

HTPC Adult Sunday School
Prophetic Call Narratives – Week 7
The Harmony of Jeremiah and Ezekiel

“For no melody can be devised more perfectly complete than that which appears between these two servants of God.” – John Calvin

I. The Message of Judgment – Symbolism

A. Jeremiah’s Iron Yoke (Jeremiah 27-28)

1 In the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD. 2 Thus the LORD said to me: “Make yourself straps and yoke-bars, and put them on your neck ... 8 ““But if any nation or kingdom will not serve this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, I will punish that nation with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence, declares the LORD, until I have consumed it by his hand. 9 So do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your dreamers, your fortune-tellers, or your sorcerers, who are saying to you, ‘You shall not serve the king of Babylon.’ 10 For it is a lie that they are prophesying to you, with the result that you will be removed far from your land, and I will drive you out, and you will perish. (Jeremiah 27:1, 8-10)

10 Then the prophet Hananiah took the yoke-bars from the neck of Jeremiah the prophet and broke them. 11 And Hananiah spoke in the presence of all the people, saying, “Thus says the LORD: Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all the nations within two years.” But Jeremiah the prophet went his way.

12 Sometime after the prophet Hananiah had broken the yoke-bars from off the neck of Jeremiah the prophet, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: 13 “Go, tell Hananiah, ‘Thus says the LORD: You have broken wooden bars, but you have made in their place bars of iron. 14 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: I have put upon the neck of all these nations an iron yoke to serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and they shall serve him, for I have given to him even the beasts of the field.’” (Jeremiah 28: 10-14)

- Why the yoke? (Deuteronomy 28:48)

- What is the false message?

B. Ezekiel’s Siege (Ezekiel 4-5)

1 “And you, son of man, take a brick and lay it before you, and engrave on it a city, even Jerusalem. 2 And put siegeworks against it, and build a siege wall against it, and cast up a mound against it. Set camps also against it, and plant battering rams against it all around. 3 And you, take an iron griddle, and place it as an iron wall between you and the city; and set your face

toward it, and let it be in a state of siege, and press the siege against it. This is a sign for the house of Israel.” (Ezekiel 4:1-3)

9 “And you, take wheat and barley, beans and lentils, millet and emmer, and put them into a single vessel and make your bread from them. During the number of days that you lie on your side, 390 days, you shall eat it. 10 And your food that you eat shall be by weight, twenty shekels a day; from day to day you shall eat it. 11 And water you shall drink by measure, the sixth part of a hin; from day to day you shall drink. 12 And you shall eat it as a barley cake, baking it in their sight on human dung.” 13 And the LORD said, “Thus shall the people of Israel eat their bread unclean, among the nations where I will drive them.” (Ezekiel 4:9-13)

5 “Thus says the Lord GOD: This is Jerusalem. I have set her in the center of the nations, with countries all around her. 6 And she has rebelled against my rules by doing wickedness more than the nations, and against my statutes more than the countries all around her; for they have rejected my rules and have not walked in my statutes. (Ezekiel 5:5-6)

- What is intent of Lord’s instructions to Ezekiel?
- How does Ezekiel’s message/symbolism harmonize with that of Jeremiah?

II. Message of Judgment – Declaration

A. Jeremiah’s Letter – Jeremiah 29

8 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, 9 for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, declares the LORD.

10 “For thus says the LORD: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place...

15 “Because you have said, ‘The LORD has raised up prophets for us in Babylon,’ 16 thus says the LORD concerning the king who sits on the throne of David, and concerning all the people who dwell in this city, your kinsmen who did not go out with you into exile: 17 ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, behold, I am sending on them sword, famine, and pestilence, and I will make them like vile figs that are so rotten they cannot be eaten. 18 I will pursue them with sword, famine, and pestilence, and will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, a terror, a hissing, and a reproach among all the nations where I have driven them, 19 because they did not pay attention to my words, declares the LORD, that I persistently sent to you by my servants the prophets, but you would not listen, declares the LORD.’ 20 Hear the word of the LORD, all you exiles whom I sent away from Jerusalem to Babylon: 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 shall strike them down before your eyes. (Jeremiah 29:8-10, 15-21)

B. The Fugitive from Jerusalem (Ezekiel 33:21ff.)

21 In the twelfth year of our exile, in the tenth month, on the fifth day of the month, a fugitive from Jerusalem came to me and said, "The city has been struck down."

23 The word of the LORD came to me: 24 "Son of man, the inhabitants of these waste places in the land of Israel keep saying, 'Abraham was only one man, yet he got possession of the land; but we are many; the land is surely given us to possess.' 25 Therefore say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: You eat flesh with the blood and lift up your eyes to your idols and shed blood; shall you then possess the land? 26 You rely on the sword, you commit abominations, and each of you defiles his neighbor's wife; shall you then possess the land? 27 Say this to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: As I live, surely those who are in the waste places shall fall by the sword, and whoever is in the open field I will give to the beasts to be devoured, and those who are in strongholds and in caves shall die by pestilence. 28 And I will make the land a desolation and a waste, and her proud might shall come to an end, and the mountains of Israel shall be so desolate that none will pass through. 29 Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I have made the land a desolation and a waste because of all their abominations that they have committed." (Ezekiel 33:21, 23-29)

- How do these messages harmonize?

- How does each message instruct Ezekiel's audience, and (for that matter) the church today?

III. Message of Redemption

A. New Covenant Blessings

31 "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. 33 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

19 *And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, 20 that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.* (Ezekiel 11:19-20 and 36:26-28)

B. Messianic Promise

5 *“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. 6 In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness.’”* (Jeremiah 23:5-6 and 33:14-16)

24 *“My servant David shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall walk in my rules and be careful to obey my statutes. 25 They shall dwell in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children’s children shall dwell there forever, and David my servant shall be their prince forever. 26 I will make a covenant of peace with them. It shall be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will set them in their land and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. 27 My dwelling place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 28 Then the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.”* (Ezekiel 37:24-28)

- Why do both prophets reference David, and what does that reference communicate? (2 Samuel 7:12-16; cf., Amos 9:11; Isaiah 11:1ff.)

IV. Observations and Implications

“The Prophets always argue with men with no other intention than that of stirring them up to penitence, which they could never effect unless God could be reconciled to those who had been alienated from him. This then is the reason why [Ezekiel], as well as Jeremiah, when they reprove the people, temper their asperity¹ by the interposition of promises.” – John Calvin

¹Harshness of tone or manner.