

# The PROPHET

## Lesson No. 5 - More Warnings and Promises (Chapters 27-29)

These chapters reflect the increasing hostility that Jeremiah faced due to his pronouncements against Judah. He had already been questioned publicly (chapter 26) and even punished by a leader of the priests (chapter 20). In these moments, God gave Jeremiah opportunities to stand face-to-face with those false prophets spreading a message that wasn't from God.

### The Yoke & Warnings (Jeremiah 27:1-22)

(a) In 27:1-11, several rulers (puppets put in place by Nebuchadnezzar) of neighboring kingdoms sent **emissaries** to Zedekiah (see 2 Kings 24:7-20), hoping to secure his support as they planned to rebel against Babylon. Jeremiah was sent to them opposing the plan.

(b) God told him to make "bonds and yokes" and **wear** them into the meeting with these messengers. This yoke can be easily seen as a symbol of submission. Jeremiah told them to "put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, or God will punish them," in 27:8.

(c) The **punishment** that would fall upon those nations was to be "sword, famine, pestilence until they are consumed," according to 27:8. The message is simple - like it or not, Babylon is now the hand of God's divine judgment that has been cast against them. Fighting against Babylon was fighting against God.

(d) They were also warned of **false** prophets who would "prophesy a lie," and proclaim "you shall not serve the king of Babylon," in 27:9-10. Surely, that must have been a tough pill to swallow for some of them because their faith was in their prophets, not Jeremiah and his advice. Submitting would have surely seemed counterintuitive to them, yet in the end, it was the most prudent choice due to God's divine judgment against them. Don't confuse this as an endorsement of Babylon, instead, it's God using them as "instruments of justice and judgment."

(e) 27:12-15 is a **carbon** copy of the message given to the emissaries, yet this time to Zedekiah, the last king of Judah (see 2 Kings 25). He was given the exact same warning, but ultimately, wouldn't listen. It should be noted that everything God promised as judgment against those who rebelled against Babylon in Jeremiah 27:8 occurred to Jerusalem and those Jews who remained in 2 Kings 25:1-10.

(f) The final warning in this chapter concerns the "**vessels** of the Lord's house," (i.e. the Temple). Jeremiah warned them any prophecy about their return was false and he implored them to submit to

Babylon and find peace. The Lord promised to “visit them and bring them back when He restores this place,” in 27:22. Surely that’s the prophetic pronouncement fulfilled in Ezra 1.

### **Jeremiah and Hananiah (28:1-17)**

**(g)** This chapter is fairly **straightforward** in its meaning. A false prophet named Hananiah proclaims that “the Lord has broken the yoke of the king of Babylon,” in 28:2. He goes on to say that “within 2 years, the vessels of the Lord’s House will be brought back to Jerusalem, alongside of King Jehoiakim and all the captives,” in 28:3,4. Notice that he says it “in the house of the Lord in the presence of the priests and all the people,” according to 28:1. This prophecy attacks the credibility of Jeremiah and all that God has spoken through him to the people of Jerusalem.

**(h)** Jeremiah’s response is one that was both **kind** and poignant. He wanted what Hananiah foretold to be true, but knew it wasn’t. In fact, if it had been true, then he would have made liars of all those prophets who proclaimed this judgment - and that can’t be possible.

**(i)** Emboldened by Jeremiah’s **gentle** answer, Hananiah grabbed the yoke from his neck and broke it. That was a huge mistake. The Lord cast judgment upon him due to his actions of increasing the weight (pressure, struggle) of the yoke from wood to iron. He even passed a stricter judgment upon Hananiah who was told “you shall die this year because you have taught rebellion against the Lord,” in 28:16.

### **The Letter to Babylon (29:1-32)**

**(j)** There are **two** sections in this chapter. A letter written to all the captives in Babylon about their future and the plans God has in store for them (29:1-23) and a specific letter to Shemaiah (29:24-32) condemning his false teaching against Jeremiah.

**(k)** The early letter makes several **promises** to the people and contains one of the most profound statements in all of Scripture. They are promised a captivity of 70 years (29:10) and are commanded to make a home in Babylon (29:5-6), to pray for Babylon (29:7), and to avoid the false teachers and prophets among them (29:8-9).

**(l)** The specifics of 29:11-14 cannot go unnoticed for they are some of the most **descriptive** passages that shed light on God’s continued investment in His people. Even though they have been punished with captivity, even though they live in a foreign land, even though God must continually warn them to avoid false teachers and prophets, He still has plans for them that include a “future and a hope.”

**(m)** The letter sent to Shemaiah is just another **condemnation** in the long line of them throughout this section for those who “caused the Jews to trust in a lie,” according to 29:31. That emphasis is significant, because God is drawing a line in the sand and separating those who are His and those who aren’t.