

The Book of Jeremiah

Jeremiah's Call	
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True Prophets vs. “False” Prophets

*How do you tell which prophet
is really speaking God’s word?*

Jeremiah
2:8
5:31
6:13-15 = 8:10-12
14:14-18
23:9-40
27:12-22
ch. 28
29:8-9, 21-32

Jeremiah chs. 27-28

28:1 Now it came about in that same year, of King Zedekiah, king of Judah, in the fourth year, in the fifth month.

= 594/3 B.C.

► Zedekiah was planning a revolt against Babylon, along with the neighboring nations of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, & Sidon



Jeremiah 27 (KGF) – Report of a Sign-Action

**Divine
Command to
Perform Action**

27:2 Thus said Yahweh to me:
“Make bonds and bars,
and place them upon your neck.



Jeremiah 27 (KGF) – Report of a Sign-Action

Divine Command to Perform Action

27:2 Thus said Yahweh to me:

“Make bonds and bars,
and place them upon your neck.

3 and send them to the king of Edom,
and to the king of Moab,
and to the king of the sons of Ammon,
and to the king of Tyre,
and to the kind of Sidon
by means of [their] messengers,
who have come to Jerusalem
to Zedekiah, king of Judah.

Interpretation of the Action

(1) to Foreign Envoys

4 And you shall command them (to go) to their masters, saying:

‘Thus says Yahweh of Hosts, God of Israel:

Thus you shall say to your masters:

5 “I have made the earth, humans, and beast

which are on the face of the earth, . . .

6 And now, even I have given all these lands

into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, my servant; . . .

in order to serve him.

7 And all the nations will serve him . . .

8 And it shall be (that) the nation and the kingdom

which will not serve him, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon,

and which will not **place its neck under the yoke**

of the king of Babylon,

I will punish that nation with the sword,

with famine, and with pestilence —declaration of Yahweh—

until my consuming them by his hand.

9 **So you should not listen to your prophets,**

and to your diviners,

and to your [dreamers],

and to your soothsayers,

and to your sorcerers,

who speak to you, saying:

‘Do not serve the king of Babylon.’

10 **For they are prophesying falsehood to you,**

the result of which will be to remove you far from your land;

and I will drive you out, and you will perish.

11 But the nation which will **bring its neck under the yoke**

of the king of Babylon, and serve him,

I will let it remain on its land —declaration of Yahweh—

and work it and dwell in it.” ‘ “

**Interpretation
of the Action**

**(2) to
Zedekiah,
King of Judah**

12 And to Zedekiah, king of Judah,
I spoke 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 should you and your people die by the sword,
by famine, and by pestilence,
according to what Yahweh has spoken to the nation
which will not serve the king of Babylon?

14 **But you should not listen to the words of the prophets
who speak to you, saying:
‘Do not serve the king of Babylon.’**

For they are prophesying falsehood to you,
15 **for I have not sent them** —declaration of Yahweh —
but they prophesy in my name for falsehood,
the result of which will be for me to drive you out,
and you and the prophets who prophesy to you will perish.”

**Interpretation
of the Action**

**(3) to Priests
& all the
People**

16 And to the priest and to all this people, I spoke, saying:
“Thus says Yahweh:

Do not listen to the words of your prophets,
the ones who are prophesying to you, saying:
‘Behold the vessels of the house of Yahweh
will be brought back from Babylon (in) a short time,’
For falsehood are they prophesying to you.

17 Do not listen to them.

Serve the king of Babylon and live.

Why should this city become a desolation?

18 And if they are prophets,
and if the word of Yahweh is with them,
let them make intercession now, with Yahweh of Hosts,
so that the vessels that are left in the house of Yahweh
and in the house of the king of Judah and in Jerusalem
will not come into Babylon.

“False Prophets” are saying:

16 ‘Behold the vessels of the house of Yahweh
will be brought back from Babylon (in) a short time,’

**Interpretation
of the Action**

**(3) to Priests
& all the
People**

• **Counter-
Prophecy**

19 For thus says Yahweh of Hosts regarding the pillars
and concerning the sea,
and concerning the bases,
and concerning the rest of the vessels,
that remain in this city,
20 which Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon
did not take them (to) Babylon,
when he carried away captive Jeconiah,
son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah,
from Jerusalem to Babylon,
and (also) all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem.
21 For thus says Yahweh of Hosts, the God of Israel,
concerning the vessels that remain in the house of Yahweh,
and in the house of the king of Judah and Jerusalem:
22: Into Babylon they will be taken,
and there they will be until the day I visit them
—declaration of Yahweh—
and I will bring them up
and I will return them to this place.’ “

“False Prophets” are saying:

27:16 ‘Behold the vessels of the house of Yahweh
will be brought back from Babylon (in) a short time,’

Jeremiah 28 (KGF)

- 1 Now it came about in that same year . . . ,
Hananiah, son of Azzur, the prophet, who is from Gibeon,
said to me in the house of Yahweh,
in the presence of the priests and all the people, saying:
- 2 “Thus says Yahweh of Hosts, God of Israel, saying:
‘I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon!
- 3 In two years I will bring back to this place
all the vessels of the house of Yahweh,
which Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon,
took from this place and brought to Babylon.
- 4 And Jeconiah (= Jehoiachin), son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah,
and all the exiles of Judah who came to Babylon,
I will bring back to this place —declaration of Yahweh—
for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.

Performance of
Sign-Action
(No divine
command reported)

10 And Hananiah, the prophet,
took the bar from off the neck
of Jeremiah, the prophet,
and broke it.

Interpretation of
the Action

11a And Hananiah said
in the sight of all the people, saying:
“Thus says Yahweh:
Just so I will **break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar,
king of Babylon,**
from off the neck of all the nations in two years.”



- Hananiah's message fits those
that Jeremiah has called
*“prophets who are speaking falsehood,
who Yahweh has not sent”*

- > But how does the Audience decide
which prophet (Jeremiah or Hananiah)
is the one truly speaking God's message?
- ◆ The immediate political decision,
as to whether to revolt or not,
is dependent upon
which prophetic message is considered
to be the correct one

Jeremiah	Hananiah
“the prophet” (28:5, 6, 10, 11,12, 15)	“the prophet” (28:1, 5, 10, 12, 15, 17)
Communication of the Messages	
<p>Audience:</p> <p>foreign emissaries (27:4-11), King Zedekiah (27:12-15), the priests & all the people of the land (27:16-22; 28:5-9)</p>	<p>Audience:</p> <p>the priests & all the people of the land (28:1-4, 11)</p>
<p>Messenger Formula:</p> <p>“Thus says Yahweh of Hosts, God of Israel” (27:4, 16, 19, 21; 28:13)</p>	<p>Messenger Formula:</p> <p>“Thus says Yahweh of Hosts, God of Israel” (28:2, 11)</p>
<p>Perform a Sign-Action:</p> <p>wears a yoke (27:2 ff.)</p>	<p>Perform a Sign-Action:</p> <p>breaks the yoke on Jeremiah’s neck (28:10-11)</p>

Jeremiah

Hananiah

Content of the Messages

Meaning of Sign-Action:

“Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon” = “serve him”
(27:4-15)

Meaning of Sign-Action:

“Yahweh will break the yoke of Babylon” → soon return from exile
(28:2, 4, 11)

Expressed as Contingent Prophecy:

- if they submit to yoke of Babylon, then they will live and remain in their land
- if they do not submit, then they will experience death, desolation, and exile
(27:7-11, 13-14, 17)

Expressed as Inevitable Prophecy:

- ♦ “In two years Yahweh will break the yoke” (28:2-4, 11)



re: Temple vessels:

- the remaining vessels in Temple will be taken to Babylon (27:21-22)

re: Temple vessels:

- ♦ those taken to Babylon will be returned in two years (28:3)

re: deportees:

- ♦ King Jehoiachin & previous exiles will come back (28:4)

ch. 27 : Sign-Action Prophecy by Jeremiah:

- Submit to Yoke (wood) of Babylon

28:1-4: Counter- Prophecy by Hananiah:

- ◀ Yoke (wood) of Babylon will be broken

28:5-9: Jeremiah's 1st Response:

- Expresses hope that Hananiah is correct,
- ◆ BUT Counters with Noting:
 - (a) Past Precedence of Prophecies of Disaster
 - (b) Proof is whether Prophecies of Peace come to pass

Jeremiah's 1st Response (28:5-9)

5 And Jeremiah, the prophet said to Hananiah, the prophet,
in the sight of the priests and in the sight of all the people,
who were standing in the house of Yahweh,
6 and Jeremiah, the prophet said:
"Truly, thus may Yahweh do.
May Yahweh raise your words, which you have prophesied,
to return the vessels of the house of Yahweh and all the exiles,
from Babylon to this place.

7 Surely nevertheless, hear now this word which I am speaking
in your ears, and in the ears of all the people.

8 The prophets who were before me and before you, from the on-going past,
they prophesied to many lands, and against great kingdoms
concerning war, and concerning evil (disaster), and concerning pestilence.

9 (As for) the prophet who prophesies concerning peace,
in the coming (about) of the word of the prophet,
the prophet will be known that Yahweh has sent him in truth."

Deuteronomy 18 (KGF)

21 And when you say in your heart, "How do we know the word
which Yahweh is not speaking it?"

22 When the prophet speaks in the name of Yahweh,
and the word does not (come) to be, . . .
it is the word that Yahweh is not speaking it.
In insolence the prophets is speaking it.
You shall not be afraid of him/it.



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28:10-11a: Counter Sign-Action Prophecy:

- ◀ Yoke of Babylon will be broken

28:11b: Jeremiah's 2nd Response:

- Silent withdrawal

- It seems that even Jeremiah is not completely sure about whether Hananiah's prophecy might be a true one from God, but Jeremiah also seems to have doubts that such is the case
- Only after receiving another revelation from Yahweh, is it affirmed to Jeremiah his original prophecy was from Yahweh, and Hananiah's was not

Jeremiah's 3rd Response (28:12-16)

12 And the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah
after Hananiah's, the prophet's, breaking the bar
from off the neck of Jeremiah, the prophet, saying:

13 "Go and you will say to Hananiah, saying:

'Thus says Yahweh:

You have broken a bar of wood,
but [I] will make bars of iron in their place.

14 For thus says Yahweh of Hosts, God of Israel:

A yoke of iron I have placed upon the neck(s) of all these nations,
so as to serve Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

And they will serve him,

and also all the beast(s) of the field I have given to him.'"

15 And Jeremiah, the prophet said to Hananiah, the prophet:

"Hear now, Hananiah.

Yahweh did not send you,
and you, you made this people trust in falsehood.

16 Therefore, thus says Yahweh;

Behold I am sending you away from off the face of the ground.
(This) year you will die,
for apostasy you have spoken against Yahweh.

ch. 27 : Sign-Action Prophecy by Jeremiah:

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28:10-11a: Counter Sign-Action Prophecy:

- ◀ Yoke of Babylon will be broken

28:11b: Jeremiah's 2nd Response:

- Silent withdrawal

28:12-16: Jeremiah's 3rd Response:

- Reaffirmation & Intensification (iron) of Original Prophecy of Yoke
- Prophecy of Hananiah's imminent death

28:17: Notation of Hananiah's death

17 And Hananiah, the prophet, died
in that year, in the seventh month.

- Hananiah's original prophecy was given two months previously in the 5th month (28:1)

- Jeremiah's Prophecy re: Hananiah came true, thus, based on Deut 18:22, it verifies that Jeremiah is a true prophet, & that his original prophecy was from Yahweh

- Hananiah's death follows the requirement of Deut 13:5 (WEB)
5 That prophet . . . shall be put to death, because he has spoken apostasy against Yahweh your God . . . So you shall remove the evil from among you.

True Prophets vs. “False” Prophets

▶ *How do you tell which prophet is really speaking God’s word?*

▶ *What are the Criteria given in Jeremiah to discern between “True” & “False” Prophets?*

▶ *How can we tell which preachers, teachers, televangelists, we should listen to, so as to receive correct teaching from God?*
(see 2 Peter 2; 1 John 4:1-6)

True Prophets vs. “False” Prophets

A. Divine Source

A.1) God for whom the Prophet Speaks

A.2) Divine Commissioning

A.3) Divine Origin of Specific Messages

B. Message Content

B.1) Message Fulfillment

B.2) Covenant Obedience

B.3) Kinds of Messages

B.4) Precedence of Previous Prophets

C. Audience Response

C.1) Opposition

D. Prophet / Messenger

D.1) Commitment to the Task

D.2) Personal Morality

A. Divine Source

“False” Prophets	True Prophets
<i>A. 1) God for whom the Prophet Speaks</i>	
<p>a) Prophecy by / for gods other than Yahweh</p> <p>Deut 13:1-5 Deut 18:10-12, 20</p> <p>✓ prophecy by Baal Jer 2:8; 23:13</p> <p>b) Use Pagan Divination</p> <p>✓ prophecy worthless divination Jer 4:14</p>	<p>(Prophecy <i>ONLY</i> for Yahweh)</p> <p>(Do Not Use Divination Techniques)</p>

+ Clearly Observable Criterion

- But what if they speak in the name of Yahweh?

“False” Prophets	True Prophets
<i>A.2) Divine Commissioning</i>	
<p>Are Not Sent by Yahweh</p> <p>✓ Yahweh not sent / appointed them</p> <p>Jer 14:14, 15; 23:21, 32; 27:15; 28:15; 29:9, 31</p>	<p>Have a Divine Calling from Yahweh</p> <p>✓ sent / appointed by Yahweh</p> <p>Jer 1:7, 10; 28:9</p>

- But how can someone else tell whether the person has been sent by God?

“False” Prophets

True Prophets

A.3) Divine Origin of Specific Messages

Do Not Receive their Messages from Yahweh

- ✓ **Yahweh has not spoken to / not commanded them**
Deut 18:20, 22
Jer 14:14; 23:21; 29:23
- ✓ **Yahweh's word is not in them**
Jer 5:13
- ✓ **not stood in Yahweh's council; not given heed to Yahweh's word**
Jer 23:18, 22
- ✓ **prophecy from own imagination / spirits; deceit of their own hearts / minds**
Jer 14:14; 23:16, 26
- ✓ **prophecy using own tongues**
Jer 23:31
- ✓ **steal words from each other**
Jer 23:30
- ✓ **prophecy falsehood & lying divination**
Jer 29:9, 21
- ✓ **prophecy lies / lying dreams or visions**
Jer 14:14; 23:25, 26, 32; 27:10, 14, 16;
29:8-9, 21, 23
- ✓ **prophecy falsely**
Jer 5:31; 27:15

Each Specific Message is Received from Yahweh

- ✓ **commanded by Yahweh to speak**
Deut 18:18
Jer 1:7
- ✓ **Yahweh puts words in their mouths**
Deut 18:18
Jer 1:9
- ✓ **speak word of Yahweh faithfully**
Jer 23:28

- But how can someone else tell whether the God has given the message?

B. Message Content

"False" Prophets	True Prophets
<i>B.1) Message Fulfillment</i>	
What they Predict Does Not Come True Deut 18:22	Prophetic Prediction Comes True Jer 28:9

+ Clearly Observable Criterion

- But what if the prediction future is too far off in the future, when an immediate decision needs to be made?
- What if the Prediction Prophecy is a Contingent Prophecy?

"False" Prophets

True Prophets

B.2) Covenant Obedience

Do Not bring the People back into Covenant Obedience

- ✓ **speak treason against Yahweh**
Deut 13:5
- ✓ **speak rebellion against Yahweh**
Jer 28:16; 29:32
- ✓ **lead people away from Yahweh**
Jer 23:13, 32
- ✓ **plan to make people forget Yahweh**
Jer 23:17
- ✓ **strengthen evildoers so as not to turn from wickedness**
Jer 23:14
- ✓ **encourage wicked not to turn from their wicked ways**
Jer 23:22
- ✓ **spread ungodliness through the land**
Jer 23:15
- ✓ **perpetuate outrage**
Jer 29:23

(Prophetic Message points out where the people have Violated the Covenant & Calls them Back to Covenant Faithfulness)

+ Clearly Observable Criterion

“False” Prophets

True Prophets

B.3) Kinds of Messages

Prophecy Hope,
Producing a False Sense of
Security, instead of
Announcing Judgment for Sin

- ✓ proclaim "peace", when there is no peace

Jer 6:14 = 8:11; 23:1

- ✓ delude the people

Jer 23:16

- ✓ make people trust in lie

Jer 28:15; 29:31

Prophecy Impending
Disaster

- ✓ prophecy disaster, rather than “peace”

Jer 28:8

+ Clearly Observable Criterion

- But even “true” prophets prophecy Deliverance & Restoration

“False” Prophets

True Prophets

B.4) Precedence of Previous Prophets

Are Like the "False"
Prophets who Preceded
them, and who were
Known to be "False"

Jer 23:13-14--prophets of Jerusalem
are like the previous prophets of
Samaria

Fit the Pattern of Previous
Prophets who were
Known to be True
because History had
Verified such

Jer 28:8: Jeremiah's message fits the pattern
of previous prophets who prophesied
disaster

+ Clearly Observable Criterion

C. Audience Response

“False” Prophets	True Prophets
<i>C.1) Opposition</i>	
(Well Received because they Speak that which is Favourable to the People)	Receive Opposition because the People Refuse to Listen Jer 1:19 (expressed in the “call narratives”)

- + Clearly Observable Criterion
- But even True Prophets may not receive opposition

D. Prophet / Messenger

"False" Prophets	True Prophets
<i>D.1) Commitment to the Task</i>	
<p>Do not Faithfully Carry Out the Responsibilities of a Prophet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ not stood in breaches (not intercede); not repair the walls Jer 27:18✓ treat the wounds carelessly Jer 6:14✓ do not profit the people Jer 23:22	<p>(Faithfully Carry Out the Prophetic Ministry)</p>

+ Clearly Observable Criterion

“False” Prophets

True Prophets

D.2) Personal Morality

**Lack of Consistency
between Personal Lives &
Covenant Obligations**

- ✓ go after things that do not profit (= idols);
worship idols; commit abominations (=
idolatry) without shame

Jer 2:8, 26-27; 6:15 = 8:12

- ✓ act shamefully

Jer 6:15 = 8:12

- ✓ ungodly

Jer 23:11, 15

- ✓ course is evil

Jer 23:10

- ✓ greedy for gain

Jer 6:13 = 8:10

- ✓ walk in lies

Jer 23:14

- ✓ deal falsely / practice deceit

Jer 6:13 = 8:10

- ✓ Adulterers; committed adultery

Jer 23:10, 14; 29:23

(Live their Personal Lives
in line with the Covenant
Obligations)

**+ Clearly
Observable
Criterion**