

CHAPTER 27

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 27

This chapter contains a prophecy of the subjection of the king of Judah, with five neighbouring kings, to the king of Babylon; signified by bonds and yokes on the prophet's neck, which they are exhorted patiently to bear, as being most for their good; and not to give heed to false prophets, who would persuade them to the contrary. The date of the prophecy is in (^{27:1}Jeremiah 27:1); the order to make the yokes, and send them to the several neighbouring princes by their messengers at Jerusalem, (^{27:2,3}Jeremiah 27:2,3); what they should say to their masters from the God of Israel, who is described from his power in the creation of the earth, and the disposal of it, (^{27:4,5}Jeremiah 27:4,5); as that he had given all their lands into the hand of the king of Babylon, whom they should serve, or it would be worse for them, (^{27:6-8}Jeremiah 27:6-8); and therefore should not hearken to their prophets, who prophesied lies; if they did, it would be to their hurt; whereas, if they quietly submitted, they would dwell in their own land, (^{27:9-11}Jeremiah 27:9-11); particularly Zedekiah king of Judah is exhorted to submit; and both he, and the priests and the people, are advised not to hearken to the false prophets, (^{27:12-15}Jeremiah 27:12-15); particularly as to what they said concerning the speedy return of the vessels of the temple, which were carried away to Babylon; but might assure themselves they should remain there; and the rest also should be taken, and not returned until the end of the seventy years, (^{27:16}Jeremiah 27:16-22).

Ver. 1. *In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah*, etc.] This is the same date with the prophecy of the preceding chapter and some think that this verse should conclude that, as belonging to it; and by which they would reconcile a difficulty that arises here; the orders for making the yokes being given in the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign, which yet were to be sent to the messengers of the neighbouring kings that were come to Zedekiah at Jerusalem, who did not begin to reign until eleven years after this time; but the word "saying", at the end of the verse, shows it not to belong to the preceding, but to what follows: others think it is a mistake of the copy, and that Jehoiakim is put for Zedekiah;

and the Syriac and Arabic versions read Zedekiah; but he was not the son of Josiah, as this king is said to be, but his brother: others therefore think, that though the prophecy was delivered to Jeremiah, and the orders were given him to make the bonds and yokes after mentioned, at this time; yet this prophecy was concealed with him, and the orders were not executed till Zedekiah's time; or that the prophet, in the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign, made the yokes as he was ordered, and put one on his neck, to signify the subjection of Judah to the king of Babylon, which quickly took place, about the third or fourth year of this reign; and that the rest were sent to the ambassadors of the neighbouring nations in Zedekiah's time; which latter seems most probable:

came this word unto Jeremiah from the Lord, saying; as follows. This verse is not in the common editions of the Septuagint; but it is in the king of Spain's Bible.

Ver. 2. *Thus saith the Lord to me, make thee bonds and yokes,* etc.] The yokes were made of wood, as appears from (²⁸¹³Jeremiah 28:13); and the bonds were strings or thongs, which bound the yoke together, that it might not slip off the neck, on which it was put:

and put them upon thy neck; not all of them together, but one after another, at different times; and this was very significant; for the prophet being seen abroad with a yoke upon his neck, it would be natural to inquire the meaning of it; when they would be told it was to signify the subjection of Judah, and so of other nations, to the king of Babylon; and that he did wear at times such a yoke, even fifteen years after, in the fourth of Zedekiah's reign, appears from (²⁸¹⁰Jeremiah 28:1,10).

Ver. 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,* etc.] All neighbouring kings and states, to whom the wine cup of God's wrath was to be sent, and they made to drink of it, (²⁵²¹Jeremiah 25:21,22); and against whom Jeremiah afterwards prophesies:

by the hand of the messengers which come to Jerusalem unto Zedekiah king of Judah; who were sent by their masters, either to congratulate Zedekiah upon his accession to the throne; or to enter into a league with him against the king of Babylon, and shake off his yoke; or to reside at his court, as ambassadors of nations at peace and in alliance usually do; and it may be for all those purposes. The yokes therefore are ordered to be sent

to them, as being the most proper and easy way and method of conveying them, with the meaning of them, to their respective masters.

Ver. 4. *And command them to say unto their masters*, etc.] The prophet is sent with authority, and ordered to speak in a very high strain, having his orders from the King of kings and Lord of lords; a greater master than those messengers had; and to enjoin them to tell their several masters in his master's name; as follows:

thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; who, though in a peculiar manner the God of Israel, yet was Lord of the whole world, and had all the armies of heaven and earth at his command, to enforce his power and authority; wherefore what he says ought to be attended to:

thus shall ye say to your masters; deliver to them the following words of the great Jehovah.

Ver. 5. *I have made the earth, the man and the beast that [are] upon the ground*, etc.] The earth was made by him on the first day, and man and beast on the sixth day, of the creation; the earth is still supported in its being, and man and beast are continued on it in succession: this is mentioned to show his right and authority to dispose of the earth, and all in it, at his pleasure; which is founded on his creation and sustaining of it, and all creatures in it: which was, and is, as he says,

by my great power, and by my outstretched arm; for nothing less could have created the original chaos out of nothing, and brought that into form and order, and produced out of it such creatures as man and beast; and nothing less than that could continue it in being, and a succession of creatures on it:

and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me; some part of it to one, and some to another; and more to one than to another; but to none according to their merit, but according to his own sovereign will and pleasure; (see ^{115:16} Psalm 115:16).

Ver. 6. *And now I have given all these lands*, etc.] Before mentioned; of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, Zidon, and Judea:

into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; whom God used as an instrument in correcting and chastising the nations; and who obeyed his will, though he knew it not; nor did what he did in

obedience to it; and yet had the honour of being called his servant, and of being rewarded with a very large empire; which was owing, not so much to his prowess and valour, wisdom and management, as to the providence of God; who delivered the above kingdoms, with others, into his hands, as being the sole proprietor and sovereign disposer of them:

and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him; either to bring him, and his armies, and his carriages of provisions for them, and warlike stores, for the invasion and taking the above countries; or the cattle found there, which belonged to these countries, and the inhabitants thereof, which would fall into his hands with them.

Ver. 7. *And all nations shall serve him*, etc.] That is, all those, all above mentioned; though there were others also that were tributary to him, but not every nation under heaven:

and his son, and his son's son; their Scripture names were Evilmerodach and Belshazzar, (^{<2828>}Jeremiah 52:31 ^{<2780>}Daniel 5:1); and by Ptolemy, in his canon, are called Iloarudamus and Nabonadius; between whom he places Niricassolassarus, or Neriglissarus; who was not a son of Evilmerodach, but his sister's husband. A son of his succeeded him, called Laborosoarchod; who, reigning but nine months, is not placed in the canon; agreeably to which is the account of Berossus^{f539}; by whom the immediate son of Nebuchadnezzar is named Evilmaradouchus; or Evilmaurouchus, as in Eusebius^{f540}; who, after he had reigned two years, was slain by Neriglissor, or Neriglissar, as in the above writer, his sister's husband; who, after he had enjoyed the kingdom four years, died, and left it to his son, whom he calls Chabaessoarachus, or Laborosoarchados, as before, who reigned but nine months; and then Nabonnidus succeeded, the name he gives him who was conquered by Cyrus in the seventeenth year of his reign; and not very different is the account of Nebuchadnezzar's successors, and the names of them, as given by Abydenus, out of Megasthenes^{f541}; according to whom, Evilmaurouchus, the son of Nebuchadnezzar, was his successor; then Neriglissar, his sister's husband, who left a son called Labassoarascus; and after him Nabannidochus, in whose times Cyrus took Babylon; and who appears to be the same with Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar; so that the Scripture is very just and accurate in mentioning these two only as the son, and son's son of Nebuchadnezzar, whom the nations should serve; for in the last of these ended the Babylonish monarchy:

until the very time of his land come; or that “itself; also he himself”^{f542} or, “also of himself”, as the Vulgate Latin version. The Targum is,

“until the time of the destruction of his land come, also of himself;”

there was a time fixed for his life, and so long the nations were to serve, and did serve, him personally; and there was a time fixed for the continuance of his monarchy, in his son, and son’s son; when it was to end, as it did, in Belshazzar’s reign; and when the seventy years’ captivity of the Jews was up:

and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him; and his kingdom; subdue it, and make it tributary to them. This was accomplished by the Medes and Persians, with Darius and Cyrus at the head of them, and other nations and kings, allies and auxiliaries to them, and associates with them; (see ^{<2514>}Jeremiah 25:14). The Vulgate Latin version renders it, “and many nations and great kings shall serve him”; so the Targum; which falls in with the former part of the verse; wherefore the other sense is best.

Ver. 8. *And it shall come to pass, [that] the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon*, etc.] Will not, upon his approaching to them, invading and besieging them, submit and become tributary to him, as is more fully expressed in the next clause:

and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon; or voluntarily become subject to him, and pay a tax he shall impose upon them. This refers to, and explains the symbol of, Jeremiah’s making and wearing yokes, (^{<2712>}Jeremiah 27:2);

that nation will I punish, saith the Lord, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence; with one judgment after another; some will perish by the sword of the enemy, sallying out upon them, or endeavouring to make their escape; others by famine their provisions being spent through the length of the siege; and others by pestilence, or the plague, by the immediate hand of God:

until I have consumed them by his hand; Nebuchadnezzar’s; by means of him; by his sword, and strait besieging them; or, “into his hand”; and so the Targum,

“until I have delivered them into his hand;”

having consumed multitudes by the sword, famine, and pestilence, will deliver the rest into his hands to be carried captive by him.

Ver. 9. *Therefore hearken not ye to your prophets*, etc.] False prophets, as the Targum. These words are not directed to the Jews, but are a continuation of what the messengers of the nations should say to their masters from the God of Israel, by the mouth of his prophet; for they had their prophets as well as the Jews; as the prophets of Baal, and others:

nor to your diviners; or soothsayers; such an one as was Balaam:

nor to your dreamers; or “dreams”; such as they had themselves, and laid great stress upon; or to those who pretended to interpret them to them:

nor to your enchanters; or stargazers; astrologers, who pretended by the position of the stars to foretell what would come to pass:

nor to your sorcerers; or wizards, or necromancers; who, by unlawful methods, pretended to acquire knowledge of future things:

which speak unto you, saying, ye shall not serve the king of Babylon; meaning, either that they ought not to become tributary to him; or they should not be brought into subjection by him: and so were stirred up to oppose him, and not submit to him.

Ver. 10. *For they prophesy a lie unto you*, etc.] That which was vain and false, and proved so; though they might not know it was when delivered:

to remove you far from your land; not that they designed it by their prophecies, but so it was eventually; for, standing it out against Nebuchadnezzar, encouraged by the lies and dreams of their prophets, he, in process of time, took them, and carried them captive into Babylon; whereas, had they surrendered at once, they might have continued in their own land, paying a tax or tribute to the king of Babylon:

and that I should drive you out, and ye should perish; drive them out of their own land, and so perish in a foreign land: God is said to do that which his servant or instrument did, being provoked by the sin and disobedience of the people, hearkening to their lying prophets, and not to him.

Ver. 11. *But the nations that bring their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him*, etc.] That at once, and readily, submit unto him, and pay him tribute:

those will I let remain still in their own land, saith the Lord; undisturbed by any other enemy; peaceably dwelling in their own habitations; following their occupations and business of life; and enjoying their substance and estates, only paying the tax imposed on them:

and they shall till it, and dwell therein; manure and cultivate it, and gather and eat the fruit of it, and continue to do so, they and their posterity after them.

Ver. 12. *I spake also to Zedekiah king of Judah*, etc.] At the same time that he delivered the above message from the Lord to the ambassadors of several nations, who were then residents in Zedekiah's court, or however in Jerusalem:

according to all these words; the same things, and much in the same language, he said to the king of Judah, as to the messengers of the nations:

saying; as follows:

bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon; you, O king, your nobles, and your people. Zedekiah was set upon the throne by the king of Babylon, was a tributary to him, and had took an oath to be faithful to him; and yet was now meditating rebellion against him; and was consulting and entering into a confederacy with the neighbouring nations to throw off the yoke, and be independent on him: wherefore the sense of this advice must be to bring themselves, he and his people, to a cheerful submission to it, and a patient bearing it, and not attempt to shake it off:

and serve him and his people, and live: the king of Babylon, and the Chaldeans, by faithfully paying the tribute, and acknowledging subjection to him; and so "live" in their own land, enjoying all other civil and religious privileges.

Ver. 13. *Why will ye die, thou and thy people, the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence*, etc.] Through a blockade of the Chaldean army, which would invade their land, and besiege their city, upon a refusal to be subject to their yoke:

as the Lord hath spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon? as the Lord has threatened shall be the case of any and everyone of the above nations that should refuse to be tributary to him; of which, no doubt, Zedekiah and his court had been apprized; (see ^{<27>}Jeremiah 27:8).

Ver. 14. *Therefore hearken not unto the words of the prophets,* etc.] The false prophets, as the Targum; such bad kings always had about them, to whom they listened, and which often proved of bad consequence to them:

that speak unto you, saying; as follows:

ye shall not serve the king of Babylon; ye ought not to do it, but cast off his yoke; to which if ye do not willingly submit, he will never be able to force you to it:

for they prophesy a lie unto you; and therefore should not be hearkened to, particularly when they promise safety from the king of Babylon.

Ver. 15. *For I have not sent them, saith the Lord,* etc.] (see ^{<2020>}Jeremiah 23:21); yet they prophesy a lie in my name; to deliver out a lie was a very wicked thing, sinful in them, and fatal to others; but to make use of the name of the Lord, and cover it with that, and back it with his authority, was much more wicked and abominable:

that I might drive you out, and that ye might perish; being driven out of their own land, perish in another; which, though the false prophets did not intend by their prophesying, yet such would be, and was, the issue of it:

ye, and the prophets that prophesy unto you; for it would end in the ruin and destruction of them both; both of the false prophets, as the Targum here again calls them, and those that listened to their prophecies; both would fall into the same ditch.

Ver. 16. *Also I spake to the priests, and to all this people, saying,* etc.] From the court he went to the temple, and spoke to the priests that were ministering there, and to all the people that were assembled for divine worship; either at the ordinary time of it, or at some one of the solemn feasts: this was a proper time and place to meet with the people and the priests; which latter especially had a concern in what he had to say concerning the vessels of the temple:

thus saith the Lord, hearken not to the words of your prophets that prophesy unto you: your false prophets, as the Targum:

saying; as follows:

behold, the vessels of the Lord's house shall now shortly be brought again from Babylon; which were carried thither, both in the times of Jehoiakim,

and of Jeconiah, (~~4807~~ 2 Chronicles 36:7,10); these the false prophets gave out would in a short time be returned; that the king of Babylon, either willingly and of his own accord, or being pressed or forced to it, would send them back; so little reason had they to fear an invasion from him, or captivity by him:

for they prophesy a lie unto you; that which is false, and will never be accomplished, at least in any short time.

Ver. 17. *Hearken not unto them,* etc.] The false prophets:

serve the king of Babylon, and live; pay homage and tribute to him; which is the way to live in your own land, and enjoy the benefits of that, and of the temple worship; which, if not, you will be utterly deprived of:

wherefore should this city be laid waste? as it certainly will, should you rebel against the king of Babylon; and as it was in a few years after, when they did.

Ver. 18. *But if they be prophets, and if the word of the Lord be with them,* etc.] The true prophets of the Lord are sent by him, and have his word put into them:

let them now make intercession to the Lord of hosts: use their interest with him, as they must have one, if they are true prophets; let them pray unto him, who doubtless will hear them; and this will be acting in character, for prophets ought to be praying persons; and this will turn to some good account:

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; instead of prophesying about the return of what are gone, let them pray for the preservation and continuance of what are left, that they do not go also; of which there was great danger, yea, certainty, in case of non-submission to, and rebellion against, the king of Babylon; there were some vessels of the sanctuary which yet remained, as well as others in the king's palace, and in the houses of the noble and rich men in Jerusalem; for the keeping of which they would do well to show a proper concern, and make use of proper means; and nothing more effectual than prayer to God; and, next to that, submission to the Chaldean yoke.

Ver. 19. *For thus saith the Lord of hosts concerning the pillars,* etc.] The pillars of brass that stood in the temple; the one called Boaz, and the other Jachin, (^{<1075>}1 Kings 7:15,21);

and concerning the sea; the sea of molten brass, which stood upon twelve oxen, (^{<1073>}1 Kings 7:23,25);

and concerning the bases: the ten bases, which also were made of brass, (^{<1077>}1 Kings 7:27-37);

and concerning the residue of the vessels that remain in this city; in the king's palace, and in the houses of the noblemen, and of the rich and wealthy inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Ver. 20. *Which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took not,* etc.] For he seems only to have taken the vessels of gold, and left the vessels of brass, as the above were; (see ^{<1243>}2 Kings 24:13);

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; of which (see ^{<1242>}2 Kings 24:12-16).

Ver. 21. *Yea, thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning the vessels that remain [in] the house of the Lord,* etc.] Which are mentioned in (^{<2079>}Jeremiah 27:19); together with others:

and [in] the house of the king of Judah, and of Jerusalem; (see ^{<2078>}Jeremiah 27:18).

Ver. 22. *They shall be carried to Babylon,* etc.] As they were; and of which, with others, there is a particular account in (^{<1253>}2 Kings 25:13-17);

and there shall they be until the day that I visit them, saith to the Lord; the Chaldeans in a way of wrath, and the Jews in a way of grace and favour; which was at the end of the seventy years' captivity; and so long the vessels of the sanctuary continued there; here we read of them as in use the very night that Belshazzar was slain, and Babylon taken, (^{<2082>}Daniel 5:2,30);

then will I bring them up, and restore them to this place; which was fulfilled when the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia to give leave to the Jews to return to their own land, and rebuild their temple; and

at the same time delivered into the hands of Sheshbazzar, prince of Judah, the vessels of the temple, (~~500~~ Ezra 1:1,7).