

OPPOSING THE PROPHECIES OF HANANIAH

(Jer 28:1-17) 10/10/18

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I. CONTEXT

- A. *Chapter 28 continues without a break in the narrative of chapter 27 (cf. the phrase “in the same year” [28:1]), which shows that Jeremiah was still wearing the yoke.*
- B. *Again, there are some divergences between the Hebrew text (MT) and the Greek (LXX). The chapter tells about the confrontation of the prophets Jeremiah and Hananiah. (EXP)*

I. HANANIAH PROPHECIES FREEDOM FROM BABYLON (Jer 28:1-4)

A. Hananiah’s Prophecies (1)

1. These events took place in the **same year** as in the previous chapter (Jer 27:1). The **fourth year** was in the beginning of Zedekiah’s first half of an eleven-year reign (597-586 BC). The **fifth month** would come into play at the end of this chapter (Ch. 28).
2. There was a prophet by the name of **Hananiah**. He was identified as the **son of Azzur**. According to one source, an unprovenanced (not from an official dig site) bulla had been found with the inscription, “Belonging to Hananiah son of Azariah” and is in the Museum of Western Asiatic Antiquity, Berlin.
3. He was also identified as coming from **Gibeon**. Gibeon is now an Arab village by the name of Al-Jib (el-Jib) and is approximately 1 mile north of Nebi Samwil, the home and burial place of the prophet Samuel. Some have postulated that Nebi Samwil is the “high place of Gibeon” in Scripture (cf. 1Ki 3:4-5). In biblical history, the Gibeonites tricked Joshua into making a treaty with them. Later, the Israelites were forced to defend their ill-made ally and defeated five Canaanite kings (Joshua 9 and 10).
4. Hananiah falsely prophesied in the **house of the Lord** to the priests and people.

B. Prophecy #1 - The Yoke of Babylon is Broken (2)

1. Hananiah was one of the prophets who was saying that the Lord **has broken the yoke** of the Babylonians.
2. In other words, Judah did not need to submit to Nebuchadnezzar because he was about to be removed from power by the Lord.

C. Prophecy #2 - All Vessels Would be Returned (3)

1. In fact, it was Hananiah who was one of the prophets that prophesied the temple **vessels** would be returned in **two years** (cf. Jer 27:16).
2. God said He would return some of the vessels, but it would be after Judah’s seventy-year exile (Jer 27:22 cf. Jer 25:11; 29:10).
3. However, the vessels would be taken by Nebuchadnezzar and they would not be returned in two years as Hananiah prophesied.

D. Prophecy #3 - Jeconiah and Exiles Would Return (4)

1. Hananiah also prophesied that **Jeconiah** and the **exiles** would be returned. This prophecy was false because God had specifically said that Jeconiah and his mother would die in exile (Jer 22:24-26 cf. Jer 52:31-34).
2. In addition, Hananiah falsely prophesied that Babylonian’s yoke and empire would be broken in two years.

II. HANANIAH OPPOSED BY JEREMIAH (Jer 28:5-9)

A. Jeremiah’s Prophecies (5)

1. Perhaps Jeremiah did not wish to be in a position where he had to oppose the would-be prophet (**Hananiah**) in front of the priests and people.
2. However, having been given his prophecies from God, Jeremiah could not remain silent. He had no other choice but to confront the false prophecies, so as not to mislead the people.

B. May the Lord Return the Vessels (6)

1. Jeremiah’s statement may seem out of character. He was giving hearty assent to the idea of the vessels and exiles returning in two years.
2. Jeremiah himself would have wished that that could be the case. However, he knew that it was not God’s will to do those things.
3. Furthermore, Jeremiah previously stated that a true prophet would be praying for the repentance of the people and the return of the temple vessels (Jer 27:17-18).

C. Past Prophets Prophesied Calamity (7-8)

1. In a different tone, Jeremiah began to prophesy God's word. Therefore, he admonished the people to listen carefully to what he had to say.
 2. Prophets are not to be motivational speakers or those who promise to never speak a negative word. They are to be the mouthpiece of the living God and His word.
 3. Jeremiah argued that the prophets who were **before him** all spoke against **lands and great kingdoms**. They spoke of **war, calamity, and pestilence**.
 4. Of course, that is not all of which they spoke. They did speak of the joy of the Lord in obedience, imminent protection, and the future kingdom. But the two go hand in hand.
- D. A Prophet's Words Must Come to Pass (9)
1. Jeremiah on the one hand posed a challenge similar to Elijah and the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel.
 2. If Hananiah was a true prophet **sent** from God, then there would be **peace** and the exiles would return from captivity.
 3. Jeremiah was stating the two litmus tests for the words of prophets: 1) Their words must not rebel against the will of the Lord (Deu 13:1-5). 2) Their prophecies must come to pass (Deu 18:20-22).
 4. Hananiah failed both tests. While God desired submission to Nebuchadnezzar, Hananiah prophesied rebellion (cf. Jer 27:17; Jer 28:2). While God predicted exile and captivity, Hananiah prophesied peace.

III. HANANIAH BROKE JEREMIAH'S YOKE (Jer 28:10-11)

A. Hananiah Took Off Jeremiah's Yoke (10)

1. Hananiah is called a **prophet** some six times (Jer 28:1, 5, 10, 12, 15, 17). The title "prophet" was a title that Hananiah gave himself. Evidently, some in Judah believed his fabrications.
2. In a bold and presumptuous gesture, Hananiah removed Jeremiah's **yoke** from around his **neck**.

B. Hananiah Affirmed the Broke Yoke (11)

1. Hoping to give credence to his false prophecies, Hananiah **broke** Jeremiah's yoke in the presence of all the people.
2. This was a simulation of what he thought and declared was going to happen to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.
3. Now that Hananiah made his prophetic claim, Jeremiah, who had already given the litmus tests for prophets, simply **went his way**.

IV. HANANIAH PROVOKED YOKES OF IRON (Jer 28:12-17)

A. Hananiah Made Yokes of Iron (12-13)

1. The **word of the Lord** came to Jeremiah after Hananiah had taken his final stand and broke the yoke around Jeremiah's neck.
2. The message was that because Hananiah broke Jeremiah's **yokes of wood**, Hananiah had made **yokes of iron** instead.
3. *[...T]he people were exchanging the wooden yoke of submission [to Nebuchadnezzar] for the inflexible iron yoke of servitude in [Babylonian captivity] (EXP).*

B. The Lord Put Yokes on All the Nations (14)

1. The Lord's iron sovereignty cannot be broken by man.
2. **Nebuchadnezzar** would be the Lord's hand of judgment on **all the nations**.

C. Jeremiah Accused Hananiah of Lying (15)

1. Jeremiah accused Hananiah of **not** being **sent** by the Lord and of causing the people to **trust in a lie** (false prophesy).
2. His false prophecies influenced the people toward the iron yoke of captivity.

D. The Lord Pronounced Death on Hananiah (16)

1. There is a play on words in vs. 15-16. Because the Lord had not "**sent**" (*shalach - send*) Hananiah, therefore, the Lord would "**remove**" (*shalach - send away*) or send him away, i.e. **die**.
2. He failed the litmus test because a true prophet does not **counsel rebellion against the LORD** and His word.

E. Hananiah Died the Same Year (17)

1. The people would have had to have waited two years to see that Hananiah was not a true prophet and that his prophecy would not come true.
2. However, they only had to wait two months (**seventh month**) to see Jeremiah's prophecy be fulfilled.

V. OBSERVATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

- A. God's Word is not always Positive
1. Joel Osteen began his ministry by declaring that you will never hear a discouraging word from his pulpit. Being positive is what Joel Osteen's ministry is all about.
 2. On a CBS Sunday Morning Interview on March 27, 2016 Joel Osteen was asked, *"You've been criticized for church-lite, or a cotton candy message. Do you feel like you're cheating people by not telling them about the Hell part? Or repentance part? she asked. "*
 3. *No, I really don't, because it's a different approach, Osteen replied. You know, it's not hellfire and brimstone. But I say most people are beaten down enough by life. They already feel guilty enough. They're not doing what they should do raising their kids we can all find reasons, he said. So, I want them to come to Lakewood or our meetings and be lifted up, to say, You know what? I may not be perfect, but I'm moving forward. I'm doing better. And I think that motivates you to do better (CBS Sunday Morning on March 27, 2016).*
 4. Jeremiah teaches us that we must be willing to say the truth no matter how negative it is or whether people want to hear it or not. Was Jeremiah guilty of church-lite or a cotton candy message? I think not.
 5. I realize that God's Word is not all negative and I praise Him for that. But when was it delegated to men behind pulpits to decide for themselves to preach only positive sections of Scripture? Paul preached the whole counsel of God (Act 20:27).
- B. False Teachers bring judgment (cf. Jer 28:13-14)
1. *Moonwalking is apparently a means God uses to exorcise demons and bring deliverance. At least that's what I'm observing from the antics of Prophet Joshua Holmes. In a video he recently posted to Facebook, in which it looks like he obtained the remnants of Michael Jackson's wardrobe, he's seen providing deliverance to someone. He delivers a swift air punch to the man needing deliverance, then he slowly moonwalks away.*
 2. *There is nothing in scripture that indicates air punches or moonwalks are sacraments or a means of delivering God's power. What can we conclude from that fact? Mostly that Prophet Joshua Holmes is a showman who is using his deliverance ministry to live out his childhood fantasy of mixing Michael Jackson's stage presence with his conman grifter gig he has as a false prophet (Heterodox Research Initiative).*
 3. Though we may get a smirk out of this article, the state of affairs in Christianity today is perilous.
 4. Jeremiah's lesson still applies; false prophets not only falsely prophecy (lie), but they also bring judgment upon those who follow them.