

**The Attackers: “Feeding on ashes” Is an Idiom for Living a Lie, Isa 44:20; Divine Warning of Punishment to False Prophets, Jer 27:10; Jeremiah Urges King Zedekiah to Surrender to Nebuchadnezzar, False Prophets Urge Zedekiah to Conspire with Egypt against Chaldea; Omniscience of God Allows Chaldea to Carry Out the Fifth Cycle on Judah but Preserve the Pivot**

**Isaiah 44:20** - He feeds on ashes; a deceived heart has turned him aside. And he cannot deliver himself, nor say, “Is there not a lie in my right hand?”

18. The phrase, “he cannot ... say, ‘Is there not a lie in my right hand?’” is an idiom indicating that a person who lives in Cosmic One arrogance is blind to the fact he has committed his life to the lie.

**Jeremiah 27:10** - “They prophesy a lie to you in order to remove you far from your land; and I will drive you out and you will perish.”

19. It was under the reign of King Zedekiah that Judah sunk to the level of spiritual depravity and the fifth cycle of discipline became inevitable.
20. Here is a little historical background on the reign of Zedekiah and the fulfillment of Jeremiah’s prophecies that Judah would fall to Chaldea:

In the ninth year of his reign (588 B.C.), Zedekiah conspired with Pharaoh Hophra<sup>1</sup> (Apries) against Nebuchadnezzar. Babylon responded with an invasion of Judah, which ended when the city fell in the summer of 586 B.C. (Jeremiah 38:28–39:10). Throughout the siege, Jeremiah urged Zedekiah to surrender. The destruction of Jerusalem at this time ... was the greatest judgment of God on Israel in the Old Testament. Zedekiah, captured as he tried to escape, his sons slain before him, his eyes blinded, was carried to Babylon with a company of his subjects.<sup>2</sup>

21. One of the damaging impacts of Zedekiah’s enrollment in the Cosmic Academy was the willingness to listen to the false prophets. The Lord demanded that the nation surrender to Nebuchadnezzar, but the false prophets advised against this:

**Jeremiah 27:8** - “It will be, that the nation or the kingdom which will not serve him, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and which will not 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 destroyed it by his hand.

**v. 9** - “But as for you, do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your dreamers, your soothsayers, or your sorcerers who speak to you, saying, ‘You will not serve the king of Babylon.’”

22. These prophets were dispensing the public lie which resulted in the people being taken into Chaldean slavery, slaughtered in the conflict that was waged in 586 B.C., or left in the land to endure the resultant famine and disease.
23. This was the fourth fifth-cycle suffered by the Jews and one of the major causes of each was the public lie.
24. The strategy behind the public lie is to eliminate rivals or those who stand in the way of attaining power or retaining power.
25. Jeremiah warned Zedekiah to ignore the advice of the prophets and to submit to the authority of Nebuchadnezzar.

<sup>1</sup> Apries \ap¹-rē-ēz\. King of Egypt (589–570 B.C.) of 26th dynasty.

<sup>2</sup> Charles L. Feinberg, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), 10.

26. Zedekiah was arrogant and ignored the advice of God's prophet and opted for those carrying the deceptive messages from Lucifer's agents in active measures.
27. The satanic strategy was to keep the Jews in opposition to Nebuchadnezzar in hopes their collective arrogance would inspire the king to completely take out the entire country.
28. God recognized that in order to protect recalcitrant Israel against genocide, the nation had to be brought under the authority of Chaldea; to oppose them would only heighten Nebuchadnezzar's wrath.
29. The omniscience of God is able to know the future. Although the Jews had to be punished for their national reversionism, the remnant had to be spared and foreseeing the reign of Darius, God directed history in favor of Chaldea.

**The same divine principles that worked against Judah's sin will also be effective against Babylon. Its rule was terminated by the Medes and Persians under Cyrus (c. 536–535 B.C.). Babylon was not to be punished for carrying out God's will but for her own sins. It is clear that God used Babylon, not because of her merit, but because of Israel's sin.<sup>3</sup>**

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<sup>3</sup> Charles Lee Feinberg, "Jeremiah," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), 6:532–33.