

3/9/25

Sermon Title: A Warning to Those Who Disobey God's Word

Preacher: Pastor Soonbae Kim

Scripture: Jeremiah 29:15-32

(Jeremiah 29:15) You may say, "The Lord has raised up prophets for us in Babylon."

(Jeremiah 29:16) But this is what the Lord says about the king who sits on David's throne and all the people who remain in this city, your fellow citizens who did not go with you into exile—

(Jeremiah 29:17) This is what the Lord Almighty says: "I will send the sword, famine, and plague against them and make them like rotten figs that are so bad they cannot be eaten.

(Jeremiah 29:18) I will pursue them with the sword, famine, and plague and make them abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth, a curse and an object of horror, scorn, and reproach among all the nations where I drive them.

(Jeremiah 29:19) For they have not listened to my words," declares the Lord, "words that I sent to them again and again by my servants the prophets. And you exiles have not listened either," declares the Lord.

(Jeremiah 29:20) Therefore, hear the word of the Lord, all you exiles whom I have sent away from Jerusalem to Babylon.

(Jeremiah 29:21) This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says about Ahab son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah son of Maaseiah, who are prophesying lies to you in my name: "I will deliver them into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he will put them to death before your very eyes.

(Jeremiah 29:22) Because of them, all the exiles from Judah who are in Babylon will use this curse: 'May the Lord treat you like Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon burned in the fire.'

(Jeremiah 29:23) For they have done outrageous things in Israel; they have committed adultery with their neighbors' wives and in my name have uttered lies,

which I did not authorize. I know it and am a witness to it,” declares the Lord. (Jeremiah 29:24) Tell Shemaiah the Nehelamite,

(Jeremiah 29:25) “This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: You sent letters in your own name to all the people in Jerusalem, to the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah, and to all the other priests. You said to Zephaniah, (Jeremiah 29:26) ‘The Lord has appointed you priest in place of Jehoiada to be in charge of the Lord’s house; you should put any maniac who acts like a prophet into the stocks and neck-irons.

(Jeremiah 29:27) So why have you not reprimanded Jeremiah from Anathoth, who poses as a prophet among you?

(Jeremiah 29:28) He has sent this message to us in Babylon: It will be a long time. Therefore, build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce.’”

(Jeremiah 29:29) When the priest Zephaniah read the letter to Jeremiah the prophet,

(Jeremiah 29:30) the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah:

(Jeremiah 29:31) “Send this message to all the exiles: ‘This is what the Lord says about Shemaiah the Nehelamite: Because Shemaiah has prophesied to you, even though I did not send him, and has led you to believe a lie,

(Jeremiah 29:32) this is what the Lord says: I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite and his descendants. He will have no one left among this people, nor will he see the good things I will do for my people, declares the Lord, because he has preached rebellion against me.’”

The Babylonian exile of the people of Judah was God's rebuke and punishment upon them.

They disobeyed God's word by worshiping foreign gods and failing to keep His laws.

They also ignored the messages of repentance and return to God delivered by the prophets He had sent.

Through the prophet Jeremiah, God warned that if they did not repent and return to Him, He would use Babylon to bring about their destruction.

He instructed the people of Judah to surrender to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and willingly go into exile.

However, they refused to listen even to this prophecy.

As a result, God fulfilled His word by allowing the people of Judah to be conquered by Babylon and taken into captivity.

From the perspective of the people of Judah, it was only right for them to humbly accept God's discipline, repent, and long for His grace during this period.

God instructed those who obeyed His will and willingly went into exile in Babylon to settle there, build their lives, have children and grandchildren, and prosper in that land.

Even in a foreign land, He assured them that if they cried out and prayed to Him, He would meet them.

After the appointed period of seventy years, He promised to bring them back to their homeland, Jerusalem, and bless them with even greater prosperity than before.

For them, salvation, peace, a future, and hope awaited.

Meanwhile, to the exiled people of Judah living in Babylon, God also spoke about the fate of those who remained in Jerusalem, warning that even greater disaster awaited them.

(Jer 29:16) This is what the Lord says about the king who sits on David's throne and all the people who remain in this city, your fellow citizens who did not go with you into exile—

(Jer 29:17) This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Behold, I will send sword, famine, and plague against them and make them like rotten figs that are so bad they cannot be eaten."

(Jer 29:18) "I will pursue them with the sword, famine, and plague, and I will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth—a curse, an object of astonishment, scorn, and reproach among all the nations where I banish them."

Their remaining in Jerusalem was not because they were spiritually or morally superior to those taken into exile in Babylon.

Rather, they were left behind only to face complete destruction.

The king who sits on David's throne refers to King Zedekiah.

Even though these people escaped being taken into exile to Babylon in 597 BC, God declares that they are still under His judgment.

They will face a dreadful fate, so the exiled people of Judah should not envy those who remained in Jerusalem.

God states the basis for His judgment upon them: they did not listen to His words.

(Jeremiah 29:19) "This is the word of the Lord: Because you have not listened to My words, I have persistently sent My servants, the prophets, to you, but you have not listened to them," declares the Lord.

God sent His servants, the prophets, to instruct them to surrender to Babylon and go into exile.

However, they refused to heed the words of the prophets sent by God and rejected His message.

The false prophets played a significant role in leading the people to reject the words of the true prophets sent by God.

Even though God had not sent them, these false prophets prophesied in His name, making their false prophecies seem more convincing than the true ones.

They claimed that since the temple of the Lord was in Jerusalem, the city could never be destroyed.

They also falsely assured the people that, even if they were taken into exile in Babylon, they would return within two years.

Furthermore, they encouraged the people to fight against Babylon to defend Jerusalem.

To the people of Judah, these false prophecies sounded more faithful and patriotic than Jeremiah's warnings.

Moreover, they aligned with their own interests and desires.

Even in the land of Babylon, where the people of Judah were living in exile, there were many false prophets.

Jeremiah proclaimed the judgment that God has spoken against these false prophets:

(Jeremiah 29:20) "Therefore, hear the word of the Lord, all you exiles whom I have sent away from Jerusalem to Babylon."

God warned the exiles to listen to His true words and not be deceived by the lies of the false prophets among them.

God specifically pointed out Ahab and Zedekiah as representative false prophets, condemning their deceitful prophecies and wicked deeds.

He declared that He would bring judgment upon them, causing King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to burn them to death.

Even after the events of **597 B.C.** exposed the falsehood of the prophets' predictions, they continued to prophesy lies in the name of the Lord.

(Jeremiah 29:21) "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning Ahab the son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, who are prophesying a lie to you in My name: Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he will slay them before your eyes."

(Jeremiah 29:22) "Because of them, all the exiles from Judah who are in Babylon will use their names as a curse, saying, 'May the Lord make you like Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire.'"

(Jeremiah 29:23) "For they have acted foolishly in Israel, committing adultery with their neighbors' wives and speaking in My name lies that I did not command them. I am the one who knows, and I am a witness, declares the Lord."

Ahab and Zedekiah were not only guilty of false prophecy but also committed adultery with their neighbors' wives—an act that violated God's law.

It is clear that those who break God's law cannot be His appointed prophets.

Knowing all things, God declared that He would hand them over to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to be executed and made a symbol of a curse among the exiles.

Like other false prophets, Ahab and Zedekiah likely prophesied the swift return of the Jewish exiles.

From Babylon's perspective, such a prophecy was essentially a declaration of its own downfall.

Therefore, it is presumed that King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon charged them with treason and had them burned to death.

Jeremiah also warns Shemaiah.

When Jeremiah sent a letter to the Jewish exiles in Babylon, Shemaiah opposed him by sending a letter to all the people in Jerusalem, including the priest Zephaniah and other priests, urging them to discipline Jeremiah for advising the exiles to settle and live in Babylon.

(Jeremiah 29:24) "You shall also speak to Shemaiah the Nehelamite, saying,

(Jeremiah 29:25) 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: You have sent letters in your name to all the people who are in Jerusalem, to the priests, to Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah, and to all the priests, saying,

(Jeremiah 29:26) "The Lord has made you priest instead of Jehoiada the priest, to have charge in the house of the Lord over every madman who prophesies, to put him in the stocks and neck irons.

(Jeremiah 29:27) Now why have you not rebuked Jeremiah of Anathoth, who prophesies to you?

(Jeremiah 29:28) For he has sent to us in Babylon, saying, 'Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce.'"

While Jeremiah sent a letter in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Shemaiah sent a letter in his own name.

It seems that the letter Jeremiah sent caused quite a stir among the Jewish exiles living in Babylon.

This prompted Shemaiah, a false prophet active in the area, to become concerned. He then urged Zephaniah, the priest in charge of the Jerusalem temple, and all the priests to discipline Jeremiah.

Despite Jeremiah's prophecy coming true, Shemaiah viewed him as one of "the madmen and those who act as prophets" he frequently saw around the temple. Shemaiah pressured Zephaniah, the overseer of the Lord's temple, to immediately carry out his duties.

However, contrary to Shemaiah's expectations, Zephaniah, the priest, seemed to be favorable toward Jeremiah.

Instead of punishing him, Zephaniah read Shemaiah's letter to Jeremiah.

When Zephaniah, the priest, read Shemaiah's letter to Jeremiah, the Lord spoke to Jeremiah, declaring that He would judge Shemaiah for his opposition.

It was a direct intervention from God, the highest authority, because any accusation or harm against Jeremiah was also a provocation against the one who had sent him as a prophet.

God says that He will judge Shemaiah and his descendants, who falsely prophesied to the people of Judah in His name, misleading them, even though He did not send them.

He declares that none of Shemaiah's descendants will partake in His salvation.
(Jeremiah 29:29) When Zephaniah the priest read Shemaiah's letter to the prophet Jeremiah,
(Jeremiah 29:30) the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying,
(Jeremiah 29:31) "Send this message to all the exiles: 'This is what the Lord says concerning Shemaiah son of Nehelam: Because Shemaiah has prophesied to you, and I did not send him, and has made you trust in a lie,
(Jeremiah 29:32) therefore, this is what the Lord says: I will punish Shemaiah son of Nehelam and his descendants. He will not have anyone among his descendants who will survive among this people, for he has spoken rebellion against Me. He will not see the good that I will do for My people,' declares the Lord."

Beloved members of Church of God's Dream,
Through this passage, God proclaims the punishment for both those who speak lies and those who follow them.
We can clearly see that excuses of ignorance will not be accepted.

Even in this day and age, there are many false prophets.
They use God's name to spread many false prophecies.
Instead of calling for repentance, they cry for peace.
Instead of delivering God's word, they speak words that please people, words that make their ears feel good, based on what others want to hear.
And many people, aligning with their own interests, believe and follow the words of these false prophets.

God makes it clear that He will punish not only the false prophets but also those who follow their words.
We must remain awake.
We must arm ourselves with His word and not fall into the deception of false prophets.

The end for those who disobey God's word and follow false prophets is destruction.