

Jeremiah's Vision of Two Baskets of Figs (597 BC)

Jeremiah 24

Description of the Figs

1 After Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had carried away captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and the officials of Judah with the craftsmen and smiths from Jerusalem and had brought them to Babylon, the LORD showed me: behold, two baskets of figs set before the temple of the LORD!
 2 One basket had very good figs, like first-ripe figs, and the other basket had very bad figs which could not be eaten due to rottenness.
 3 Then the LORD said to me, "What do you see, Jeremiah?" And I said, "Figs, the good figs, very good; and the bad *figs*, very bad, which cannot be eaten due to rottenness."

Meaning of the Good Figs

4 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,
 5 "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Like these good figs, so I will regard as good the captives of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place *into* the land of the Chaldeans.
 6 For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them again to this land; and I will build them up and not overthrow them, and I will plant them and not pluck them up.
 7 I will give them a heart to know Me, for I am the LORD; and they will be My people, and I will be their God, for they will return to Me with their whole heart.

Meaning of the Bad Figs

8 'But like the bad figs which cannot be eaten due to rottenness—indeed, thus says the LORD—so I will abandon Zedekiah king of Judah and his officials, and the remnant of Jerusalem who remain in this land and the ones who dwell in the land of Egypt.
 9 I will make them a terror *and an* evil for all the kingdoms of the earth, as a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse in all places where I will scatter them.
 10 I will send the sword, the famine and the pestilence upon them until they are destroyed from the land which I gave to them and their forefathers.'"

Jeremiah's Letter to the Exiles in Babylon (597 BC)

Jeremiah 29

Sending of the Letter

1 Now these are the words of the letter which Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the rest of the elders of the exile, the priests, the prophets and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.
 2 (This was after King Jeconiah and the queen mother, the court officials, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen and the smiths had departed from Jerusalem.)
 3 *The letter was sent* by the hand of Elasah the son of Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, saying,

Settle Down in Babylon

4 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon,
 5 'Build houses and live *in them*; and plant gardens and eat their produce.
 6 Take wives and become the fathers of sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; and multiply there and do not decrease.
 7 Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare.'

Warning against False Prophets

8 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Do not let your prophets who are in your midst and your diviners deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams which they dream.
9 For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them,' declares the LORD.
10 "For thus says the LORD, 'When seventy years have been completed for Babylon, I will visit you and fulfill My good word to you, to bring you back to this place.
11 For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.
12 Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.
13 You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.
14 I will be found by you,' declares the LORD, 'and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you,' declares the LORD, 'and I will bring you back to the place from where I sent you into exile.'
15 "Because you have said, 'The LORD has raised up prophets for us in Babylon'—
16 for 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 brothers who did not go with you into exile—
17 thus says the LORD of hosts, 'Behold, I am sending upon them the sword, famine and pestilence, and I will make them like split-open figs that cannot be eaten due to rotteness.
18 I will pursue them with the sword, with famine and with pestilence; and I will make them a terror to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse and a horror and a hissing, and a reproach among all the nations where I have driven them,
19 because they have not listened to My words,' declares the LORD, 'which I sent to them again and again by My servants the prophets; but you did not listen,' declares the LORD.
20 You, therefore, hear the word of the LORD, all you exiles, whom I have sent away from Jerusalem to Babylon.
21 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning Ahab the son of Kolaiah and concerning Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, who are prophesying to you falsely in My name, 'Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he will slay them before your eyes.
22 Because of them a curse will be used by all the exiles from Judah who are in Babylon, saying, "May the LORD make you like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire,
23 because they have acted foolishly in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbors' wives and have spoken words in My name falsely, which I did not command them; and I am He who knows and am a witness," declares the LORD.'"

Shemaiah Resists Jeremiah's Message

24 To Shemaiah the Nehelamite you shall speak, saying,
25 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Because you have sent letters in your own name to all the people who are in Jerusalem, and to Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah, the priest, and to all the priests, saying,
26 "The LORD has made you priest instead of Jehoiada the priest, to be the overseer in the house of the LORD over every madman who prophesies, to put him in the stocks and in the iron collar,
27 now then, why have you not rebuked Jeremiah of Anathoth who prophesies to you?
28 For he has sent to us in Babylon, saying, 'The exile will be long; build houses and live *in them* and plant gardens and eat their produce.'"

God's Message to the Exiles About Shemaiah

29 Zephaniah the priest read this letter to Jeremiah the prophet.
30 Then came the word of the LORD to Jeremiah, saying,

31 “Send to all the exiles, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite, “Because Shemaiah has prophesied to you, although I did not send him, and he has made you trust in a lie,”
32 therefore thus says the LORD, “Behold, I am about to punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite and his descendants; he will not have anyone living among this people, and he will not see the good that I am about to do to My people,” declares the LORD, “because he has preached rebellion against the LORD.”””

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