

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Jeremiah: Prophet Of Judgment Followed By Blessing Part XCIII: Seraiah's Symbolic, Prophetic Mission Of Final Vengeance (Jeremiah 51:59-64)

I. Introduction

- A. Sometimes God's people need special encouragement that the Lord is **really** going to deliver them and/or punish their oppressive foes, and Jeremiah 51:59-64 in its historical context is a passage about such a need.
- B. We view this passage for our insight and edification (as follows):

II. Seraiah's Symbolic, Prophetic Mission Of Final Vengeance, Jeremiah 51:59-64.

- A. The final event relative to Jeremiah's prophecy about Babylon's fall is recorded in Jeremiah 51:59-64, and this event occurred in the fourth year of the reign of Judah's last king, Zedekiah, Jeremiah 51:59b.
- B. Babylon's king Nebuchadnezzar had summoned Judah's vassal king Zedekiah to Babylon, and William H. Shea ("Daniel 3: Extra-Biblical Texts and the Convocation on the Plain of Dura," Andrews University Seminary Studies 20. Spring 1982:29-52) "offers strong evidence to suggest Nebuchadnezzar summoned all his vassal kings to Babylon in 594 B. C. to insure their loyalty after an attempted revolt in Babylon a little less than a year earlier. Shea believes that this gathering was recorded in Daniel 3" when Nebuchadnezzar called all his puppet kings to bow in homage before his golden image, the image before whom Daniel's three friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego refused to bow. (Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1203-1204)
- C. Thus, Zedekiah was called by Babylon's king to come to the Plain of Dura and bow in idolatrous worship before Nebuchadnezzar's golden image, an event that would have greatly angered the Lord!
- D. One of Zedekiah's officials who made this trip with him was Seraiah, the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, and from Jeremiah 32:12 where Baruch is reported to have had the same father and grandfather as Seraiah, we know that Seraiah was a brother of Baruch, the scribe who wrote down Jeremiah's prophecies!
- E. Since this mission by Zedekiah and his officials was meant to reaffirm Zedekiah's loyalty to Babylon's king Nebuchadnezzar by bowing before Nebuchadnezzar's golden image, God had a prophetic mission for Seraiah to perform when he got to Babylon to counter Nebuchadnezzar's idolatry, Jeremiah 51:59-64 (as follows):
 - 1. Jeremiah commissioned Seraiah to take a scroll upon which he had written all the words of God's coming judgment against Babylon, and in Babylon, he was to read those words and say, "O Lord, You have said concerning this place that you will cut it off, so that nothing shall dwell in it, neither man nor beast, and it shall be desolate forever," Jeremiah 51:59-62 ESV.
 - 2. When Seraiah had finished reading the scroll and saying these words, he was to tie a stone to it and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates River, saying, "Thus shall Babylon sink, to rise no more, because of the disaster that I am bringing upon her, and they shall become exhausted ('her people will fall,' NIV)," Jeremiah 51:63-64a ESV. [This ended the prophetic words of Jeremiah, meaning the rest of the book of Jeremiah was written by another unknown author, Jeremiah 51:64b.]
- F. In other words, God used Seraiah's mission in Babylon to counter the oppressive and influential effort by Nebuchadnezzar to intimidate Zedekiah into submitting to idolatrous worship before his golden image, a mission that promised God's destruction of Babylon and its people so that it would no longer have any impact on the world for evil idolatry.
- G. The Lord's deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego from Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace (Daniel 3:1-30) in reward for their faith shown by refusing to bow to Nebuchadnezzar's image led to the Babylonian king's confession and edict that their God was the true God Who was to be honored above all other gods (Daniel 3:28-29). Nevertheless, Babylon's idolatrous influence needed to be destroyed, and Zedekiah who likely bowed before the golden image needed an encouragement from the Lord still to hold to the true God.

Lesson: *To offset the powerful thrust of Babylon's king to pressure Zedekiah to worship his golden image in idolatry, God had Zedekiah's official Seraiah, the brother of Jeremiah's scribe Baruch, read Jeremiah's scroll of God's coming judgment on Babylon, then tie the scroll to a rock and throw it into the midst of the Euphrates River to testify symbolically that Babylon would thus be destroyed and no longer exist. This ministry was meant to encourage Zedekiah and his officials with him still to hold firmly in faith to Judah's true God.*

Application: *If confronted with strong pressures to yield to unbiblical beliefs, be assured that God will provide His protective encouragement to adhere to the truth opposite such ungodly pressure, and thus may we hold to the truth.*