THE PROPHET WHO PROPHESIES PEACE

Jeremiah 28:9 “But the prophet who prophesies peace will be recognized as one truly sent by the LORD only if his prediction comes true.”

Review

2 Kings 23:25-27 Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the LORD as he did – with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses. Nevertheless, the LORD did not turn away from the heat of his fierce anger, which burned against Judah because of all that Manasseh had done to arouse his anger. So the LORD said, “I will remove Judah also from my presence as I removed Israel, and I will reject Jerusalem, the city I chose, and this temple, about which I said, ‘My Name shall be there.’ “

Fast Forward

Josiah dies in 609 BC after being king for 31 years. Jeremiah begins his ministry thirteen years into Josiah’s reign, prophesying judgement on Judah, primarily through Babylon. 2 Kings 22:1; 23:29&30; Jeremiah 25:3

Josiah’s son Jehoahaz becomes king, reigns three months, is arrested by Pharaoh Necho and taken in chains to Egypt where he dies. 2 Kings 23:31-33

Pharaoh makes Jehoiakim king and he reigns 11 years. He is defeated by Nebuchadnezzar and becomes his vassal after Babylon defeats Egypt at Carchemesh in 605 BC. Nebuchadnezzar takes some of the articles from the Temple to Babylon along with members of the royal family. 2 Kings 24:1-4; 2 Chronicles 36:5-7; Daniel 1:1-5 Jehoiakim later rebels against Babylon.

Jehoiakim’s son Jehoiachin becomes king and reigns for three months and ten days and surrenders to the Babylonians and is taken to Babylon along with articles of value from the Temple and all but the very poorest of the people of Jerusalem in 597 BC. 2 Kings 24:8-16; 2 Chronicles 36:9&10

Nebuchadnezzar makes Zedekiah, Josiah’s son, king and he reigns for eleven years. 2 Kings 24:17&18; Jeremiah 1:2

Earlier Prophecies

2 Kings 20:16-18 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the LORD: The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your predecessors have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left says the LORD. And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood who will be born to you, will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.”

Habakkuk 1:5&6 “Look at the nations and watch – and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told. I am raising up the Babylonians,”

Jeremiah’s Prophecy in the Fourth Year of Zedekiah’s Reign

Jeremiah 27:8&9 “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. So do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your interpreters of dreams, your mediums or your sorcerers who tell you, ‘You will not serve the king of Babylon.’ “

Jeremiah 27:10&11 “They prophesy lies to you that will only serve to remove you far from your lands; I will banish you 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 on its own land to till it and to live there, declares the LORD.”

Hananiah’s False Prophecy

Jeremiah 28:1-3 In the fifth month of that same year, the fourth year, early in the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, the prophet Hananiah son of Azzur, who was from Gibeon, said to me in the house of the LORD in the presence of the priests and all the people: “This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel says: ‘I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two years I will bring back to this place all the articles of the LORD’s house that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon removed from here and took to Babylon.’ “

Jeremiah 28:4 “‘I will also bring back to this place Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim king of Judah and all the other exiles from Judah who went to Babylon,’ declares the LORD, ‘for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.’ “

Jeremiah’s Response

Jeremiah 28: 5-7 Then the prophet Jeremiah replied to the prophet Hananiah before the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the LORD. He said, “Amen! May the LORD do so! May the LORD fulfill the words you have prophesied by bringing the articles of the LORD’s house and all the exiles back to this place from Babylon. Nevertheless, listen to what I have to say in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people:”

Jeremiah 28:8&9 “From early times the prophets who preceded you and me have prophesied war, disaster and plague against many countries and great kingdoms. But the prophet who prophesies peace will be recognized as one truly sent by the LORD only if his prediction comes true.”

Hananiah Responds

Jeremiah 28:10&11 Then the prophet Hananiah took the yoke off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah and broke it, and he said before all the people, “This is what the LORD says: ‘In the same way I will break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon off the neck of all the nations withing two years.’ “At this, the prophet Jeremiah went on his way.

God’s Final Word

Jeremiah 28:12-14 After the prophet Hananiah had broken the yoke off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: “Go and tell Hananiah, “This is what the LORD says: ‘You have broken a wooden yoke, but in its place you will get a yoke of iron. This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel says: I will put an iron yoke on the necks of all these nations to make them serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and they will serve him. I will even give him control over the wild animals.’ “

Jeremiah’s Final Words to Hananiah

Jeremiah 28:15&16 Then the prophet Jeremiah said to Hananiah the prophet, “Listen, Hananiah! The LORD has not sent you, yet you have persuaded this nation to trust in lies. Therefore this is what the LORD says: ‘I am about to remove you from the face of the earth. This very year you are going to die, because you have preached rebellion against the LORD.”

Epilogue

Jeremiah 28:17 In the seventh month of that same year, Hananiah the prophet died.

Things to Think About

Isaiah and Habakkuk had already prophesied judgment was coming at the hands of the Babylonians. God had told Jeremiah judgment was coming unless Judah repented. Judah had not repented, so based on what God had said previously Hananiah could not be right.

Moreover, Babylon had already conquered Judah twice.

Proverbs 14:34 Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin condemns any people.

Notice that Hananiah was saying the same thing as the diviners, interpreters of dreams, mediums and sorcerers.

Because people and nations sin against God, war, disaster and plague happen with great regularity.

To tell people that all will be well even if they continue in their sinful ways is to preach rebellion against the Lord and is a very serious offense.

To think that our nation can continue on its present course without judgment will have consequences more serious than those we have experienced.