalem, they got Zedekiah's permission to cast him into a cistern, Jer. 38:1-6; Ibid., Ryrie St. Bib., fn. to 38:6.
 - 9. God moved the Ethiopian eunuch, Ebed-melech to gain permission from Zedekiah to release Jeremiah lest he die (Jer. 38:7-13), at which time Zedekiah again asked Jeremiah to give him God's message, Jer. 38:14. Jeremiah now questioned Zedekiah's honesty with him (Jer. 38:15), but when Zedekiah promised in God's name not to harm him, Jeremiah again told him his **same old message**: Babylon would invade, but things would go better if Zedekiah surrendered to the Babylonians, Jer. 38:16-18.
 - 10. Zedekiah replied he was afraid the Jews in Babylon would mistreat him if he surrendered, Jer. 38:19. Jeremiah urged him to **trust** that **God** would not let that occur, and to surrender anyway, Jer. 38:20-23.
 - 11. However, Zedekiah did not obey God's Word through Jeremiah, but fled when Babylon attacked, and the abuse he feared from the captive Jews was administered on him by the Babylonians, Jer. 52:7-11!
- D. 2 Chronicles 36:13-21 tells how Zedekiah and Judah were captured by Babylon for their sin against God, and they stayed in Babylon for 70 years to fulfill the **Word of God** by **Jeremiah**, cf. 2 Chron. 36:20-21!

Lesson: (1) If a messenger (a) **CONSTANTLY**, (b) **STOUTLY** (c) in **EVEN TRYING EVENTS** gives a message that (d) **FITS SCRIPTURE** and (e) **GODLY PRECEDENTS**, and (f) it **STARTS** to show itself in **LIFE** to be **TRUE**, and (g) the messenger **URGES** us to **TRUST** in **GOD**, God is **EMPOWERING** him to give His truth, Jer. 1:18-19! (2) If such are absent, we must **reject the message!** (1 Tim. 5:24-25)