

Jeremiah 27

Chapters 27- 29 are a unit. Jeremiah tells Zedekiah and the people of Israel that they will be going into Babylonian captivity. Chapter 28 has the (false) prophet Hananiah confronting Jeremiah, in front of the leaders and the people, claiming that his message was from God and Jeremiah was wrong. The chapter in front of us has God clearly stating that He is all-powerful and does as He wills in the affairs of men. The lessons we learn are excellent. Charles Feinberg reminds us, "In time of national crisis, religious fakers always flourish because many people want to hear only comforting messages, which may often be untrue (2 Timothy 4:3-4). But nations that obey God will remain in peace in their lands and will prosper (Jeremiah 27:11)."

1 In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah came this word unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

the beginning of the reign:

The Jamieson, Fausset, Brown Commentary states: "The fourth year may, in a general sense here, as in Jer 28:1, be called "the beginning of his reign," as it lasted eleven years (2Ki 24:18). It was not long after the fourth year of his reign that he rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 51:59; 52:3; 2Ki 24:20), in violation of an oath before God (2Ch 36:13)."

"According to Jewish usage, the date was indeed the beginning of his rule, for the Jews divided periods of time into halves: beginning and end. It means simply 'in the first half of his reign.'"

Charles Feinberg, *Jeremiah*, page 191

This verse presents a difficulty by referencing Jehoiakim. Many see this as a scribal error. Some see this as a prophecy and thus not a scribal error.

SCRIBAL ERROR

The reference to the "**reign of Jehoiakim**" is recognized as almost certainly a scribal error. It should read "**the reign of Zedekiah.**" Zedekiah is referenced in verses 3, 12, 20 and 28:1. "And it came to pass the same year, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year..." Jeremiah 28:1, puts the dating of this chapter in the 4th year of Zedekiah's reign (593 B.C.).

See the separate page from <https://www.explainingthebook.com/jeremiah-27-commentary/>

PROPHECY AND NOT A SCRIBAL ERROR

One explanation of why Jehoiakim is referenced is seen in an orthodox Judaism commentary:

"Jeremiah was not to make the following prophecy public until the reign of Zedekiah, eleven years later (v. 3), but God wanted him to tell Jehoiakim now that Nebuchadnezzar would become king and that Jehoiakim should submit to him."

Rabbi Nosson Scherman, Editor, *The Milstein Edition, The Prophets, Jeremiah*, ArtScroll Series, 2014, pg. 235

A Christian website makes the same observation:

"Both Jehoiakim and Zedekiah were sons of Josiah (2 Kings 23:34 and 2 Kings 24:17), but some allege that "Jehoiakim" in Jeremiah 27:1 is an error because the prophecy concerns matters when Zedekiah was "king". Jehoiakim's reign began and ended before Zedekiah's. Despite the seeming textual problem, most Hebrew manuscripts have "Jehoiakim". Although the NIV has "Zedekiah", the footnote to the verse says, "most Hebrew manuscripts [have] Jehoiakim". Furthermore, there is nothing unusual about God providing a prophecy of a future king during the reign of an earlier king. The very nature of a prophecy is its foretelling of an event far into the future. The previous prophecy in Jeremiah chapter 26 was also given during the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign. It is possible that God gave a series of prophecies at the same time during the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign. Of course, Jeremiah responded to the instructions in each prophecy during the proper time."

<https://www.kjvtoday.com/home/jehoiakim-or-zedekiah-in-jeremiah-271>

JEWISH AWARENESS MINISTRIES: The Scriptures

We believe the entire Bible, containing the 66 books from Genesis to Revelation, is the Word of God. We believe in verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible in its original documents. We believe that the Bible was written by holy men of God who spoke as they were moved/controlled by the Holy Spirit; therefore, it is inerrant and the supreme standard of authority by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions shall be tried. We believe that the Canon of Scripture is closed, and that any claims to extra-biblical revelation are contrary to Scripture itself. We are committed to the Bible as being our final authority in all matters of doctrine (faith) and practice. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:19-21; 2 Peter 1:3; Psalm 119:7-11)

**2 Thus saith the LORD to me; Make thee bonds and yokes, and put them upon thy neck,
3 And send them to the king of Edom, and to the king of Moab, and to the king of the Ammonites, and to the king of Tyrus, and to the king of Zidon, by the hand of the messengers which come to Jerusalem unto Zedekiah king of Judah;
4 And command them to say unto their masters, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Thus shall ye say unto your masters;
5 I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me.
6 And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him.
7 And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him.**

Jeremiah is told to make yokes, one of which he wore for 15 years, and send the message the yoke conveyed through the envoys of the kings to the surrounding kings illustrating that they should continue to be servants of the Babylonian empire. The envoys had come to Jerusalem to talk with Zedekiah about an alliance to overthrow Babylon.

God has **made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power** and can give the nations **unto whom it seemed meet unto me.**

The 5 kings mentioned will have their lands conquered and ruled by Babylon if they don't submit to Babylon.

God is sovereign and when He desires He can give control of nations to whomsoever He desires. In Daniel 4:25, God tells the arrogant, prideful Nebuchadnezzar that he will lose His kingdom as He (God) has the power and authority to do it:

"That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."

The mistake some make is to think that this means that God ALL the time, in EVERY instance, rules in the affairs of a nation, putting into place His APPOINTED ruler at all times. This is incorrect.

Luke 4:6-8

6 And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.
7 If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.
8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Revelation 11:15

15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

God has GIVEN the kingdoms of this world to Satan to rule. When God desires, He can intervene and do as HE wills, regardless of what Satan desires. But, generally speaking God allows Satan the freedom to rule in the governments of men.

God ALLOWS certain individuals to RULE, but seldom INTERVENES in the position who ascends to LEADERSHIP of a government.

**8 And it shall come to pass, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the LORD, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.
9 Therefore hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon:
10 For they prophesy a lie unto you, to remove you far from your land; and that I should drive you out, and ye should perish.
11 But the nations that bring their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him, those will I let remain still in their own land, saith the LORD; and they shall till it, and dwell therein.**

The pagan kings had to decide to allow Babylon to remain as their lord and remain in their own land or face the judgment of the God of Israel if they join Zedekiah in the revolt.

- 12 **I spake also to Zedekiah king of Judah according to all these words, saying, Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live.**
13 **Why will ye die, thou and thy people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the LORD hath spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon?**

Jeremiah brings the same message that he brought to the kings of the nations to Zedekiah. Submit to the rule of Babylon and you and the people will live.

- 14 **Therefore hearken not unto the words of the prophets that speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you.**
15 **For I have not sent them, saith the LORD, yet they prophesy a lie in my name; that I might drive you out, and that ye might perish, ye, and the prophets that prophesy unto you.**
16 **Also I spake to the priests and to all this people, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Hearken not to the words of your prophets that prophesy unto you, saying, Behold, the vessels of the LORD'S house shall now shortly be brought again from Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you.**
17 **Hearken not unto them; serve the king of Babylon, and live: wherefore should this city be laid waste?**

The king is told not to listen to what the (false) prophets are telling you. They speak in God's name but they are not sent by God.

- 18 **But if they be prophets, and if the word of the LORD be with them, let them now make intercession to the LORD of hosts, that the vessels which are left in the house of the LORD, and in the house of the king of Judah, and at Jerusalem, go not to Babylon.**

Jeremiah challenges the (false) prophets to make intercession to the LORD and if the word of the LORD is with them the prophecy they tell will come to pass.

A PROPHECY WILL COME TO PASS 100%

Deuteronomy 18:

- 21 And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken?
22 When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

A PROPHECY WILL NOT CONTRADICT THE WORD OF GOD

2 Peter 1:

- 20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.
21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

A PROPHECY WILL NOT CAUSE YOU TO FOLLOW FALSE GODS

Deuteronomy 13:

- 1 If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder,
2 And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them;
3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.
4 Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.

- 19 **For thus saith the LORD of hosts concerning the pillars, and concerning the sea, and concerning the bases, and concerning the residue of the vessels that remain in this city,**
20 **Which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took not, when he carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah from Jerusalem to Babylon, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem;**
21 **Yea, thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning the vessels that remain in the house of the LORD, and in the house of the king of Judah and of Jerusalem;**
22 **They shall be carried to Babylon, and there shall they be until the day that I visit them, saith the LORD; then will I bring them up, and restore them to this place.**

Jeremiah now proclaims God's message. There will be a Babylon captivity!

Jeremiah 27 Commentary: The Scene

And first, Jeremiah sets the scene in Jeremiah 27:1.

Jeremiah 27:1 In the beginning of the reign of [Jehoiakim/Zedekiah] the son of Josiah king of Judah came this word unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

We'll continue soon. But first, we need to note something in this verse.

I need to point out a seeming discrepancy here. What king does this verse mention? It has "Jehoiakim." He was the king who came after Jehoahaz. Jehoahaz reigned for a few months right after Josiah died. So, Jehoiakim was the second king after Josiah.

Jeremiah 27 Commentary: Verse 3

But let me point our attention forward to Jeremiah 27:3. There, Jeremiah is told to send a message to five nations that surrounded Judah at the time. And that verse ends by mentioning which king? It speaks of "Zedekiah."

Now, Zedekiah was the last king of Judah. After Jehoiakim dies, then Jehoiachin reigns for a few months and then the king of Babylon exiles him and replaces him with a man named Mataniah, whose name he then changes to Zedekiah.

So, what we have is Jeremiah 27:1 speaking of king Jehoiakim's reign. But then in Jeremiah 27:3 God is speaking of doing something under the reign of a king who would come after the death of Jehoiakim. So, this is starting to get a little confusing.

Jeremiah 27 Commentary: Verse 12

What's more, Jeremiah 27:12 records Jeremiah's response to the commands that God is giving him in these first 11 verses of the chapter. And immediately, Jeremiah "spoke also to Zedekiah king of Judah." But again, if Jeremiah 27:1 is really telling us that this all happened in the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign, then why – and even how – did Jeremiah speak to Zedekiah – a king who reigns only after Jehoiakim's death??

Jeremiah 27 Commentary: 28:1

Let's consider one more issue with the mention of Jehoiakim in Jeremiah 27:1. Jeremiah 28 – the next chapter in this book – records the response of a false prophet to God's message through Jeremiah in this chapter. When does that event in Jeremiah 28 occur? Jeremiah 28:1 says, "And it came to pass the same year, in the beginning of the reign of [whom?] Zedekiah king of Judah."

So, if Jeremiah 28 is in the "same year" as Jeremiah 27, then we'd expect the king to be ... Jehoiakim, according to Jeremiah 27:1. But it's actually mentioned as "Zedekiah."

Do you see the difficulty here? Several factors point to the events in Jeremiah 27 as occurring during the reign of Zedekiah. But the one statement in Jeremiah 27:1 indicates that these things happened during whose reign? Jehoiakim's.

Jeremiah 27 Commentary: Manuscripts?

This is when you want to know what the Hebrew manuscripts say. And apparently almost all of them say "Jehoiakim" in Jeremiah 27:1. But a few have "Zedekiah" there instead.

So, there's some manuscript evidence to say that the king mentioned in Jeremiah 27:1 should be "Zedekiah" rather than "Jehoiakim." There's also textual evidence to strongly indicate this as well – with the several references to Zedekiah in this chapter and the next chapter.

So, I would say this is a scribal error. God would have originally breathed out "Zedekiah" in Jeremiah 27:1 but a copier of the text would have accidentally written "Jehoiakim" instead.

Jeremiah 27 Commentary: 26:1

Why? Is there any reason we can think of that would influence a scribe to accidentally write "Jehoiakim?" Look at Jeremiah 26:1. The chapter immediately preceding Jeremiah 27 starts this way, "In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah..." So, Jehoiakim was mentioned at the beginning of the last chapter. And so perhaps that influenced a scribe to write his name at the beginning of this chapter.

But when it comes down to it, I do think that we're in the reign of Zedekiah in this chapter. I mean, we have to be, considering the two other references to him in this chapter as well as the reference to him in the next chapter. The events in Jeremiah 27 occur during his reign.

What we're about to read then occurs around 593/4 BC. We're in the start of the reign of the last king of Judah. Jeremiah survived the reign of the wicked and bloodthirsty Jehoiakim. And now God has a message for his people Judah.