



Study Guide: Jeremiah – Chapter 28

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This study guide provides an educational overview of Jeremiah Chapter 28 using a verse-by-verse structure, theological context, and application-oriented insights grounded in Scripture.

Introduction

Jeremiah Chapter 28 presents a dramatic confrontation between two prophets, Jeremiah and Hananiah, which highlights the tension between true and false prophecy during a critical period in Judah's history. This chapter contributes to the book's flow by illustrating the conflict over the message of impending judgment and exile versus a false hope of swift deliverance. Readers should watch for the interaction between divine truth and human optimism, as well as the consequences of claiming God's word without divine authority.

Context

Jeremiah 28 is set during the reign of King Zedekiah in Judah, a time when Babylonian forces were threatening Jerusalem. The immediate literary context follows Jeremiah's prophecies warning of Babylonian captivity as a consequence of Judah's covenant unfaithfulness. The chapter features a direct encounter between Jeremiah and Hananiah, another prophet who offers a contradictory message of hope by predicting the end of Babylonian dominance within two years. This clash occurs within the covenant framework where true prophecy must align with God's revealed will and covenant promises. The key speakers are Jeremiah, known for his sobering messages of judgment, and Hananiah, who represents false assurance. The setting is likely the temple courtyard, a public place for prophetic pronouncements.

Outline

The chapter begins with Hananiah's bold prophecy that the Babylonian yoke will be broken within two years, symbolized by the breaking of wooden bars representing Babylonian control. Jeremiah responds by challenging Hananiah's message and reminding him that true prophecy must come from God. Following this, Jeremiah delivers a solemn oracle declaring that Hananiah's optimistic prophecy will not come to pass and that the prophet



will die because he has led the people astray. The chapter concludes with the death of Hananiah within the year, confirming Jeremiah's word and underscoring the seriousness of proclaiming God's message accurately.

Verse-by-Verse Study

Verses 1-3: Hananiah the prophet confronts Jeremiah in the temple courtyard, declaring that God will break the yoke of Babylon within two years. He physically breaks the wooden bars symbolizing Babylon's oppression, a dramatic gesture meant to symbolize imminent freedom.

Verses 4-6: Jeremiah responds cautiously, acknowledging Hananiah's message but emphasizing that the true test of prophecy is whether it comes to pass. He reminds Hananiah that he has not been sent by God to proclaim such a message, signaling doubt about Hananiah's authority.

Verses 7-9: Jeremiah proclaims a word from the Lord, stating that the yoke of Babylon will not be broken by wooden bars but by iron bars, symbolizing a stronger and more enduring captivity. He declares that Hananiah's prophecy is false and that the people will remain in exile.

Verses 10-11: Jeremiah warns Hananiah that because he has preached rebellion against the Lord, his prophecy will not stand. He predicts Hananiah's death within the year as a sign of the falsehood of his message.

Verses 12-17: Hananiah responds defiantly, insisting that the Lord has sent him to break the yoke of Babylon. Jeremiah then issues a solemn judgment, stating that Hananiah has made the people trust in a lie and that God will bring Hananiah's death as a consequence. The chapter ends with the report that Hananiah died that same year, validating Jeremiah's word.

Key Themes

One key theme is the distinction between true and false prophecy, emphasizing that God's word must be tested by fulfillment and alignment with covenant truth. Another theme is the tension between hope and judgment; Hananiah's message offers premature hope, while Jeremiah's message calls for sober acceptance of God's disciplinary plan. The chapter also highlights the consequences of speaking presumptuously in God's name, underscoring divine authority over prophetic speech. Finally, the symbolism of the yoke



and its materials (wood versus iron) reflects the nature and permanence of Babylonian captivity.

Cross-References

Deuteronomy 18:20–22 provides a foundational principle for discerning true prophecy, stating that a prophet whose words do not come true is not sent by God, which directly relates to Jeremiah’s challenge to Hananiah. Ezekiel 13 discusses false prophets who give false hope, paralleling Hananiah’s actions. Jeremiah 27 also addresses the yoke of Babylon, providing background for the imagery used in chapter 28. Lastly, 1 Kings 13 recounts the story of a false prophet who dies after contradicting a true prophet, a narrative that echoes Hananiah’s fate and reinforces the seriousness of prophetic authority.

Application

Modern disciples can learn from Jeremiah 28 the importance of discerning God’s true word amid competing voices, especially when hopeful messages may contradict divine truth. This chapter challenges believers to test prophetic claims by Scripture and the fruit of fulfillment rather than by emotional appeal or popular desire. It also reminds us to approach God’s discipline with humility and patience, trusting His sovereign purposes even when circumstances seem bleak. Additionally, the chapter warns against the dangers of speaking presumptuously in God’s name, encouraging integrity and reverence in sharing spiritual truths.

Summary

Jeremiah 28 captures a pivotal moment of prophetic confrontation between Jeremiah and Hananiah, illustrating the conflict between true and false messages from God during Judah’s crisis. Through symbolic actions and direct speech, the chapter contrasts the sobering reality of Babylonian exile with false assurances of quick deliverance. The narrative underscores the necessity of testing prophecy by its fulfillment and fidelity to God’s covenant, highlighting the grave consequences of misleading the people. Ultimately, the chapter reinforces Jeremiah’s role as a faithful messenger of God’s judgment and the enduring authority of divine truth amid human hopes.