

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing Part LII: Responding Well To Competing False Religious Messengers (Jeremiah 29:1-32)

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 29:1-32, Jeremiah exemplified how to respond well to false religious messengers who competed against him, so we view the passage for our insight and edification (as follows):

II. Responding Well To Competing False Religious Messengers, Jeremiah 29:1-32.

- A. Jeremiah not only faced opposition from false prophet Hananiah in Jerusalem (Jer. 28:1-17), but he also faced it from false prophets Ahab and Zedekiah who were with Judah's captives in Babylon. They like Hananiah countered Jeremiah's claim that these captives would be in Babylon for a long 70 years, Jer. 29:2, 21a, 8-10.
- B. Thus, Jeremiah wrote a letter to these captives, instructing them to reject what Ahab and Zedekiah were saying in favor of God's truth, Jeremiah 29:1-23:
 - 1. Jeremiah told the captives to build houses, settle in them, plant gardens and eat the produce, to marry and have families and seek the peace of the city where they dwelt opposite the false predictions by Ahab and Zedekiah that they would be there just a short time so as not to do these things, Jeremiah 29:1-9.
 - 2. The captives would not return after just a few of years, but after seventy long years, much later when God Who had good plans for the remnant in Babylon would restore them to Judah, Jeremiah 29:10-11. This restoration would occur when they repented and called on God with a whole heart, Jeremiah 29:12-14.
 - 3. Jeremiah explained that he had written this letter to counter the false hopes the captives in Babylon had raised due to the false prophetic ministries of Ahab and Zedekiah, Jeremiah 29:15.
 - 4. Indeed, Jeremiah explained God was going to cause their brethren in Judah to be invaded by Babylon which would destroy many of them and that God would scatter the rest for their rebellion, Jer. 29:16-19.
 - 5. God would thus cause Ahab and Zedekiah to be slain by the king of Babylon for not only prophesying false lies of a false hope of a speedy return to Judah, but for their acts of adultery, Jer. 29:20-23.
- C. Yet, "(m)any exiles in Babylon objected to Jeremiah's letter and tried to engineer official reprisals against him by appealing through a false prophet (Shemaiah) to Zephaniah, a deputy to the high priest in Jerusalem (52:24), who read Shemaiah's letter to Jeremiah," Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to Jer. 29:24-32.
- D. God then led Jeremiah to denounce the false prophet Shemaiah, sending him a letter in reply, Jer. 29:24-32:
 - 1. Shemaiah's letter to Jerusalem was a sharp, strong denunciation of Jeremiah, Jeremiah 29:24-29:
 - a. He had sent a letter in God's name to the people in Jerusalem, to Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah, the priest and to all the priests regarding Jeremiah, Jeremiah 29:24-25.
 - b. In the letter, Shemaiah had claimed that God had set them up as spiritual leaders to take every insane man who made himself out to be a prophet and put him in prison and the stocks, especially to reprove Jeremiah who allegedly pretended to be a prophet of the Lord, Jeremiah 29:26-27.
 - c. Shemaiah claimed Jeremiah had written, telling the captives in Babylon to settle down and be productive as they would be there a long time (Jer. 29:28), so he implied Jeremiah's message was insanely errant!
 - 2. Zephaniah the priest then read Shemaiah's potently scathing letter to Jeremiah, Jeremiah 29:29.
 - 3. Without himself taking the battle to such rebellious opposition, Jeremiah waited on the Lord to direct him to send a second letter to all the people of Judah in captivity, saying that since Shemaiah had prophesied though God had not sent him, making the captives and the people in Jerusalem believe a lie that the captives would be quickly returned to Judah, God would punish Shemaiah and his offspring, Jer. 29:30-32a. Shemaiah would have no heir and he would not see the good that God planned to do for His people in restoring them to the Promised Land since he had taught rebellion against the Lord, Jeremiah 29:32b!

Lesson: *When false prophets in Babylon competed against Jeremiah's ministry of God's Word in Jerusalem, instead of going on the attack in response, Jeremiah waited on the Lord to direct him to write to them of judgment for rejecting God's Word, for their rejection of Jeremiah and his words was in essence rebellion against the Lord!*

Application: *If parties compete against us in ministry, they rebel against God who sent us to minister, and rebellion against Him is as the sin of witchcraft (1 Samuel 15:22-23), so it is likely satanic. May we thus follow God's lead to respond to them as they are spiritually dangerous people that only God can handle, not us! (2 Timothy 2:24-26)*