

Jeremiah

Chapter 28

Hananiah the False Prophet

In that same year, at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fifth month of the fourth year, Hananiah the son of Azzur, the prophet from Gibeon, spoke to me in the house of the LORD, in the presence of the priests and all the people, saying, 2 “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. 3 Within two years I will bring back to this place all the vessels of the LORD's house, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place and carried to Babylon. 4 I will also bring back to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and all the exiles from Judah who went to Babylon, declares the LORD, for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.” 5 Then the prophet Jeremiah spoke to Hananiah the prophet in the presence of the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the LORD, 6 and the prophet Jeremiah said, “Amen! May the LORD do so; may the LORD make the words that you have prophesied come true, and bring back to this place from Babylon the vessels of the house of the LORD, and all the exiles. 7 Yet hear now this word that I speak in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people. 8 The prophets who preceded you and me from ancient times prophesied war, famine, and pestilence against many countries and great kingdoms. 9 As for the prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of that prophet comes to pass, then it will be known that the LORD has truly sent the prophet.” 10 Then the prophet Hananiah took the yoke-bars from the neck of Jeremiah the prophet and broke them. 11 And Hananiah spoke in the presence of all the people, saying, “Thus says the LORD: Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all the nations within two years.” But Jeremiah the prophet went his way. 12 Sometime after the prophet Hananiah had broken the yoke-bars from off the neck of Jeremiah the prophet, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: 13 “Go, tell Hananiah, ‘Thus says the LORD: You have broken wooden bars, but you have made in their place bars of iron. 14 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: I have put upon the neck of all these nations an iron yoke to serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and they shall serve him, for I have given to him even the beasts of the field.’” 15 And Jeremiah the prophet said to the prophet Hananiah, “Listen, Hananiah, the LORD has not sent you, and you have made this people trust in a lie. 16 Therefore thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I will remove you from the face of the earth. This year you shall die, because you have uttered rebellion against the LORD.’” 17 In that same year, in the seventh month, the prophet Hananiah died.

28:1–17 The true prophet Jeremiah confronts the false prophet Hananiah. (CSB)

28:1 *Zedekiah...fourth year.* 593 B.C. (CSB)

prophet. The word is used for all prophets, whether true (vv. 5, 10–12, 15) or false (vv. 1, 5, 10, 12, 15, 17). (CSB)

Hananiah. Means “The LORD is gracious,” an appropriate name for a prophet who believed strongly (though mistakenly) that the Lord would soon bring back the exiles of Judah and the temple articles (see vv. 3–4, 11). (CSB)

Spokesman for the false prophets. Except for the part he played in this incident, nothing is known of him. (TLSB)

Gibeon. This is a city some eight miles northwest of Jerusalem. (Kretzmann)

28:2–4 Before the same audience of priests and people (27:16), the impostor declared that the Lord already was ending the Babylonian servitude. (TLSB)

28:2 *Thus says the LORD*. See v. 11. Though a false prophet, Hananiah claims to have the same authority as Jeremiah (see vv. 13–14, 16; see also 23:31). (CSB)

28:3 Hananiah's prediction directly contradicts the words of Jeremiah. (CSB)

two years. See v. 11. Contrast Jeremiah's 70 years (25:11–12; 29:10). (CSB)

28:4 *bring back*. Contradicting Jeremiah's prophecy (see 22:24–27), which was fulfilled (see 52:34). (CSB)

This was a bold move on the part of the false prophet, intended to offset and neutralize the clear proclamation which Jeremiah had made concerning the length of the coming captivity. (Kretzmann)

Jehoiachin ... went to Babylon. In 597 B.C. (CSB)

28:5 *Jeremiah spoke* – Having the truth on his side, he possessed the boldness which a true servant of the Lord should always exhibit. (Kretzmann)

28:6–9 Jeremiah's response was marked by restraint. Nothing would have pleased him more than to affirm the prediction of an immediate deliverance of the people he loved so dearly. (TLSB)

28:6 *may the LORD do so*. The sign of a true prophecy (see v. 9). (CSB)

Jeremiah was personally in the heartiest accord with this, idea of the early restoration of the captives and of the Temple vessels; nothing would have pleased him better than to have this fortunate turn of events come true. (Kretzmann)

28:8 *from ancient times* – Isaiah, Joel, Hosea, Amos, and others. (Kretzmann)

war, famine and pestilence. An appropriate modification of Jeremiah's usual triad (see note on 14:12). (CSB)

28:9 *peace*. Ordinarily the message of false prophets. (CSB)

The future would demonstrate which prophet the Lord had truly sent. (TLSB)

That is, the fulfillment of a prophecy such as had been made by Hananiah would be the best proof of his having spoken the truth. But from the start the presumption of truth is in favor of the prophecies of calamity, since they are connected with danger to him who brings the message. Prophecies of good fortune may be flattery and have the object of providing their maker with pleasant conditions; it is necessary, therefore, to wait for results before accepting them. (Kretzmann)

28:10 *broke them*. Perhaps symbolically to break the power of Jeremiah's earlier prophecies, which contradicted his own. (CSB)

This was an act of audacity and impertinence with which he intended to strengthen his position over against the people. (Kretzmann)

28:11 *he spoke in the presence of all the people* – He thought that the bold repetition of his false prophecy, together with the symbolic act which accompanied it, would cause the people to believe him without question. (Kretzmann)

Jeremiah...went his way – He thought that the bold repetition of his false prophecy, together with the symbolic act which accompanied it, would cause the people to believe him without question. (Kretzmann)

28:12 *sometime after* – Jeremiah did not refute Hananiah on his own authority but he waited for a divinely inspired rebuttal, as he did on a later occasion. (TLSB)

28:13 *yoke bars*. The wooden yoke of submission would be exchanged for the iron yoke of servitude. (CSB)

The result of Hananiah's rash and impertinent action was merely to increase the emphasis which the Lord placed upon the fulfillment of His prophecy against Judah. (Kretzmann)

28:14 *they shall serve him...beasts of the field*. Near Eastern artwork depicts elaborate royal hunts. (TLSB)

28:15–17 Because Hananiah made people trust in a lie, he would not live the two years (v 3) within which his prediction was to have come true. (TLSB)

28:15 *The LORD has not sent you*. A mark of the false prophet. (CSB)

28:16 *remove*. The Hebrew root underlying this word is the same as that underlying “sent” in v. 15. The Lord had not “sent” Hananiah to prophesy, and therefore he would soon be “sent away” to his death. (CSB)

uttered rebellion. Such activity on the part of false prophets was punishable by death (see Dt 13:5; see also Dt 18:20; cf. Eze 11:13; Ac 5:1–11). (CSB)

Teaching false doctrine is not a trifling misdemeanor but a heinous crime because it misleads people to defy the will of God. Dire punishment awaits such perverters of the truth (29:21–22). (TLSB)

28:17 *In the seventh month ... Hananiah ... died*. He who had falsely prophesied restoration “within two years” (vv. 3, 11) himself died within two months (see v. 1). (CSB)

The quick fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy serving to emphasize all the more strongly the seriousness of his offense against Jehovah. The punishment of the Lord upon the false prophets of our day may often seem to be delayed in coming, but He will certainly vindicate His honor against all who assail His Word. (Kretzmann)

Ch 28 In 594 BC, Hananiah falsely predicts the return of the temple furnishings taken to Babylon in 597 BC and the Judean captives. Jeremiah warns the populace of Jerusalem that the worst is yet to come. God does not deal with sin merely with a “slap on the wrist” (as Hananiah thought). The wages of sin is death (Rm 6:23a). However, God does not delight in punishing sinners. He also sends true prophets and faithful

ministers to turn people from death to life—God’s gift to us in Christ Jesus (Rm 6:23b). • Teach us, Lord, to avoid sin and wait upon Your Word, that we may have life in Jesus Christ. Amen. (TLSB)