

February 2, 2025

Sermon Title: God's Will and Warning Against False Prophets

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Scripture: Jeremiah 27:1-22

(Jeremiah 27:1) The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah at the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah.

(Jeremiah 27:2) This is what the Lord said to me: "Make a yoke out of straps and crossbars and put it on your neck."

(Jeremiah 27:3) "Then send word to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon through the envoys who have come to Jerusalem to see Zedekiah king of Judah."

(Jeremiah 27:4) "Give them a message for their masters and say, 'This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Tell this to your masters.'"

(Jeremiah 27:5) "With my great power and outstretched arm, I made the earth and the people and animals on it, and I give it to anyone I please."

(Jeremiah 27:6) "Now I will hand all your countries over to my servant, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; I will even make the wild animals subject to him."

(Jeremiah 27:7) "All nations will serve him and his son and his grandson until the time for his land comes; then many nations and great kings will subjugate him."

(Jeremiah 27:8) "'If, however, any nation or kingdom will not serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon or bow its neck under his yoke, I will punish that nation with the sword, famine, and plague, declares the Lord, until I destroy it by his hand.'"

(Jeremiah 27:9) "So do not listen to your prophets, diviners, dreamers, mediums, or sorcerers who tell you, 'You will not serve the king of Babylon.'"

(Jeremiah 27:10) "They prophesy lies to you that will only serve to remove you far from your lands; I will banish you and you will perish."

(Jeremiah 27:11) "But if any nation will bow its neck under the yoke of the king

of Babylon and serve him, I will let that nation remain in its own land to till it and live there, declares the Lord."

(Jeremiah 27:12) "I gave the same message to Zedekiah king of Judah: Bow your neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon; serve him and his people, and you will live."

(Jeremiah 27:13) "Why will you and your people die by the sword, famine, and plague with which the Lord has threatened any nation that will not serve the king of Babylon?"

(Jeremiah 27:14) "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who say to you, 'You will not serve the king of Babylon,' for they are prophesying lies to you."

(Jeremiah 27:15) "'I have not sent them,' declares the Lord. 'They are prophesying lies in my name. Therefore, I will banish you, and you will perish—both you and the prophets who prophesy to you.'"

(Jeremiah 27:16) "Then I said to the priests and all these people, 'This is what the Lord says: Do not listen to the prophets who say, 'Very soon now the articles from the Lord's temple will be brought back from Babylon.' They are prophesying lies to you.'"

(Jeremiah 27:17) "Do not listen to them. Serve the king of Babylon, and you will live. Why should this city become a ruin?"

(Jeremiah 27:18) "If they are prophets and have the word of the Lord, let them plead with the Lord Almighty that the furnishings remaining in the house of the Lord and in the palace of the king of Judah and in Jerusalem not be taken to Babylon."

(Jeremiah 27:19) "For this is what the Lord Almighty says about the pillars, the bronze Sea, the movable stands, and the other articles that are left in this city,"

(Jeremiah 27:20) "which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon did not take away when he carried Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim king of Judah into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon, along with all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem—"

(Jeremiah 27:21) "yes, this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says about the things that are left in the house of the Lord and in the palace of the

king of Judah and in Jerusalem:"

(Jeremiah 27:22) "They will be taken to Babylon and will remain there until the day I come for them,' declares the Lord. 'Then I will bring them back and restore them to this place.'"

Human history (History) is His story, meaning God's story.

This means that God is the sovereign ruler of history.

God, with the authority of the Creator who made this world and divided the land according to His will, is involved in the history of the world.

He oversees the fate of not only Judah but all nations of the world. Although rulers of various nations may seem to act based on their own national interests, in reality, not a single moment has ever been beyond God's intervention and sovereignty.

Whether good or evil, every existing authority operates within God's divine purpose.

The word of the Lord comes to Jeremiah.

Considering that this passage assumes the second deportation (597 BC) that took place after King Zedekiah ascended the throne, it is likely referring to the time of his reign.

The reference in the first verse to the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign appears to be a textual error.

(Jeremiah 27:1) Early in the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the Lord.

Here is the historical background of the time:

In 605 BC, following their victory at the Battle of Carchemish, Babylon emerged as a rising superpower, gradually extending its influence over the Near East.

In response, envoys from the surrounding nations—Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon—gathered in Jerusalem to consult with King Zedekiah and explore their options.

The fact that these representatives convened in Judah's capital suggests that King Zedekiah was a key leader in the anti-Babylonian coalition.

This likely explains why, after Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem, Zedekiah faced such severe punishment.

At this time, God commanded Jeremiah to prophesy concerning all nations in a very unique way.

He instructed Jeremiah to make a yoke and put it on his neck, and then to give yokes to the envoys who had come to Jerusalem, so that they might deliver God's message to their respective kings.

(Jeremiah 27:2-3)

"This is what the Lord said to me: 'Make a yoke and put it on your neck. Then send word to the kings of Edom, Moab, the Ammonites, Tyre, and Sidon through the envoys who have come to Jerusalem to meet with King Zedekiah of Judah.'"

Through this symbolic act, God was demonstrating that all nations would fall under Babylon's rule and become subject to its dominion.

God commanded the envoys to deliver His message to their kings, declaring that He had handed over all nations to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and that they would serve him.

(Jeremiah 27:4-7)

"Give them a message for their masters, saying, 'This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: With my great power and outstretched arm, I made the earth, its people, and the animals on it, and I give it to whomever I please. Now I will hand all these lands over to my servant, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; I will even make the wild animals serve him. All nations will serve him, his son,

and his grandson until the time for his land comes; then many nations and great kings will subjugate him.”

Here, God first proclaims His absolute sovereignty over the world as its Creator. Because He created everything, He has the right to give dominion to whomever He chooses.

Then, by His sovereign will, He declares that He has given control of all lands to Nebuchadnezzar and that all nations must serve Babylon for a set period of time.

God further declares that any nation or people who refuse to serve King Nebuchadnezzar will be destroyed.

(Jeremiah 27:8)

“But if any nation or kingdom will not serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon or bow its neck under his yoke, I will punish that nation with the sword, famine, and plague until I destroy it by his hand,” declares the Lord.”

For the people of Judah, this message must have been extremely difficult to accept—that God’s judgment would come through a foreign king, Nebuchadnezzar.

However, as the sovereign ruler of all nations, God fulfills His will through the course of history, whether people understand it or not.

His plans will be accomplished according to His divine authority.

God warns against false prophets, diviners, dreamers, sorcerers, and magicians who deceive the people with false prophecies.

Many of these individuals sought to gain favor with the ruling class by encouraging rebellion against Babylon.

(Jeremiah 27:9-11)

“Do not listen to your prophets, diviners, dreamers, sorcerers, or magicians who say to you, ‘You will not serve the king of Babylon.’ They are prophesying lies to you, with the result that I will drive you far away and you will perish.”

"But if any nation will bow its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I will let that nation remain in its own land to cultivate it and live there," declares the Lord."

The false prophets proclaimed a quick restoration, saying, *"You will not serve the king of Babylon."*

However, because their words were not from God, believing them would lead only to destruction.

God says that if they surrender to Babylon, the moment will be painful and distressing, but He will surely restore their former glory.

Jeremiah, who had proclaimed God's warning to the nations, now turns to warn the people of Judah.

In fact, God's primary concern was not with the foreign nations, but with Judah itself.

God first tells King Zedekiah not to be deceived by the false prophets, but to surrender to the king of Babylon and serve him according to God's word.

Although surrendering to the king of Babylon might be humiliating, God commands that this is the only way to survive.

(Jeremiah 27:12-15)

"I gave this message to King Zedekiah of Judah: 'Surrender to the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him and his people, and you will live.'"

"Why should you and your people die by the sword, famine, and plague, as the Lord has decreed against the nations that do not serve the king of Babylon?"

"Do not listen to the words of the prophets who say to you, 'You will not serve the king of Babylon,' for they are prophesying lies to you."

"I have not sent them," declares the Lord. "They are prophesying lies in my name. Therefore, I will banish you and the prophets who prophesy lies to destruction."

If King Zedekiah of Judah does not obey God's word and instead listens to the false prophets, he and his people will perish alongside them.

King Zedekiah indeed did not obey God's word and attempted to rebel against King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

As a result, when Judah was conquered by Babylon in 586 BC, Zedekiah was captured by Nebuchadnezzar and suffered a tragic fate.

Nebuchadnezzar ordered the execution of Zedekiah's sons before his eyes, then gouged out his eyes, bound him with chains, and took him to Babylon.

There, he eventually died.

This tragic outcome was a fulfillment of the prophecy and a direct consequence of disobedience to God's command.

God, who had previously urged King Zedekiah not to listen to the false prophets and to serve the king of Babylon, now speaks the same message to the priests and all the people.

(Jeremiah 27:16-18)

"I also spoke to the priests and all the people, saying, 'This is what the Lord says: Do not listen to the prophets who say to you, "The vessels of the Lord's temple will shortly be brought back from Babylon," for they are prophesying lies to you.'"

"Do not listen to them; serve the king of Babylon, and live. Why should this city become a ruin?"

"If they are prophets and have the word of the Lord, let them plead with the Lord of hosts that the articles remaining in the house of the Lord and in the palace of the king of Judah and in Jerusalem not be taken to Babylon."

The false prophets claimed that after the catastrophe of 597 BC, the temple vessels that had been taken to Babylon would soon return, and the exiles would come back.

Nevertheless, this is nothing more than a futile and false promise.

The prophecy about the return of the captured temple vessels symbolized Judah's liberation from Babylonian control, which would have given comfort and hope to the people of Judah who were crushed under the overwhelming military power of Babylon and barely saved their lives.

However, this was a false promise.

Such false prophecies led the people to resist and rebel against Babylon, causing them to reject God's word and ultimately bring upon themselves judgment.

A true prophet of God, instead of misleading the people with false comfort, should have conveyed God's judgment and urged the people to repent and follow God's will, praying for them.

God had given Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, dominion for seventy years, so the only way for the people of Judah to survive was to surrender to Babylon and serve the king of Babylon. This was the only path to life.

In reality, contrary to their prophecies, after the fall of Jerusalem, even the remaining temple vessels were taken to Babylon.

Jeremiah proclaims God's word, telling the people not to listen to or believe the false prophecies of those who say the temple vessels will be swiftly returned.

God says that the pillars, large basins, stands, and all other temple items left in the city will be taken to Babylon and remain there until the appointed time set by God.

After that, He will bring them back.

(Jeremiah 27:19-22)

Thus says the Lord of Hosts concerning the pillars, the large basins, the stands, and the remaining vessels in this city:

These items were not taken by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon when he carried away King Jehoiachin, the son of King Jehoiakim, along with the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, to Babylon.

This is what the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, says about the vessels that are still in the Lord's temple, the palace of the king of Judah, and the city of Jerusalem:

They will be carried off to Babylon and will remain there until the day I attend to them. Then I will bring them back and return them to this place, declares the Lord.

The prophecy that the temple vessels will be taken to Babylon signifies that God is completely departing from the temple.

It confirms the impending destruction of Judah.

In 586 BC, in the 11th year of King Zedekiah, Judah was completely defeated by Babylon, and the remaining temple vessels and palace items in Judah were taken to Babylon.

(Jeremiah 52:17) The Chaldeans also broke the two bronze pillars, the stands, and the bronze sea of the Lord's temple, and they carried the bronze to Babylon.

And after a certain period, when Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians, King Cyrus of Persia gave them back to the governor of Judah, Zerubbabel, who returned them to Jerusalem.

(Ezra 1:7-11)

King Cyrus also brought out the articles of the house of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem and placed in the temple of his gods.)

King Cyrus of Persia had them brought by the treasurer of the temple, Mithredath, who counted them out and gave them to Sheshbazzar, the governor of Judah.

The total was: thirty gold dishes, one thousand silver dishes, twenty-nine silver knives,

thirty gold bowls, four hundred ten silver bowls, and a thousand other articles.

In all, there were five thousand four hundred articles of gold and silver.

Sheshbazzar brought all these along when the exiles went up from Babylon to Jerusalem.

The return of the temple vessels signifies the restoration of Israel.

God is telling the people of Judah that, although He will bring judgment upon them because of their sins, beyond that judgment, He has a new plan for them.

Beloved members of Church of God's Dream,

Despite the prophecies of false prophets, the vessels of the temple and the palace were moved to Babylon according to God's will.

Through this event, we must realize the solemn truth that it is not human beings, but God who governs history and that we must discern false prophets and keep away from them.

God operates this world according to His will with the power of the Creator.

Before the Lord, the sovereign of history, we must humbly kneel and seek to understand His will, living in obedience to it.

To do so, we need spiritual discernment to distinguish false prophets.

Today, we see many false religious leaders standing on the pulpit, deceiving people.

Instead of preaching God's Word, they create messages that appeal to people's hearts and present them as if they were God's truth.

If you are deceived by them and follow them, you will perish.

The only way to live is to follow God's Word alone.

I pray at this time that the Lord grants us wisdom, understanding, and spiritual discernment to comprehend His will—what He desires, what He seeks to accomplish through us, and how we can align ourselves with His divine purpose.