

The False Prophets' Lies

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Text:

Introduction:

I. Prophet description

A. Characteristics of a prophet's work

1. Public: "in the house of the Lord in the presence of the priests and of all the people" 28:1
2. In the name of the Lord: "Thus speaks the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel" 28:2
3. God speaking in first person language: "I have broken the yoke of the king..." 28:2
4. Specific prediction: "Within two full years... Jeconiah... with all the captives of Judah..." 28:3-4
5. Acknowledgement by a known prophet: "Amen" 28:6
6. Visual aid: broke a yoke 28:10

B. Is the above prophet a true or false prophet?

1. It is Hananiah, a false prophet
 - a. Jeremiah said, "...the Lord has not sent you, but you make this people trust a lie... this year you shall die, but you have taught rebellion against the Lord... So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month" 28:15-17
 - b. Hananiah had many of the marks of a true prophet, yet was false
2. Not always easy to identify who was/is a true/false prophet

II. Who would you have followed?

A. Someone I study with from a denomination asked me if I thought I would have recognized and believed in Jesus had I been in first century Judea. Interesting question, with many variables, and an "I hope so..." answer.

B. Would YOU have recognized Jeremiah as a true prophet (and others as false) had you lived in his day?

1. Remove your hindsight and post-Babylonian captivity confidence in the prophecies of Jeremiah to place yourself in the sandals of a 626-580's B.C. Jerusalem citizen
2. There were a good number of prophets with a variety of contradictory messages claiming a variety of sources
 - a. Some were "even your brothers, the house of your father" 12:6
 - b. Some were speaking "smooth words" 12:6
 - c. Majority were predicting peace ("...I give you assured peace in this place" 14:13; "No evil shall come upon you" 23:17; "You shall not serve the king of Babylon" 27:9)
3. Political correctness and prevailing religious practice [although false] was a strong force that affected thinking and perspective

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4. Jerusalem was the center of Jehovah's dealing with Israel for over 400 years
 - a. Hence the false peace-monger argument: "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these" 7:4
 - b. Seemed inconsistent to prophesy "in the name of the Lord" while in the "court of the Lord's house" and speak of its destruction 26:2-9
 - 1) Probably considered blasphemous ("...This man deserves to die! For he has prophesied against this city..." 26:11)
 - 2) Remember the false accusation against Jesus in Mk. 14:58-59
 - 3) Jeremiah's words would have sounded treasonous
 - a) Jeremiah was accused of being a traitor, siding with Babylon and attempting to defect 27:12, 13, 17; 37:11-15
 - 1] He even said, "...who goes over to the Chaldeans shall live..." 38:4
 - 2] He urged surrender, "...If you surely surrender to the king of Babylon's princes..." 38:17
 - b) Jeremiah's arrest and imprisonment would have caused some to question his character and message
 - 4) Nationalism and temple dedication would have made Jeremiah's message distasteful (and false prophets' messages appealing)
 5. Jeremiah accused prophets of speaking lies, but others said to Jeremiah, "You speak falsely! The Lord our God has not sent you..." 43:2
 6. "Who is the wise man who may understand this?" 9:12b
 - a. It may have been difficult, but with wisdom it WAS possible to know and understand what was true and right (who was true and right)
 - b. The same is true today, but who will make the effort and be wise?
 - C. Some of the same challenges they had in identifying true and false prophets face us today in identifying true and false teachers
 1. This IS a Biblical comparison:
 - a. 2 Pet. 2:1; 1 Jn. 4:1-6
 - b. Not all aspects of the prophet/teacher is parallel, but many are
 2. Comparisons for us today will be drawn throughout the study

III. Overview of this study from Jeremiah

- A. Judean cultural/religious climate of Jeremiah's day was a hotbed for false prophets
- B. How to identify true and false prophets (true and false prophecy)
- C. The tragic impact made by false prophets and what to do about it

Body:

- I. **"...My People Love To Have It So" (Jer. 5:31) – Judean Cultural/Religious Climate As Described In The Book Of Jeremiah Was A Hotbed For False Prophets**

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- A. Review the immoral and idolatrous climate of Judah through the eyes of God as spoken by Jeremiah
1. Amount of general rebuke in Jeremiah:
 - a. **“wicked”/“wickedness”** 1:16; 2:19; 32; 4:14, 18; 5:26; 6:7; 8:6; 12:4; 14:16, 20; 22:22; 23:11, 14; 25:31; 33:5; 44:3, 5, 9
 - b. **“backslidings”** 2:19; 3:6, 8, 11, 12, 22; 3:14, 22; 5:6; 8:5; 14:7; 15:6; 31:22
 - c. **“abomination”/“abominations”** 2:7; 4:1; 6:15; 7:10; 8:12; 13:27; 32:34, 35; 44:22
 - d. **“evil”** 2:13, 19; 3:17; 4:4, 14, 22; 7:24, 30; 8:3; 9:3; 11:8, 15, 17; 13:10, 11, 23; 16:12; 18:8, 10, 11, 12; 21:12; 23:14, 22; 25:5; 26:3; 32:30, 32; 35:15; 36:3, 7; 44:7, 22
 - e. **“rebellious”/“rebels”** 4:17; 5:23; 6:28; 28:16; 29:32
 - f. **“foolish”** 4:22; 5:4, 21
 - g. **“silly children”** 4:22
 - h. **“no understanding”** 4:22; 5:21
 - i. **“wise to do evil but to do good they have no knowledge”** 4:22
 - j. **“swear falsely”** 5:2; 7:9
 - k. **“adultery”** 5:7-8 ; 7:9; 9:2; 23:10, 14; 29:23
 - l. **“violence”** 6:7; 20:8; 22:17
 - m. **“plundering”** 6:7; 20:8
 - n. **“covetous”** 6:13; 8:10; 22:17
 - o. **“slanderers”** 6:28; 9:4
 - p. **“corrupters”** 6:28
 - q. **“steal”** 7:9
 - r. **“murder”/“murderers”** 4:31; 7:9
 - s. **“everyone turned to his own course”** 8:6
 - t. **“sin”/“sinned”** 2:35; 3:35; 5:25; 8:14; 14:7, 10, 20; 15:13; 16:18; 17:1; 18:23; 30:14, 15; 32:35; 33:8; 36:3; 40:3; 44:23; 50:7, 14
 - u. **“treacherous”** 3:7, 8, 10, 11, 20; 9:2; 12:1
 - v. **“lying”/“lies”** 9:3, 5; 14:14; 23:14; 29:23
 - w. **“deceit”** 5:27; 8:5; 9:6, 8; 14:14; 23:26
 - x. **“uncircumcised in the heart”** 9:26b
 - y. **“pride”** 13:9, 15, 17
 - z. **“iniquity”** 2:22; 3:13; 9:5; 13:22; 14:10; 20; 16:10, 17, 18; 18:23; 30:14, 15; 36:31
 - a. **“blood of innocents”** 2:34; 19:4; 22:17
 - b. **“disgraceful things”** 29:23
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- c. **“transgressed”/“transgression”** 2:8, 29; 3:13; 5:6; 33:8; 34:18
- d. About 180 times sin is clearly labeled and condemned (not including general rebukes for “you did not hear my voice” [almost 40 times], “you did not obey” [more than 10 times], or condemnations of idolatry [more than 40 instances])

2. Wickedness

- a. All Ten Commandments broken except for “Honor your father and your mother”

No other gods	2:5b, 11, 20, 27b, 28b; 5:19, etc.
No graven images	1:16b; 8:19; 10:1-16; etc.
Name of Lord not in vain	14:14; 23:27; 34:16; etc.
Remember the Sabbath Day	17:19-27
Honor father and mother	
Not kill	2:34; 7:9; 19:4; 22:17; 32:35
Not steal	7:9
Not commit adultery	5:7-9; 9:2; 23:10; 29:23
Not bear false witness	5:2; 7:9
Not covet	6:13; 8:10; 22:17

- b. Expressions of extreme degradation and prevalence

- 1) “I have seen your adulteries and your lustful neighings, the lewdness of your harlotry...” 13:27
- 2) “...They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge” 4:22
- 3) “...your iniquity is marked before Me” 2:22
- 4) “Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil” 13:23
- 5) “even if Moses and Samuel stood before Me, My mind would not be favorable toward this people...” 15:1
- 6) Worse than their forefathers who forsook God 16:11-13
- 7) “Your affliction is incurable, your wound is severe” 30:12

3. Idolatry

- a. They were completely given over to idolatry:

- 1) “Burned incense to other gods, and worshiped the works of their own hands” 1:16b
- 2) “...Have followed idols, and have become idolaters” 2:5b
- 3) “...Has a nation changed its gods, what are not gods? But My people have changed their Glory for what does not profit” 2:11
- 4) “...on every high hill and under every green tree you lay down, playing the harlot” 2:20

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- 5) "Saying to a tree, 'You are my father,' and to a stone, 'You gave birth to me.'" 2:27a
 - 6) "...according to the number of your cities are your gods, O Judah" 2:28b
 - 7) Israel: "She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot" 3:6b
 - 8) Judah, followed Israel: "...through her casual harlotry, that she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees" 3:9
 - 9) "served foreign gods" 5:19
 - 10) "burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom you do not know" 7:9
 - 11) "make cakes for the queen of heaven; and they pour out drink offerings to other gods" 7:18
 - 12) "They have set their abominations in the house which is called by My name, to pollute it. And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire..." 7:30-31
 - 13) "...all the host of heaven, which they have loved and which they have served and after which they have walked, which they have sought and which they have worshiped..." 8:2
 - 14) "...their carved images – with foreign idols" 8:19
 - 15) "...walked according to the dictates of their hearts and after the Baals..." 9:14
 - 16) "...for one cuts down a tree... they decorate it... they cannot speak... a wooden idol is a worthless doctrine..." 10:1-16
 - 17) "they have gone after other gods to serve them" 11:10
 - 18) "...the gods to whom they offer incense..." 11:12
 - 19) "For according to the number of your cities were your Gods, O Judah..." 11:13
 - 20) "...offering incense to Baal" 11:17
 - 21) "swear by Baal" 12:16
 - 22) "walk after other gods" 13:10
 - 23) "...they have walked after other gods and have served them and worshiped them" 16:11
 - 24) "...I will cast you out... and there you shall serve other gods day and night" 16:13
 - 25) "...detestable and abominable idols" 16:18
 - 26) "Will man make gods for himself, which are not gods?" 16:20
 - 27) "...their children remember their altars and their wooden images... your high places of sin..." 17:3
 - 28) "...they have burned incense to worthless idols..." 18:15
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- 29) "...burned incense in it to other gods... burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings to Baal..." 19:4-5
- 30) "...they have burned incense to all the host of heaven, and poured out drink offerings to other gods" 19:13
- 31) "...worshiped other gods and served them" 22:9
- 32) "Do not go after other gods to serve them and worship them..." 25:6
- 33) "...the houses on whose roofs they have offered incense to Baal and poured out drink offerings to other gods..." 32:29
- 34) "...they set their abominations in the house which is called by My name... they built the high places of Baal..." 32:34-35
- 35) "...do not go after other gods to serve them..." 35:15
- 36) "...they went to burn incense and to serve other gods..." 44:3, 5, 8
- 37) "...their wives had burned incense to other gods..." 44:15
- 38) "...we will certainly... burn incense to the queen of heaven..." 44:17-19, 21, 23, 25
- 39) Note: Idolatry is specifically mentioned more than 40 times in at least 20 chapters (mentioned 15 times in the first 19 chapters, over 8 times just in chapter 44). Was a huge problem!

b. Idolatry was/is self-centered

- 1) "...we will certainly do whatever has gone out of our own mouth, to burn incense to the queen of heaven... For then we had plenty of food, were well-off, and saw no trouble..." 44:17-19
- 2) A self-centered religion personalizes your god so you can do and be as you desire
- 3) *Wes McAdams*: "An idolatrous god is simply a means to an end. The ancients would worship a fertility goddess in order to be fertile. They would make sacrifices to the god of war in order to have victory on the battlefield. They would try to please the god of the seas in order to ensure a safe voyage.
 "The God of the Bible, on the other hand, is not worshiped as a means to an end. God is to be worshiped because He Himself is the end; He is the object of our pursuit. We are told to seek Him in order that we might find Him (see Acts 17:27; Hebrews 11:6). Not in order that we might find all the physical *things* – or even eternal *things* – we want."
 - a) McAdams adds that God becomes a "Personalized God" ("god" is my concept of a god rather than as God has revealed Himself) and out of context Bible verses become "soothsayers" telling people what they want to hear
 - b) McAdams draws parallels between this and the "American Church" (<http://www.radicallychristian.com/has-american-christianity-basically-become-idolatry>)

4. The people's hearts and minds

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- a. Judah's problems were deep heart problems
 - 1) "...has not turned to Me with her whole heart" 3:10
 - 2) "...evil hearts" 3:17
 - 3) Judah is to remove the "foreskins of your heart" 4:4
 - 4) "wash your heart from wickedness" 4:14
 - 5) "...This is your wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reaches to your heart" 4:18
 - 6) "...this people has a defiant and rebellious heart..." 5:23
 - 7) "They do not say in their heart, 'Let us now fear the Lord our God..." 5:24
 - 8) "...followed the counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts..." 7:24
 - 9) "...have walked according to the dictates of their own hearts..." 9:14
 - 10) "...all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart" 9:26
 - 11) "...they are altogether dull-hearted and foolish" 10:8
 - 12) "For the shepherds have become dull-hearted..." 10:21
 - 13) "...everyone followed the dictates of his evil heart..." 11:8
 - 14) "...You are near in their mouth but far from their mind" 12:2
 - 15) "...no one takes it to heart" 12:11
 - 16) "...who follow the dictates of their hearts..." 13:10
 - 17) "...each one follows the dictates of his own evil heart..." 16:12
 - 18) "...the sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron; with the point of a diamond it is engraved on the tablet of their heart..." 17:1
 - 19) "...Cursed is the man... whose heart departs from the Lord" 17:5
 - 20) "...we walk according to our own plans, and we will every one obey the dictates of his evil heart" 18:12
 - 21) "...your eyes and your heart are for nothing but your covetousness, for shedding innocent blood, and practicing oppression and violence" 22:17
 - 22) "...hypocrites in your hearts..." 42:20
 - b. This is so serious because:
 - 1) The heart is untrustworthy: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings" 17:9-10
 - 2) Won't (can't) listen to God:
 - a) "...each one follows the dictates of his own evil heart, so that no one listens to Me" 16:12
 - b) "And they said, 'That is hopeless! So we will walk according to our own plans, and we will every one obey the dictates of his evil heart'" 18:12
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- 3) "...Indeed their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot give heed. Behold, the word of the Lord is a reproach to them; they have no delight in it" 6:10; (1 Cor. 2:14)
 - c. This created the perfect environment to breed prophets who are wicked and speak from their own evil hearts to please the people
- B. Prophets who conformed to their environment
- 1. Wickedness
 - a. "...from the prophet even to the priest, everyone deals falsely... they committed abomination..." 6:12-15; (8:10)
 - b. "For both prophet and priest are profane; Yes, in My house I have found their wickedness" 23:11
 - c. "...They commit adultery and walk in lies... all of them are like Sodom to Me, and their inhabitants like Gomorrah" 23:14
 - d. Some were openly idolatrous, prophesying by Baal 2:8; 23:13
 - e. Obviously affected what these prophets said and didn't say
 - 2. Prophesied from their hearts
 - a. Wrong source
 - 1) "...They speak a vision of their own heart, not from the mouth of the Lord" 23:16
 - 2) This is a re-definition of the role of a prophet
 - b. Evil and deceitful source
 - 1) "...they prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart" 14:14
 - 2) "How long will this be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies? Indeed they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart" 23:25
 - 3) As with the general population: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings" 17:9-10
 - c. Remember: The people followed their own hearts
 - 1) The prophets grew up learning this as the source
 - 2) The prophets knew this source is exactly what the people wanted
- C. The people and the prophets had a shared responsibility in their sin
- 1. The people – "The prophets prophesy falsely... and My people love to have it so..." 5:31
 - a. Responsible for own sinfulness and its consequences
 - 1) "Have you not brought this on yourself, in that you have forsaken the Lord your God..." 2:17
 - 2) "...which they have done against themselves..." 11:17

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- 3) "...they have caused themselves to stumble in their ways..." 18:15
 - 4) "Your ways and your doings have procured these things for you. This is your wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reaches to your heart" 4:18
- b. Pressure on true prophets to conform or be quiet
- 1) Said didn't want messages like Jeremiah taught and said to stop prophesying
 - 2) They caused the prophesy (dreams) they desired: "...nor listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed" 29:8
 - 3) Historical failure to listen discourages true speakers and breeds those who will speak what is desired
 - a) God persevered in sending His prophets
 - 1] "And now, because you have done all these works," says the Lord, "and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you, but you did not answer" 7:13
 - 2] "Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have even sent to you all My servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them: 7:25
 - 3] "For I earnestly exhorted your fathers in the day I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, until this day, rising early and exhorting, saying, 'Obey My voice'" 11:17
 - 4] "From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, even to this day, this is the twenty-third year in which the word of the Lord has come to me; and I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, but you have not listened" 25:3
 - 5] "And the Lord has sent to you all His servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, but you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear" 25:4
 - 6] "to heed the words of My servants the prophets whom I sent to you, both rising up early and sending them (but you have not heeded)" 26:5
 - 7] "because they have not heeded My words, says the Lord, which I sent to them by My servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them; neither would you heed, says the Lord" 29:19
 - 8] "And they have turned to Me the back, and not the face; though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not listened to receive instruction" 32:33
 - 9] "The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, which he commanded his sons, not to drink wine, are performed; for to this day they drink none, and obey their father's commandment. But although I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, you did not obey Me" 35:14
 - 10] "I have also sent to you all My servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, 'Turn now everyone from his evil way, amend your doings, and do not go after other gods to serve

them; then you will dwell in the land which I have given you and your fathers.' But you have not inclined your ear, nor obeyed Me" 35:15

11] "However I have sent to you all My servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, "“Oh, do not do this abominable thing that I hate!”" 44:4

b) They would not listen

1] "...you have not obeyed My voice" 3:13

2] "...And we have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God" 3:25

3] "...without understanding, who have eyes and see not, and who have ears and hear not..." 5:21; (Mt 13:14)

4] "...refused to hear My words" 11:10

2. The prophets – "...caused My people Israel to err" 23:13

a. Responsible for the deception (lies) they taught and the sin it produced in others – I am not suggesting that false prophets were innocent victims of their society

b. "Also I have seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem: They commit adultery and walk in lies; They also strengthen the hands of evildoers, So that no one turns back from his wickedness. All of them are like Sodom to Me, And her inhabitants like Gomorrah" 23:14

3. A symbiotic relationship existed: The people wanted the prophets to prophesy lies and the prophets gave them the lies they wanted (note lying is mentioned about 20 times in Jeremiah)

II. "...The Lord Has Not Sent You" (Jer. 28:15) -- How To Identify True And False Prophets (True And False Prophecy)

A. Foretold events must occur precisely as predicted

1. Deuteronomy 18:20-22 helps in some situations

a. What if the fulfillment is very far in the future?

b. What if the prophecy isn't "foretelling," but is "forthtelling" (which makes up the vast majority of Biblical prophecy)?

2. Note: Jeremiah made predictions which could have been observed

a. Captivity lasting longer than two years 28:3

b. The death of Hananiah 28:16-17

c. Shemaiah the false prophet "shall not see good" 29:32

d. Hanamel coming and selling field to Jeremiah 32:6-12

e. Fall of Jerusalem to Babylon

1) "Now the Lord has brought it, and has done just as He said..." 40:3

2) Destruction of Jerusalem 52:5-7

f. Punishment on those who fled to Egypt "shall be a sign to you" 44:29

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- g. However experiencing fulfillment was not Jeremiah's primary proof that he was a true prophet of God
- B. True prophets were dedicated to and speaking by the one true and living God – Jehovah
1. In Jeremiah, Jehovah is the Creator God
 - a. "For He is the Maker of all things..." 10:16
 - 1) "Are there any among the idols of the nations that can cause rain? Or can the heavens give showers? Are You not He, O Lord our God? Therefore we will wait for You, since You have made all these" 14:22
 - 2) "I have made the earth, the man and the beast..." 27:5
 - 3) "...Who gives the sun for light by day, the ordinances of the moon and stars for a light by night..." 31:35
 - 4) "Ah, Lord God! Behold you have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power..." 32:17
 - b. Other concepts of God are foolish and unreasonable
 - 1) "Saying to a tree, 'You are my father,' and to a stone, 'You gave birth to me'" 2:27
 - 2) "...worshiped the works of their own hands" 1:16b
 - 3) An idol cannot make self, decorate self, stand by self, speak, go, do evil or do good, has no breath 10:1-14
 - 4) "...the gods that have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens" 10:11
 - c. There is a Creator/Prophet connection in 10:11-16
 - 1) In contrast to idol gods, when Jehovah "utters His voice" things are created, moved and changed – authoritative!
 - 2) Then through the prophet Jeremiah, "...thus says the Lord..." 10:18 (the phrase "says the Lord" appears over 280x in the book of Jeremiah! See Appendix 1) – authoritative!
 2. In Jeremiah, Jehovah is the God of history
 - a. Brought you up out of Egypt (mentioned 10x) 2:6; 7:22, 25; 11:4, 7; 16:14; 23:7; 31:32; 32:21; 34:14
 - b. "as I commanded your fathers" 17:22
 3. True prophets served Jehovah God and gave Him as the source of their message
 - a. Some false prophets prophesied by Baal 2:8; 23:13, 27 (Note: they are false whether or not their predictions come true!)
 - b. However, some false prophets claimed to prophesy in the name of the LORD 14:14-15; 23:25; 27:15; 29:9, 21, 23
 - c. Note: Some people threatened Jeremiah not to "prophesy in the name of the Lord" 11:21
 4. True prophets spoke against other gods, their worship, and those who worship them 25:6
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5. Any prophet who failed to serve, glorify, obey, or give Jehovah God as the source of his prophecy was a false prophet
- C. True prophets were dedicated to the true (and whole) law of God
1. They had the revealed Law of God – “My law [and] My statutes that I set before you and your fathers” 44:10
 - a. They had the Covenant 11:2, 3, 6, 8, 10; 22:9; 34:13, 15, 18
 - b. This was the “old paths”
 - 1) “...And they have caused themselves to stumble in their way, from the ancient paths...” 18:15
 - 2) “...Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’” 6:16
 2. Anyone accepting, propagating, defending violation or change of the Law was false – 2:8; 6:19; 9:13; 16:11; 26:4 [“walk in my law”]; 32:23; 44:10, 23
 - a. Note: the people did not believe they had abandoned God’s law 18:18
 - b. Revealing, correcting, rebuking, and calling for repentance from sin is evidence of dedication to God and His revealed Law 25:5
 3. Prophecy consistent with known true revelation and prophecy 26:16-19
 4. Written words of the prophet carry the same weight as spoken 36:1-32 [spoken by Jeremiah while imprisoned, written and read by Baruch]
 5. Any prophet who failed to teach, embrace, advocate and attempt obedience to the original Covenantal Law was a false prophet
- D. Dedication to message purity and personal obedience
1. We have already noted that false prophets were accused by God of covetousness, oppression (against the vulnerable – poor, widows, orphans), and immorality (adultery, lies, etc.)
 2. The message is compromised if the prophet is disobedient to the one true and living God
 3. The message is suspect if it justifies the impure life of the prophet
 4. The prophet must be fully dedicated to say precisely what God gives him to say
 - a. “...Behold, I have put My words in your mouth...” 1:9
 - b. “...speak to them all that I command you” 1:17
 - c. “...proclaim there this word and say, ‘Hear the word of the Lord...’” 7:3
- III. “...My People Have Forgotten Me Days Without Number” (Jer. 2:23) - The Tragic Impact Made By False Prophets And What To Do About It
- A. Tragedy of...
1. Forgetting Jehovah God 2:23
 - a. They replaced Jehovah God in their hearts, minds, and actions with themselves
 - 1) That led to selfishness and abuse
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- 2) That led to depraved actions in secular and religious life
 - b. I believe the Book of Jeremiah can be subtitled, "Remember Jehovah God"
 - 1) The word LORD (Jehovah, YHWH) appears 621x in Jeremiah
 - 2) There are 1364 verses, so that's almost every other verse! (The Psalms is the only book to mention Him more)
 - 3) When people forget the LORD, mention Him a lot!
 - c. Faith is based on knowing the one true and living God – anything or anyone else is useless
 - d. A true prophet's job was to hold up Jehovah God to them so they would not forget Him
2. Exchanging truth for a lie
- a. False prophecy/teaching is rebellion against the Lord 28:15
 - 1) It is not a small matter
 - 2) It is not just another approach or worldview
 - 3) "slight healing" 6:14-15 is insufficient
 - 4) It is rebellion because it says that Jehovah is wrong and I (or another) am right
 - a) God said, "Yes," they said, "No"
 - b) God said, "Judgment," they said, "Peace"
 - b. False prophecy/teaching is not just wrong, it is useless
 - 1) This is not just theological exercise – it is about truth as expressed by God Himself
 - 2) Everything else is "...lying words that cannot profit" 7:8
 - 3) Everyone not sent by God "...shall not profit this people at all" 23:32

B. Solutions:

- 1. Change of heart – people and prophets [teachers]
 - a. "...wash your heart from wickedness..." 4:14
 - b. Remain astonished and horrified by what is false 23:14
 - c. Remember that the Lord is the one "Testing the mind and the heart..." 11:20; 17:10; 20:12
 - d. Requires humility of heart 9:23-24
- 2. Listen for, find, understand, accept, obey the true voice of Jehovah God
 - a. The words "says the Lord" (or some form) appear over 300x in Jeremiah (much more than in any other book in the Bible – See Appendix 1) – Almost every fourth verse! See Appendix 2 for many additional expressions of this message being from Jehovah God
 - b. Note in 9:13 how not obeying God's voice is the same as forsaking His law and not walking according to it

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- c. These ARE the “old paths” 6:16 (and we shouldn’t be ashamed of them)
 - 3. Reject and expose those speaking what is not from God
 - a. God says they are things “which I did not speak, nor did it come into my mind” (19:5; cf. 7:31) -- we need revelation to know what is in the mind of God 1 Cor. 2:6-16
 - b. See them as they really are: “Therefore behold, I am against the prophets,” says the LORD, “who steal My words every one from his neighbor” 23:30
 - c. Do not listen to them 23:16
 - d. Do not be deceived by them 29:8
 - e. “O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps” 10:23
 - f. Need to be willing “...To root out and pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant” 1:10
 - 4. Keep preaching the truth
 - a. Already noted that God kept sending prophets even when they rejected them
 - b. Jeremiah was to speak even though warned they would reject him and his message
 - 1) “Therefore you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not obey you...” 7:27 (cf. 7:25; 25:4-5)
 - 2) Even though God said He had rejected them 6:30
 - c. The answer to error is truth. When error increases, so must the teaching of truth

Conclusion:

- I. The sinful degradation of Jeremiah’s day should terrify us about the need for truth, truth tellers, and truth believers
- II. God looked ahead to a time when they “...shall know that My name is the Lord” 16:21
 - A. It will require a whole heart search
 - 1. “And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart” 29:13
 - B. And when found
 - 1. God will “give them one heart” 32:39
 - 2. God’s law will be “in their minds” and written “on their hearts” 31:33

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Appendix 1
“...says the Lord”

2:5; 3:1, 14, 16; 4:1, 3, 9, 27; 5:14, 15, 18, 22, 29; 6:6, 9, 16, 21; 7:3, 11, 13, 19, 20, 21, 30, 32; 8:1, 3, 4, 17; 9:3, 6, 7, 9, 13, 15, 17, 22, 23, 24, 25; 10:2, 18; 11:3, 11, 21, 22; 12:14, 17; 13:11, 12, 13, 14, 25; 14:10, 15; 15:2, 3, 6, 9, 19, 20; 16:3, 5a, 5b, 9, 11, 14, 16; 17:5, 21, 24; 18:6, 11, 13; 19:1, 3, 6, 10, 12, 14; 20:4; 21:3, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14; 22:1, 3, 6, 11, 18, 24; 23:1, 2a, 2b, 4, 7, 11, 12, 15, 16, 23, 24a, 24b, 28, 29, 31, 32; 24:5, 8; 25:7, 8, 9, 12, 15, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32; 26:2; 27:2, 4, 8, 11, 14, 16, 19, 21, 22; 28:13, 14, 16; 29:4, 8, 10, 11, 14a, 14b, 17, 21, 23, 25, 31, 32; 30:1, 3a, 3b, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 18, 21; 31:1, 2, 7, 15, 16a, 16b, 17, 20, 23, 27, 28, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37a, 37b, 38; 32:13, 15, 28, 30, 36, 42, 44; 33:2, 4, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 20, 25; 34:2a, 2b, 4, 5, 13, 17a, 17b, 22; 35:13a, 13:b, 17, 19; 36:29, 30; 37:7, 9; 38:2, 3, 17; 39:16, 17, 18; 42:9, 11, 14, 18; 43:10; 44:2, 7, 11, 25, 26, 29, 30; 45:2, 4, 5; 46:5, 23, 25, 26, 28; 47:2; 48:1, 12, 25, 30, 35, 40, 43, 44, 47; 49:1, 2a, 2b, 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 16, 18, 26, 28, 30, 31, 32, 35, 37, 38, 39; 50:4, 10, 18, 21, 30, 31, 33, 35, 40; 51:1, 24, 25, 26, 33, 36, 48, 52, 53, 58

Appendix 2**Expressions Concerning The Source Of Jeremiah's Prophecy**

“to whom the word of the Lord came...” 1:2 (“it also came...” 1:3, 4, 11, 13; 2:1; 7:1; 11:1; 13:8; 14:1; 16:1; 18:1, 5; 21:1; 24:4; 25:1; 26:1; 27:1; 28:12; 29:30; 30:1; 32:1, 6, 26; 33:1, 19, 23; 34:1, 8, 12; 35:1, 12; 36:1, 27; 37:6; 39:15; 40:1; 42:7; 43:8; 44:1; 46:1; 47:1; 49:34

“The word that the LORD spoke to Jeremiah the prophet” 46:13

“Says the King” 46:18, 15; 51:57

“Hear the counsel of the Lord...” 50:45

“The word that the Lord spoke...” 50:1 [by Jeremiah the prophet]

“I have heard a message from the Lord” 49:14

“As the Lord has spoken” 48:8

“The Lord showed me” – 24:1

“Thus speaks the LORD God of Israel, saying: ‘Write in a book for yourself all the words that I have spoken to you.’” 30:2

“...the Lord said to me...” 1:7, 12, 14; 3:6, 11; 11:6, 9; 13:1, 3, 6; 14:11, 14; 15:1, 11; 17:19, 21; 24:3

“Now these are the words that the LORD spoke concerning Israel and Judah” 30:4

“Hear the word of the Lord” 9:20; 19:3; 22:2

“Speak this word” 22:1

“Hear the word which the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel.” 10:1

“...you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak.” 1:7

“Hear the word of the Lord...” 2:4; 21:11; 31:10; 34:4; 44:26

“Hear the words of this covenant...” 11:2, 3