

## THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF JEREMIAH

### **X. Jeremiah's Exemplary Response To A Godless Competing Prophet (Jeremiah 27:1-2, 12-15; 28:1-17)**

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. God called Jeremiah to prophesy in Judah during its apostasy until God's judgment fell on the nation.
- B. Jeremiah's ministry is then similar to what God's servants face in our era of spiritual decline. Such a calling can be marked by opposition that seeks to intimidate God's servants into ceasing to do His work.
- C. Jeremiah 28:1-17 reports that Jeremiah faced an opposing competitor, a godless prophet who countered him and his message, and the passages provides a lesson for us for our insight, application and edification:

#### **II. Jeremiah's Exemplary Response To A Godless Competing Prophet, Jeremiah 27:1-2, 12-15; 28:1-17.**

- A. The Lord directed Jeremiah to tell Gentile rulers and Judah's king to submit to the rule of Babylon and live peaceably under Babylonian rule instead of heeding their false prophets to the contrary:
  - 1. Early in the reign of Judah's king Zedekiah ("Jehoiakim" in Jer. 27:1 KJV is incorrect), the Lord directed Jeremiah to make a model yoke out of straps and crossbars and put it on his neck, Jeremiah 27:2 NIV.
  - 2. This was a sign to Jeremiah's listeners that the Gentile nations around Judah (cf. Jeremiah 27:3-8) as well as Zedekiah (Jeremiah 27:12-13) were to bring themselves under the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon or suffer the divine punishment of having Babylon invade their countries.
  - 3. False prophets in the surrounding Gentile nations (Jeremiah 27:9-11) and in Judah itself (Jeremiah 27:14-15) were prophesying lies by asserting that they should not submit to Babylon, and God warned these nations through Jeremiah that heeding these false prophets would only insure the destruction of their lands.
- B. However, the false prophet Hananiah publicly competed against Jeremiah, countering him and his message:
  - 1. In the fifth month of that same year, the false prophet Hananiah approached Jeremiah in the temple in the presence of the priests and all of the worshippers there publicly to counter Jeremiah's message, Jeremiah 28:1. Hananiah prophesied that the Lord God of Israel declared that He would break the yoke of the Babylonian king, and *within two years* bring back the articles he took from the temple along with Judah's king Jehoiachin and all the other exiles from Judah, Jeremiah 28:2-4.
  - 2. Jeremiah reacted by saying that he wished that what Hananiah had foretold might occur (Jer. 28:5-6; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, ftn. to Jer. 28:1-17), but he added that past godly prophets had predicted God's judgment on many great nations in contrast to Hananiah's words. Also, Jeremiah said that any prophet who predicted peace would be recognized as being from God only if his prophecy was fulfilled, v. 7-9.
  - 3. Hananiah then publicly took the wood yoke off of Jeremiah's neck and broke it, telling the audience that the Lord would likewise break Nebuchadnezzar's yoke off of all the nations *within two years*, v. 10-11a.
- C. When Hananiah had said this, Jeremiah simply walked away with nothing more to say, Jeremiah 28:11b.
- D. God then had Jeremiah go to Hananiah in private and tell him that though Hananiah had broken wooden bars, in its place there would be iron bars, Jeremiah 28:12-13. God would put a yoke of iron on the necks of all of the nations and force them to serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, for God had given Nebuchadnezzar not only these nations, but even the wild animals in the lands of these nations, Jeremiah 28:14.
- E. In addition, Jeremiah told Hananiah that the Lord had not sent him, yet Hananiah had persuaded the people of Judah to trust in lies, and for that rebellion, God would remove him from the face of the earth, Jeremiah 28:15-16a. That same year, Hananiah would die for preaching rebellion against the Lord, Jeremiah 28:16b.
- F. In the seventh month, *two MONTHS* after Hananiah had publicly countered Jeremiah's ministry by claiming that Judah would escape Babylon's control *within two YEARS*, Hananiah died, Jeremiah 28:17.

***Lesson:*** *When false prophet Hananiah publicly countered Jeremiah's prophetic ministry from the Lord, Jeremiah simply affirmed the truthfulness of his message from the Lord and left Hananiah for God to handle. The Lord then punished Hananiah to die in two months in fitting judgment for falsely predicting that Judah's captives and booty that Babylon had taken would be returned from Babylon within two years!*

***Application:*** *(1) If we are called of God to achieve a certain ministry objective, but that objective is countered by an opponent, like Jeremiah, may we simply hold our ground, affirming God's will, and let the Lord deal with the opponent since that opponent is actually opposing the Lord! (2) To think clearly and to remain emotionally composed in facing such opposition, may we like Jeremiah recall that we do not serve our own interests, but God's interests, and may we thus keep performing God's assignment without viewing the conflict as a personal issue!*