

Journey through Jeremiah Part 30 False Prophet Hananiah

A sermon series by Pastor Byron Chesney, Th.D. – Wednesday, July 12, 2017

† Jeremiah 28:1-17 – The False Prophet, Hananiah

We pick up in our text here in chapter 28 with a continuation of what we studied last week in chapter 27. In chapter 27 we read about Jeremiah and the prophecy of the yokes. We saw that he was instructed to make yokes and send them to 5 different Kings that reigned in countries that surrounded Israel and he was told that the LORD said they were to accept Nebuchadnezzar as their King. He said if they didn't that he would bring sword, famine, and pestilence upon them. So the LORD's plan is for Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon to be the reigning world King.

Of course, this would not set well with anyone and they would come out against Jeremiah because of this, and that is where we pick our story up from tonight.

(1) And it came to pass the same year, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year, *and* in the fifth month, *that* Hananiah the son of Azur the prophet, which *was* of Gibeon, spake unto me in the house of the LORD, in the presence of the priests and of all the people, saying,

The time period we are looking at is the same as the time period we looked at last week when Jeremiah revealed the prophecy to Zedekiah. It was during the beginning of Zedekiah's reign. If you remember, Jeremiah had warned Zedekiah not to listen to false prophets. Let's read that so we have that fresh in our minds: **Jeremiah 27:12-15: I spake also to Zedekiah king of Judah according to all these words, saying, Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live. (13) Why will ye die, thou and thy people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the LORD hath spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon? (14) Therefore hearken not unto the words of the prophets that speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you. (15) For I have not sent them, saith the LORD, yet they prophesy a lie in my name; that I might drive you out, and that ye might perish, ye, and the prophets that prophesy unto you.**

We are going to see in the next verses that Jeremiah's warning about these false prophets is going to come into play through this man, Hananiah. It says that Hananiah was the son of Azur the prophet. Being a prophet often ran in the family, so Hananiah is also most likely a prophet and priest. He comes to specifically confront Jeremiah and he does it "in the presence of the priests and all the people." So, he has chosen this time where he knew he would have this specific audience. His goal is to discredit Jeremiah.

(2) Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon.

Immediately this man, Hananiah claims to be speaking for the "LORD of hosts, the God of Israel," in other words he is stating that God has given him this message, this prophecy to bring. He claims that the LORD told him that he had "broken the yoke of the king of Babylon." Well, that's strange considering he told Jeremiah that Israel and all of the surrounding countries were under the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar. What, so suddenly the LORD changes His mind?

(3) Within two full years will I bring again into this place all the vessels of the LORD'S house, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place, and carried them to Babylon:

Wow, this Hananiah is awfully bold. He claims that within the next 2-years that God is going to restore all of the things that Nebuchadnezzar carried out of Judah. All of the spoils of war were going to be returned to them.

This is convenient because this would give him a 2-year time period before he would be found out to be a liar.

(4) And I will bring again to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah, that went into Babylon, saith the LORD: for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.

Then he goes even further by claiming that the LORD told him that He would restore King Jehoiakim back to Judah and all of the captives that had been taken into Babylon. So much for that 70-years huh?

(5) Then the prophet Jeremiah said unto the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the priests, and in the presence of all the people that stood in the house of the LORD, (6) Even the prophet Jeremiah said, Amen: the LORD do so: the LORD perform thy words which thou hast prophesied, to bring again the vessels of the LORD'S house, and all that is carried away captive, from Babylon into this place.

At this point the LORD has not told Jeremiah that this Hananiah is a false prophet. It appears that Jeremiah believes what he is saying. No doubt Jeremiah had been praying for the LORD to have mercy upon Judah and his heart's desire was to see them saved and back in their own lands. It was only human for Jeremiah to want to believe this prophecy.

(7) Nevertheless hear thou now this word that I speak in thine ears, and in the ears of all the people; (8) The prophets that have been before me and before thee of old prophesied both against many countries, and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of pestilence. (9) The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, *then* shall the prophet be known, that the LORD hath truly sent him.

Here Jeremiah does state that the prophets of old didn't prophesy about peace, they prophesied about repentance and wrath; war, pestilence, and famine. But if this prophets Hananiah is a true prophet and was really sent by God, it will be known when the 2-years' time comes and if it happens the way he said it would then we will know that God really sent him.

(10) Then Hananiah the prophet took the yoke from off the prophet Jeremiah's neck, and brake it.

Then another very bold move, the false prophet, Hananiah, takes the yoke that Jeremiah was wearing around his neck (which we studied about last time in Chapter 27 verse 2).

(11) And Hananiah spake in the presence of all the people, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years. And the prophet Jeremiah went his way.

Of course, this was great news to the people in Judah and what a flamboyant show this Hananiah put on! He achieved exactly what he had set out to achieve. He received attention of everyone, made Jeremiah look dumb, and got the praise of men. Little did he know what a huge mistake he had made...

(12) Then the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah *the prophet*, after that Hananiah the prophet had broken the yoke from off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, saying, (13) Go and tell Hananiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Thou hast broken the yokes of wood; but thou shalt make for them yokes of iron.

Now God speaks to Jeremiah concerning this false prophet Hananiah. I'll bet Jeremiah was thinking, "LORD, why did you wait so long?" I know I would have been asking that!

But, the LORD tells Jeremiah to go to Hananiah and tell him that it's even worse than he thought. Instead of yokes of wood, He was going to place them in yokes of iron. No way to escape. No chance of them being broken accidentally.

(14) For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they shall serve him: and I have given him the beasts of the field also.

This bondage is going to be worse than they can imagine. Here Hananiah had given them false hope and now the LORD says that He is enslaving all of the nations in bonds of steel to serve Nebuchadnezzar and he will take everything from them even the animals in the fields.

(15) Then said the prophet Jeremiah unto Hananiah the prophet, Hear now, Hananiah; The LORD hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lie. (16) Therefore thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will cast thee from off the face of the earth: this year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the LORD.

Wow, what a terrible but just ending for the false prophet, Hananiah. Wouldn't you have loved to been there when Jeremiah broke the news to him? He was probably celebrating and basking in his well crafted deception thinking he was going to be receiving Prophet of the Century award or something and then Jeremiah delivers the true Word of the LORD and it's bad news for ol' Hananiah. Because of his lies and rebellion against the LORD, the LORD is going to take his life.

This should not have come to a surprise to him though considering what God said was the penalty for falsely prophesying in His name: **Deuteronomy 13:1-5**
1 If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder,
2 And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them;
3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.
4 Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.
5 And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.

Also, in the 18th Chapter of Deuteronomy: **Deuteronomy 18:20** But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.

So, Hananiah as taking a huge risk by purposely prophesying something that was not given to him by the LORD, especially when he claimed, as we read in verse 2 that he was speaking on behalf of the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel,

(17) So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month.

Wow, within 3-months of delivering the fake news to Judah, Hananiah the Prophet died. Friends, the LORD is not happy with rebellion. Rebellion is sin no matter how you slice it. There are penalties and repercussions for sin.

† All Scripture from the Authorized King James Version of the Bible