

Jehoiakim or Zedekiah – Jeremiah 27:1-3 – Floyd Nolen Jones, Th.D., Ph.D.

Jeremiah 27:1 In the beginning of the reign of **Jehoiakim** the son of Josiah king of Judah came this word unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

2 Thus saith the LORD to me; Make thee bonds and yokes, and put them upon thy neck,

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, by the hand of the messengers which come to Jerusalem unto **Zedekiah** king of Judah; (Jer. 27:1-3, King James Bible)

The comment on verse one in the margin of my Bible states: “Here is possibly a scribal error, Hebrew Reads *Jehoiakim* but context (see vv. 3, 12, 20; 28:1) requires *Zedekiah*.”

Consulting a commentary, I read that most Hebrew manuscripts name Jehoiakim rather than Zedekiah; nevertheless, as Zedekiah is named king in verses 3, 12, and 28:1, his name should be at 27:1. Thus, we are informed “Jehoiakim” is a scribal error. Three others agree. A fifth reads similarly, and adds: “all of vs. 1 is missing in the LXX” (the Septuagint, a BC [?] corrupt Greek translation of the OT, FNJ) and that it differs “widely from the Hebrew text in this chapter.” These are not the efforts of lost, liberal academicians as one might surmise. All are the works of well-known, highly respected “conservative” scholars. They “correct” but are not *translating*!

Now Matthew’s 1537 Bible, the 1539 Great Bible, the 1560 Geneva, the 1568 Bishop’s Bible and the 1611 KJB all read “Jehoiakim” – yet the NAS, NIV etc. impiously insert “Zedekiah” into 27:1! Whereas Zedekiah is, in fact, named king in verses 3, 12, and 28:1, Christian scholarship as a whole has overlooked that God has many times promised to *preserve* His Word!

Isa. 40:8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

Psalms 12:6 The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified 7 times. ⁷ Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

Mark 13:31 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

Therefore, our answer to this so-called “text problem” *must* honor these promises. Now Christians are supposed to believe the Bible is the verbal (word-for-word), plenary (complete, nothing is to be added or subtracted) God inspired Word. Thus, 27:1 must be left “Jehoiakim” – just as almost all the Hebrew manuscripts read! The “textual problem” is merely a mirage.

The straightforward solution is that God simply *revealed* these instructions to Jeremiah near the 609 BC *beginning* of Jehoiakim’s reign (27:1), but he was not to perform and pronounce the prophecy until envoys from Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon would be in Jerusalem to meet with Zedekiah (Jer. 27:2-3). This event did not occur until the 5th month of Zedekiah’s fourth year as king (Jer. 28:1 = July or August of 593 BC).¹ Jeremiah 27:1 is correct as written!

This means Jeremiah 27:1-3 actually *prophesied* Zedekiah’s future kingship! Such fulfillment would have served to greatly encourage and confirm for Jeremiah the words of the prophecy which he was to deliver to the five envoys and Zedekiah. It revealed the meaning of the yokes the Lord instructed the prophet to make, wear, and send to the kings whom the delegates served, (27:2-3). The meaning was that their nations, as well as Judah, were all to serve and not resist King Nebuchadnezzar – they were to accept his yoke or perish (Jer. 27:4-22).

And we too are to accept the yoke whereby Jeremiah 27:1 must be left “Jehoiakim”. Selah.

¹ We are not told why these envoys came from their kings to Jerusalem; but, from the message Jeremiah gave them for their lords, it surely must have been to enlist Zedekiah in joining a revolt against Nebuchadnezzar (cp. 51:59 where Zedekiah went to Babylon that same 4th year – probably to assure the Chaldean king of his loyalty).