

## The Truth of A Prophet

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### *Abstract*

*The Bible is the Word of God as the basis for constructing a doctrine and ministry. All forms of teaching experience and services that all Christians do must take the Bible as a basis or foundation to build it. About The Truth of A Prophet, from the beginning they have been existed among the environment of the believer. Old Testament and New Testament records the true prophet and the false prophet. Of course, this may have been due to a lack of understanding of the Bible as the foundation of truth that arises various false teachings about biblical prophecy. Thus, to test every teaching that occurred within the scope of the Christian, they should use Bible as a tool to make the test.*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The church has recently been rocked by so many prophecies being delivered both from within the country and from foreign churches. In many Christian magazines today, writers do not hesitate to include the word "Prophet" to some servants of God or just say pastors, evangelists or anyone who claims to be a leader or lead a Christian person / organization. Do not know where it comes from, like mushrooms in the rainy season, suddenly the term "prophet" appears which in the past Christians were very reluctant to use it.

Some credible sources such as those who work as priests legitimize that today many people are used as prophets of God even it is funny they take the quote that "the Lord Jesus remains the same then, now and forever" (Hebrews 13:8) then the prophet can appear just as the prophet in the Old Testament or the New Testament. They simply translate the above verse in terms of the fact that prophets can appear everywhere and consider the atmosphere past and present to remain the same as Jesus who remained the same.

Based on the reasons above and the number of false prophecies of those who claim to be a prophet, the writer feels interested to write in this article with the title "The Truth of A Prophet" in the hope that this article can rectify the tendency that lately continues to grow in the midst of Christians. Because this article deals with the author's research on the prophet "Jeremiah", the writing takes material with relation to the Book of Jeremiah.

### **Old Testament Prophets and New Testament Prophets.**

Speaking of "prophets", our memories will be directed to the servants of God, those who are used by God in the Old Testament or we will be brought to the saints who carry out God's Word. Indeed, the definition of a prophet is someone who is used by God or has a special task as a conveyor of words or God's words to humans. According to Merriam-Webster the word Prophet is interpreted as:

1. one who utters divinely inspired revelations: as a often cap: the writer of one of the prophetic books of the Bible b cap : one regarded by a group of followers as the final authoritative revealer of God's will 2. one gifted with more than ordinary spiritual and moral insight esp : an inspired poet 3. : one who foretells future events : predictor 4.: an effective or leading spokesman for a cause, doctrine, or group<sup>1</sup>

Then how is the relation of prophets in the New Testament, is it still relevant that there are prophets in the New Testament or at the present time we live? When traced we will see and hear repeatedly that the prophets play an important role in the church of God. As when the Apostle Paul mentions various types of service in the church, the 'prophets' are given a second place besides the apostles. "*And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gift of healings, help, governments, diversities of tongues*" (KJV) (I Cor. 12:28). So as not to misunderstand, let's first look at the word prophecy. Merriam-Webster provides definitions of the word prophecy or prophesy as: "1 : to utter by or as if by divine inspiration 2 : to predict with assurance or on the basis of mystic knowledge 3 : prefigure vi (1: to speak as if divinely inspired 2: to give instruction in religious matters : preach 3: to make a prediction syn see foretell).<sup>2</sup>

Means that prophecy/prophesy is stating the word, will and plan of God which has to do with both the present and the past and the future. A prophet is a person chosen by God to be "connecting His tongue".

If this explanation applies to the Old Testament prophets, then it cannot also be changed with regard to the New Testament. Since the Old Testament prophets of God's salvation lie in the future, we read many prophecies about the coming Messiah and His work. For the church, this very important event lies in the past, therefore the church's prophecy inevitably emphasizes what has happened in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That does not mean that we silence the future, because He who has come as a servant of the suffering God, will come as King to complete His work. In the meantime all the prophecies are about to achieve a result now: that is, that people believe in the Savior and be obedient to the King who was told to him.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians that God in Christ had reconciled the contents of this world with himself. "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word

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<sup>1</sup> Merriam-Webster, I. (2003). *Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary*. Includes index. (Eleventh ed.). Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." (2 Corinthians 5:19-20). Paul here is the mouth of God like the prophets of old, and he expects a decision of the listeners today, that they accept that atonement.

As another example, we take Peter's sermon on Pentecost. According to his explanation, at that time Joel's prophecy was delivered: The Spirit of the Lord was poured out on Jesus' disciples so they prophesied. What is in their prophecy? It is nothing but a witness that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah of God. And the purpose of his prophecy was for the Jews to repent and be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ, so that they would be forgiven of sins.

In 1 Corinthians 14 Paul compares at length the gift of tongues with the gift of prophecy. Regarding prophecy, he said that such words were in the form of advice and consolation that strengthened faith. But prophecy is of no use to church members only, but if an unbeliever happens to enter the congregation, then those who prophesy are rebuked, then "*And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.*" (KJV) (1 Corinthians 14:25)

By prophesying something which cannot be known by reason and cannot be felt by our souls without the revelation of God. The Apostle Paul calls himself a servant of Christ to whom the secrets of God are entrusted (1 Corinthians 4:1). In Ephesians he writes that a secret was revealed to him by revelation. The secret was in the days of earlier generations not preached to the children of men, but what is now revealed in the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets (Ephesians 3:5). Is that secret, unknown to the Old Testament prophets, only revealed to the apostles and prophets in the church? That the Gentiles, because of the Gospel News, also become heirs and members of the body and participants in the promise given in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 3:6). Paul was also given the gift of preaching that secret which for some time was hidden in God, but may now be told to all.

Based on the verses that we examined earlier, we can draw a conclusion: Prophecy in the New Testament means stating the meaning of Jesus Christ that cannot be understood by human reason and telling the meaning of the Savior and God, both for the church and Christians respectively, as well as for the world as a whole, while connecting His salvation and His government with all fields of life, so that the listener makes a decision based on the word of God preached to him.

If we compare the call of the church in the world with the call of an Old Testament prophet, then there is an amazing equation. The word church in the original language means "called out". Just as the prophets were called by God for special assignments, so did the church. About the prophets it is said that they cannot preach their own words, only what God revealed to them, otherwise they become false prophets. The church is fully bound to God and his Savior, and if he teaches something that is different from God's statement, he misleads people, to the prophet given a firm

task: go get the king! Say to the people of Israel! Face the emissaries of foreign kings ... so the church is given a clear mandate: preach the gospel to all nations to the ends of the earth.<sup>3</sup>

The Old Testament prophets did not witness the Word of God with only their mouths, but with a variety of actions that caught people's attention. The church does not have to preach the Gospel solely by words, but by deeds of service or deaconia as well. When the disciples of Jesus were told to tell people that the kingdom of God was near, they were given the power to heal the sick and cast out demons. Oral witnessing is accompanied by acts of love which are an important sign in the performance of church duties.

Just as the prophets revealed God's hidden plans to the people, so the church preached the secrets of God unknown to the nations, namely that Jesus Christ became the Savior of the world. Both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, the preaching of God's Word led to a decision on the part of the listeners: let them believe and obey God who called him.

Is the church willing and able to carry out its prophetic duty to the world? Or are we Christians living for ourselves alone? Are we willing to surrender ourselves unconditionally to our Lord or are we more concerned with pleasure, security and well-being alone? This issue is indeed important, because here it will be decided whether the church becomes a faithful servant, or whether he is a useless servant and will be punished for his laziness at the time of the Lord's coming.

### **Background of the Book of Jeremiah.**

Jeremiah was the main prophet in the kingdom of Judah during the dark ages that brought Judah to ruin. Although the lights of other prophets, such as Habakkuk and Zephaniah flickered in the kingdom of Judah at that time, Jeremiah's torch blazed on fire, together with Ezekiel in Babylon they revealed the darkness of Judah's sins through the sharp word of God. Jeremiah was a prophet who lament amidst disobedient people.

Jeremiah came from a priest who lived in Anathot not far from Jerusalem. His father Hilkiah was a member of the Levitical priests living in Anatot, a small town northeast of Jerusalem. The name Jeremiah means "exalted God". Jeremiah's ministry lasted from the 13th year of King Josiah's reign (Jeremiah 1:2) until the exile of Jerusalem (1:3). Jeremiah began prophesying from 627 BC to at least 586 BC. In fact Jeremiah's ministry continued between the fall of Jerusalem to at least 582 BC. In the book of Jeremiah there are a large number of chronological references which aid the dating of many of its prophecies.

A great difficulty occurred when trying to determine how the various prophecies in Jeremiah were arranged. Many scholars feel that this book of Jeremiah is an anthology of the chosen words of Jeremiah which were then collected and compiled. Some scholars deny that there are objectives set in composing these texts. "The Dating

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<sup>3</sup> H. Rothlisberger. *My Word is like fire*. (Jakarta. BPK Gunung Mulia. 1985), page. 187

of Jeremiah's Prophecies" a chart, shows how Jeremiah's prophecies were arranged chronologically. There are three studies made.

(1) Clearly no chronological certainty is found. Unlike in Ezekiel, each prophecy is arranged in a chronological order. Jeremiah often put the prophecies together in very different years. (2) Jeremiah's messages were written in years of stress, upheaval and need. Chapters 1-6 and 11-12 were written during the Reformation of King Josiah. His next prophetic activity (chapters 7-10; 14-20; 22:1-19; 26) came when Nebuchadnezzar was in power. The rest of Jeremiah's prophecies came at the time of the first exile to Babylon, the second exile to Babylon, the plan of rebellion to Babylon, and the final attack until the final exile to Babylon. Chapter 52 was written in the following period. (3) This Book of Jeremiah itself testifies to varying degrees of growth. It was Jeremiah, at different levels of his ministry gathering his prophecies and arranging them in a certain pattern (cf. 25:13; 30:2; 36: 2,32). Jeremiah could only complete the last form of chapters 1-51 after he was taken prisoner in Egypt (cf. 51:64). But what about chapter 52? Jeremiah 52, almost identical to 2 Kings 24:18-25:30, was written after 561 BC. when King Jehoiachin was released from Babylonian captivity (52:31). Surely this last chapter was added by the same compiler as the Book of Kings ... this chapter was added to show that Jeremiah's words about the judgment had been fulfilled and King Jehoiachin was released because of the shadow of God's promise of restoration and blessing.

The historical background of Jeremiah's ministry extends to the last five decades of the history of Judah. His service call came in 627 BC. in the 13th year of King Josiah (1:2), the last good king of Judah. Josiah's reign was the last reign of light before the darkness of idol worship and outside intrigues enthroned over the kingdom of David. Josiah was made king when he was eight years old and remained stable in Judah for 31 years.

The introduction of the people of Judah to idol worship when King Manasseh ruled for 55 years (2 Kings 21:1-9). In 622 BC (Josiah aged 18) Judah experienced the last spiritual renewal (cf. 2 Kings 22:3-23:25). Triggered by the rediscovery of a copy of the Mosaic Law in the Temple, Josiah made regular efforts to clean up idolatry. He succeeded in removing the outer skin but his efforts did not reach the hearts of the people of Judah. After Josiah died the people returned to their evil deeds.

Internationally the Assyrian Empire which ruled the Near East for centuries is on the verge of collapse. The capital of Nineveh, was destroyed in 612 BC, and in 609 the Assyrian army was defeated at Haran. The remnants of the attack from the united Assyrian Kingdom rocked Carchemish, crossing the Euphrates River.

The fall of Assyria led to the rise of Babylon. In October 626 prince Nabopolassar defeated the Assyrian army outside Babylon. The kingdom founded was known as the Neo-Babylonian Empire. He consolidated his kingdom and by 616 the combined Babylonian army and the Medes destroyed Nineveh in 612. The Babylonians came to power and Assyria fell causing a change of power in the area. Judah under

Josiah's rule broke free from the Assyrian yoke and enjoyed a period of national freedom. But this independence fell apart through the events of 609 BC.

Egypt had the opportunity to expand into the fall of Assyria. If the weak Assyrians can be controlled then Egypt can put a halt to Babylon and that means it is free to take the Western part of Palestine (including Judah) which had been controlled by Assyria before. Even though Egypt was afraid of the Assyrian forces all along, Egypt was now afraid of the prospect of Babylonian power. Therefore Egypt entered into conflict between Assyria and Babylon. In 609 Pharaoh Neco II along with the Egyptian army left for Haran to help the remnants of the Assyrian army try to take back their territories.

King Josiah realized what consequences Judah would have if Egypt had succeeded in its purpose. He did not want Egypt to replace Assyria as master of Judah. Therefore Josiah mobilized his army to obstruct Egypt first. A battle took place in Megiddo-Judah. Josiah was killed in the battle and the Egyptian army continued to move to Haran (2 Chron. 35:20-24).

Whether Josiah's attack caused a change is unknown. But maybe he could prevent the Egyptian army from arriving in Assyria's time of need. Assyria failed to regain power and that became a major force in history.

The city of Carchemish became a place of demarcation and two powers confronted there between Egypt and Babylon. After the defeat of Judah, Egypt controlled Palestine. Judah chose Joahas instead of Josiah's father. But after three months of his reign he was sacked by Neco and taken to Egypt. Neco then carried the treasure of Judah and chose Jehoiakim, another son of Josiah, as king (2 Kings 2:34-35).

In 605 BC. a shift in power in the balance of power. For four years Egypt and Babylon fought equally in Carchemish. Then in 605 the crown prince of Nubkadnezzar brought Babylon to victory. The Babylonians defeated the Egyptian army at Carchemish and even advanced to Egypt.

Two other events in 605 BC. that influenced the history of Judah was. First King Jehoiakim made an agreement with Babylon after the battle in the Carchemish and he surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 2 24:1). Second, in August 15 year 605 Nebopolasar the king of Babylon died. Nebuchadnezzar returned to Babylon and became king.

Judah remained a colony until the end of 601 BC. At that time Nebuchadnezzar made progress in the Palestinian territories. The real goal was to defeat Egypt, but this ambition was not realized. The Babylonian army suffered defeat. Jehoiakim, king of Judah at that time, was an ambassador who made an agreement with Babylon when he defeated Egypt in 605 after Babylon began to be defeated in 601, he changed his policy by supporting Egypt. (cf. 2 Kings 2 24:1). This is a fatal mistake.

By December 598 Nebuchadnezzar's army planned an attack. Its main purpose was to teach Jerusalem the consequences of its rebellion in cooperation with Egypt. Jehoiakim was killed in the attack and continued by his ruling son, Jehoiachin.

Jehoiachin saw foolishness in opposing Babylon, so he surrendered to Babylon in March 597.

Nebuchadnezzar replaced the new king and seized the spoil of the city. Jehoiachin, after three months of rule, was banished to Babylon and Zedekiah was appointed as his uncle as king. Together with Jehoiachin Nebuchadnezzar also cast out 10,000 leaders, trained workers and soldiers of Jerusalem (cf. 2 Kings 24:12-16). This might also be the time when Ezekiel was transported to Babylon. Five years later he began his prophetic ministry in Babylon.

Because the new king of Judah, Zedekiah was very weak, Judah completely collapsed. Eleven years of his reign was filled with unstable spiritual and political decline. Not learning from past mistakes, Zedekiah even repeated them. With the ascension of Pharaoh (Hofra) in Egypt in 588, Judah again tried to fight Babylon (2 Kings 2: 20-25: 1; Jer. 52:3-4).

Alliance of colonies (Yehudah, Tere, and Ammon) to resist under the rule of Babylon was formed. Nebuchadnezzar's response was very harsh. The Babylonian army was deployed around Jerusalem and there was a terrible attack. In July to August 586 the city of Jerusalem collapsed and was destroyed.<sup>4</sup>

### **True and False Prophets of the Age of Jeremiah.**

It was in the midst of the situation described above that Jeremiah was a prophet for Judah's fallen, Judah in turmoil, Judah who did not have a good and reliable king. What a tragic thing that happened compared to David's glory as king of Israel.

As a true prophet before God, Jeremiah's life was full of thrilling challenges and even endangered his own life. In chapter 36 it is said that one day God told the prophet Jeremiah to write down all the prophecies that he had spoken during the last 23 years in a book. Therefore Jeremiah dictated his prophecies to his secretary named Baruch, and after the work was completed, he told Baruch to go to the Temple to read the contents of the book to all the people who had gathered there from all the lands of Judah to hold a fast day. When the commanders heard this, they told Baruch to read the contents of Jeremiah's book to them too. After they heard all these words, they were shocked and said one to the other: " We must immediately tell all these words to the king! " (Jeremiah 36:16).

After they told Baruch and Jeremiah to hide, they entered the palace to read the book of prophecy to the king in the hope that he would repent. It was the ninth month and the king was sitting in the winter hall, while in front of him a fire was burning in the fireplace. Every time when Jehudi finished reading three or four columns, the king tore him with a knife, then thrown into the fire in the fireplace, until all the scrolls were consumed by the fire in the fireplace. Neither the king nor his servants, who listened to these words, were not surprised and did not tear their clothes. (Jeremiah 36:22-24).

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<sup>4</sup> Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (1:1123). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books

What a foolish feast of Jehoiakim who argues that by rejecting God's servants and burning His word, the punishment that threatens him may be removed! His fierce actions resulted in even greater prophecy of punishment, and the prophet Jeremiah was told by God to write the book again.

Likewise, the last king of the kingdom of Judah was Zedekiah, a man who was always wavering, unable to stand alone, and even though he liked and sought the Word of God in meetings with Jeremiah but was unable to make a firm and courageous decision because he was too dependent on the ministers and his officers. Jeremiah repeatedly rebuked lest he rebel, and when the king of Babylon approached to torment the city of disobedience, Jeremiah gave advice to surrender because "Thus saith the LORD: This city will surely be surrendered to the armies of the king of Babylon who will take it." (Jeremiah 38:3) Finally, Jeremiah who was suspected of agreeing with the enemy was imprisoned in a very poor cellar (Jeremiah. 37:16).

King Zedekiah who was always hesitant had told people to bring Jeremiah to his palace to ask him, because he always hoped that God would nullify His punishment. "Then the king quietly asked in his palace to him: "Has the word of the Lord come?" Jeremiah's answer: "There is!" Again he said: "It reads: You will be handed over to the king of Babylon!" (Jeremiah 37:17). Thus the prisoner is like an independent person - because it depends only on God - facing the king who appears to be free, but actually the servant of the ministers and his fear.

Certainly if Jeremiah did not intervene in politics or pronounce his prophecies wisely, he would not have to suffer and not experience much death. But that didn't matter to him. He knows only one task, which is to be a faithful servant of God, to be a witness of the truth, to convey the Word of God even in a very offensive and provoking form.

Jeremiah's suffering on the part of the kings was not only one, but there were other opponents too: once the Pashur priest, the temple overseer, persecuted Jeremiah because of his prophecy (Jeremiah 20), as well as the people in the village agreed to kill him (Jeremiah 11 ) so Jeremiah felt unbearable and cursed the day of his birth: *"Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth! I have neither lent on usury, nor men have lent to me on usury; yet every one of them doth curse me. "* (KJV) (Jeremiah 15:10).

But the most formidable resistance came from the side of false prophets whose words contradicted the true prophet's prophecy. Actually the false prophets in their efforts and methods are very much like magicians. It is not difficult to see the great difference between true and false prophets. A true prophet is a person who is called by God for this particular task, not to state anything except what God has revealed to him. He does not think of profit or respect, may not seek pleasure in life, even experience opposition from many people and suffer misery. Regardless of the safety of his life, he confronts kings, dignitaries, priests, wealthy people and the general public while delivering their unpleasant word to God. True prophets are not considered ordinary



members of society, but are called foolish and insane; the greater the error of the person the greater his hatred of the prophets.<sup>5</sup>

Another case with false prophets. They adjust to the general atmosphere, first check what people want to hear, then issue a "prophecy" that pleases the listener. Therefore they are popular with many people and are considered very useful, so that they are given wages and respect according to their important ranks. But if they did not receive enough honorarium, then they predicted war and torture to the related king. In the book of Amos we find how Amos refused the title of prophet so that he would not be confused with false prophets. " *I was no a prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a gathererof sycamore fruit: and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.*" (KJV) (Amos 7:14-15).

Jeremiah was almost in despair because of all the false prophets who negated his prophecies so that people did not pay attention to God's rebuke. "Ouch, Lord GOD! Didn't the prophets say to them: You will not experience war, and famine will not come upon you, but I will give you steady peace in this place!" The LORD answered me, "The prophets prophesied in my name! I did not send them, did not command them, nor did they speak to them. They prophesied to you false visions, empty predictions and deceitful thoughts of their own hearts." (Jeremiah 14:13-14).

We find the sharp criticism of the false prophets in chapter 23. There we read that not only in their words are not in accordance with God's will, but their lives are very conspicuous: "they commit adultery and behave dishonestly; they strengthen the hearts of those who do evil, so that no one repents of their evil; all of them have become like Sodom to me and their inhabitants like Gomorrah." (Jeremiah 23:14). God rebuked the inhabitants of Judah, lest they be lured by the false prophets: "Thus saith the LORD of hosts: "Do not listen to the words of the the prophet who prophesied to you! They only give vain hope to you, and only reveal the vision of their own fictional hearts, not what comes from the mouth of the LORD; they always say to those who insult the word of the LORD: You will be saved! and to everyone who follows the hardness of their hearts they say, "Disasters will not befall you" (Jeremiah 23:16-17).

The prophets were very dangerous for the nation of Israel. Because instead of calling them to repentance, they joined in committing all sins and in the meantime comforted the wicked, "prophesied" that God would grant them prosperity and salvation. "I did not send the prophets, but they were active; I did not speak to them, but they prophesied. If they were present in my deliberation council, it would be that they would preach my words to my people, bringing them back from their steps. evil and from his evil deeds. " (Jeremiah 23:21-22).

Jeremiah has no proof that he was a true prophet, even though his opponents were only false prophets. However, a person who is not blind at all can also be aware

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<sup>5</sup> Holy Bible: *Hosea* 9:7

that something is incompatible. For example, if the people do not live according to God's will, but instead violate all His commands in deciding matters, will God give His blessings and salvation to such people? Isn't this hope so contrary to the contents of the Torah and all experiences throughout Israel's history? If the "prophets" were indeed members of God's grand council, surely they would rebuke the wicked to repent, return to the God they left behind!

Let them not argue that God does not know or does not care about their behavior. "Shall I only be the God who is near, says the Lord, and not the God who is far too? If someone were hiding in a hiding place, would I not see him? declares the Lord. Did I not fill the heavens and the earth? declares the Lord. I have heard what the prophets said, who prophesied false in my name by saying: I have dreamed, I have dreamed! Until when it is in the hearts of prophets who prophesy false and who foretell the deception of their own hearts, who designed to make My people forget My name with their dreams which they told one person to, just as their ancestors forgot My name because of Baal? " (Jeremiah 23:24-27). The words of the prophets were not based on the word of God, but only their dreams and goals so that he forgot God.

Between the words of the false prophet and the words of the true prophet there is no middle ground, there is no possibility of compromise, but there are only two ends that cannot be met: dreams or the word of God, lies or truth, husks or wheat! "The prophet who has a dream, let him tell his dream, and the prophet who has my word, let me tell my word correctly! What does straw have to do with wheat? Thus says the Lord. Is not my word like fire, says the Lord and like a hammer that destroys a rock? Therefore, verily, I will be against the prophets, saith the LORD, who steal my words each from his friend. Behold, I will be against the prophets, declares the Lord, who uses his tongue arbitrarily to speak the divine word. Behold, I will be against those who prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and tell them and deceive my people with their lies and their boasting. I have never sent them and never ordered them. They have absolutely no use for this nation, declares the Lord. " (Jeremiah 23:28-32).

In chapter 28 Jeremiah tells of his clash with a false prophet. Hananiah his name. For many years Jeremiah rebuked the authorities and the people to repent, because if not, God would bring judgment on the city of Jerusalem by means of the king of Babylon. And indeed the attack of Babylon became a reality in 597: the city of Jerusalem was defeated and some of its inhabitants were taken captive to Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar made Zedekiah king in the land of Judah, but the rest of Jerusalem's inhabitants did not intend to submit to the king of Babylon, but instead planned a rebellion. The knight who urged the weak king Zedekiah was supported by false prophets prophesying: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who say to you: Do not be subject to the king of Babylon! Because they prophesy false words to you. For I did not send them, declares the LORD, but they prophesy falsely in my name, so that I grant you and perish together with the prophets who prophesied to you. "Also to the priests and to all the people I spoke I said, "Thus saith the LORD: Do not listen to the

words of your prophets who prophesy to you, Behold, the utensils of the house of the Lord will soon be brought back from Babylon! Because they prophesy false words to you. " (Jeremiah 27:14-16). Jeremiah strongly opposed them, and disputes between true prophets and false prophets increased when their meeting took place in the Jerusalem Temple.

In 594, the fourth year after the victory of the king of Babylon, Jeremiah was in the house of the Lord along with all the priests and the crowd. Suddenly the prophet Hananiah of Gibeon stood up and prophesied. In the form of his speech there is no difference with the way the true prophet. "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. In these two years I will return to this place all the utensils of the house of the LORD that have been taken from this place by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and which he brought to Babylon. I will return Jehoniah son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah along with all the exiles from Judah who will be brought to Babylon. Surely, I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon!" (Jeremiah 28:2-4).

Who doesn't like to hear those grandiose promises? Even Jeremiah himself, who was a nation of Judah who suffered in the torment of the enemies of his people, wanted such things to happen. Therefore he answered: "Amen! May the Lord do this! May the Lord keep the words you made by returning the utensils of the Lord's house and all the exiles from Babylon to this place." (Jeremiah 28:6).

But God's actions do not depend on the hopes and desires of His people and therefore prophecy must not be adjusted to human desires. A prophet must state what he hears from God, others do not. Therefore Jeremiah goes on to say the following: "Only, listen to the words which I will say in your ears and to the ears of all these people: Prophets that were before me and before you of long ago have prophesied to many lands and to kingdoms. the great thing about war and doom and plague. But concerning a prophet who prophesies about peace, if the prophecy is fulfilled, then it will be discovered that the prophet has been sent by the Lord" (Jeremiah 28:7-9).

With these words Jeremiah refers to previous prophets who had prophesied condemning the sins of God's people and the wickedness of the nations. The prophet Jeremiah here calmly discusses prophecy and compares himself and his opponent with historical reality. But Hananiah was more fanatical than Jeremiah. In the previous chapter (27:2) Jeremiah had laid a wooden yoke on the nape of his neck as a sign that the people of Judah would submit to the king of Babylon. Now suddenly Hananiah took the yoke from the neck of Jeremiah, then broke it and said: "Thus saith the LORD: In these two years I will also break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, from the necks of all the nations!" But the prophet Jeremiah left from there. " (Jeremiah 28:11). Jeremiah did not answer anything but he left, not because of doubt or fear, but apparently felt useless arguing with the fanatical prophet.

Shortly afterwards the Lord said to Jeremiah, telling him to return to Hananiah with a specific prophecy for the man: "Go and say to Hananiah: Thus saith the LORD:

Thou hast broken the wooden axle, but I will make an iron axle in its place! For thus says The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: I will lay iron on the necks of these nations, so that they will submit to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon; (Jeremiah 28:13-14).

Thus the earlier prophecy of Jeremiah was now confirmed and renewed by God with a statement of harsher punishment. The old prophecy is still valid, even added with a terrible prophecy specifically about the prophet Hananiah: " Listen, O Hananiah! The Lord has not sent you, but you have made this nation believe in lies. Therefore this is what the Lord says: Behold, I command you depart from the face of the earth. This year you will die, because you have led away from the Lord "(Jeremiah 28:15-16).

Even though Jeremiah could not prove the truth of his prophecy about the king of Babylon, but he knew that he did not declare anything except what he heard from God. And now the opening of the veil of Hananiah makes him appear as a false prophet who deceives God's people. For this grave sin he will be punished that same year. This chapter concludes with a short note that "Then the prophet Hananiah died that same year, in the seventh month", which is two months after his clash with Jeremiah in the Temple.

## CONCLUSION

From the comments above we come to conclusions about the truth of a prophet, who is a true prophet and a false prophet today. If the author is permitted to use the term prophet in the present era, then who is the true prophet in the church today? A true prophet is a prophet who voices a divine voice, preaches the truth of Christ, preaches the gospel and wins souls, does not seek to seek personal popularity and direct himself to Hedonism. The spirit of Jeremiah who was willing to suffer and hold fast in telling the truth must be the spirit that is in the true prophet of this era.

Who is the false prophet? Those who seek to attract personal popularity in the ministry act as if they have the voice of God when the personal voice is highlighted. Many internet sites expose false prophets, those who arbitrarily prophesy without evidence, but have tremendous popularity in the ministry and become Christian figures. Therefore, let the comments in this article be a Warning for God's service, and Jeremiah's life can be enlightenment and role model. As the Lord Jesus once said: "By their fruits you will know them. Can people pick grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thorn grass? " (Mathew 7:16).

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