

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing
Part LI: Responding Well To False Religious Messengers
(Jeremiah 27:1-28:17)

I. Introduction

- A. 2 Timothy 3:13 predicts that in the last days, men would go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.
- B. In Jeremiah 27:1-28:17, the prophet Jeremiah exemplified how to respond well to false religious messengers such as false prophets or false teachers in his era, so we view the passage for our insight and edification:

II. Responding Well To False Religious Messengers, Jeremiah 27:1-28:17.

- A. God sent Jeremiah to preach against false prophets on how men were to relate to Babylon's king, Jer. 27:1-22:
 - 1. At the start of Zedekiah's reign (not "Jehoiakim's" reign as in the KJV at v. 1 -- that is a scribal error; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Jer. 27:1-3), God told Jeremiah to make wooden yokes, to put one of the yokes on his own neck and to send the other yokes to each of the ambassadors of foreign nations who had come to Jerusalem to "conspire with Judah against Nebuchadnezzar" of Babylon, *Ibid.*; Jeremiah 27:1-3.
 - 2. Jeremiah's message along with the object lesson of the yokes was that Judah's God, the Creator of all men and animals and Who thus gave power over men and animals to whomever He willed, was giving all the lands into Nebuchadnezzar's power, that they were to submit to him or suffer destruction, Jeremiah 27:4-8.
 - 3. Jeremiah warned that the rulers of these nations were not to hearken to their prophets who lied by claiming that they would not serve the king of Babylon. Rather, they were to submit to Nebuchadnezzar if they wanted to continue to live in peace and prosper, Jeremiah 27:9-15.
 - 4. God's prophet Jeremiah also told the people of Judah that the prophets who had predicted the temple vessels that Nebuchadnezzar had taken to Babylon in 597 B. C. would be returned in the near future were prophesying a lie, that Nebuchadnezzar would return and take the rest of the treasures of the temple away to Babylon where they would remain until the time God said they would be returned, Jeremiah 27:16-22. [Conquering kings typically took a conquered people's idols as booty, but since Israel had no idol for God, Nebuchadnezzar had taken holy vessels from the temple in Jerusalem, *Ibid.*, ftn. to Jeremiah 27:16.]
- B. However, false prophet Hananiah then publicly contradicted Jeremiah's message, Jeremiah 28:1-4:
 - 1. Reacting to Jeremiah's prophecy, Hananiah publicly confronted him in the temple, Jeremiah 28:1.
 - 2. There Hananiah claimed that Israel's God had said He had broken the yoke of Babylon's king so that within 2 full years, not the 70 years Jeremiah predicted (Jer. 25:11), all the temple vessels Nebuchadnezzar had taken would be returned along with king Jeconiah and his fellow Hebrew captives, Jeremiah 28:2-4.
- C. Jeremiah responded with restraint to Hananiah's contradiction of his prophetic ministry: he graciously voiced his personal wish that Hananiah's positive-sounding prediction could be fulfilled, Jeremiah 28:5-6. However, Jeremiah warned that godly prophets before him had predicted the same message he gave, the message that Judah would face Babylonian destruction, and that when the prophecy of either Jeremiah or Hananiah was fulfilled would the people know for sure who was the true prophet -- Jeremiah or Hananiah! (Jeremiah 28:7-9)
- D. Hananiah then offensively, publicly belittled Jeremiah's message, taking the yoke off of his neck and breaking it while claiming God would break the yoke of Babylon over all the nations in 2 full years, Jer. 28:10-11b.
- E. Since Jeremiah had no more direction from the Lord at that time, he simply walked away, Jeremiah 28:11c.
- F. God later sent Jeremiah to Hananiah to announce God's punishment upon him for his sinful ministry, v. 12-17:
 - 1. The Lord sent Jeremiah to Hananiah to tell him that he had broken wooden yokes, God would make yokes of iron Hananiah could not break, that Babylon would surely conquer the nations, Jeremiah 28:12-14.
 - 2. God also predicted judgment on Hananiah for his sinful ministry, for (a) God did not send him as he had claimed, (b) he caused the people to believe a lie and (c) he had taught rebellion against the Lord, v. 15-16.
 - 3. Hananiah died that same year just two months later, Jer. 28:17 with 28:1. He had errantly predicted the return of Judah's captives in **2 years**, but God slew him in **2 months**, fittingly critiquing his false ministry!

Lesson: *Jeremiah responded to false prophets (1) by teaching the truth aligned with Scripture, (2) by responding to being publicly belittled and contradicted with restraint and saying time would expose who told the truth, (3) by withdrawing when publicly mistreated and lacking God's further direction and (4) letting God punish the sinner.*

Application: *(1) May we discern true from false messengers as detailed in Jeremiah 27:1-28:17. (2) May the true messengers of God heed Jeremiah's example if they face opposition from false religious messengers.*