

Jeremiah 28:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass the same year, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year, and in the fifth month, that Hananiah the son of Azur the prophet, which was of Gibeon, spake unto me in the house of the LORD, in the presence of the priests and of all the people, saying,

Analysis

And it came to pass the same year, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year—Zedekiah reigned 597-586 BC, making this 594/593 BC, just three years after the first Babylonian deportation. **Hananiah the son of Azur the prophet**—the term *navi* (נָבִיא, prophet) is used, showing Hananiah claimed legitimate prophetic office. His name means 'Yahweh is gracious,' ironically appropriate for someone preaching false grace. **Which was of Gibeon**—a priestly city (Joshua 21:17), suggesting Hananiah had religious credentials. **Spake unto me in the house of the LORD, in the presence of the priests and of all the people**—this was a public confrontation in the temple courtyard, not a private dispute. The setting gave Hananiah maximum credibility and Jeremiah maximum vulnerability.

This chapter presents the classic prophetic conflict: two men both claiming 'Thus saith the LORD' with contradictory messages. Hananiah's public platform, optimistic message, priestly connections, and prophetic title made him more credible to most observers than Jeremiah, who stood alone preaching submission to Babylon. The narrative demonstrates the difficulty of discerning true from false prophecy and the courage required to maintain unpopular truth.

Historical Context

In 594 BC, Judah was a Babylonian vassal following Nebuchadnezzar's 597 BC siege that deported King Jehoiachin, the royal family, nobles, and craftsmen (2 Kings 24:10-16). Zedekiah, installed as puppet king, faced pressure from an anti-Babylon coalition including Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon (Jeremiah 27:3). Many in Jerusalem believed the exile would be brief and advocated rebellion. Into this volatile situation, Jeremiah wore a wooden yoke symbolizing submission to Babylon (Jeremiah 27), while Hananiah proclaimed imminent liberation. The temple setting was crucial—prophets often delivered oracles there, and public confrontations determined whose message the people would follow. Hananiah's Gibeonite origin and priestly connections gave him establishment credentials Jeremiah lacked. This public confrontation would determine Judah's course: submission or rebellion.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What does Hananiah's impressive credentials teach about the insufficiency of religious pedigree for validating prophetic truth?
2. How should we respond when conflicting messages both claim divine authority, and the popular position contradicts the unpopular one?
3. Why does God allow situations where false prophets appear more credible than true ones?

Interlinear Text

וַיְהִי	וְשָׁנָת	בְּרִאשִׁית	מֶלֶךְ
H1961	And it came to pass the same year	H1931	in the beginning
	H8141		H7225
בָּצְדָקְיהָ	צָדְקָה הַ	בְּשָׁנָת	בָּרְבָעָה יְהִי
of Zedekiah	king	of Judah	And it came to pass the same year
H6667	H4428	H3063	H8141
בְּחַדְשָׁ	בְּהַמִּישׁ	אֵל יְ	בְּנֵי אֶזְרָעֵל
month	and in the fifth	saying	that Hananiah the son of Azur
H2320	H2549	H559	H2608 H1121 H5809
הָנָנִיאָה	אֶל	בְּבֵית	יְהָנָה
the prophet	H834	which was of Gibeon	unto me in the house of the LORD
H5030		H1391	H1004 H3068
לְעֵינִ	מִגְבָּעָן	בְּבֵית	יְהָנָה
in the presence	of the priests	H3605	אֲשֶׁר
H5869	H3548		רְאֵבֶן יְמִ
וְכֹל	בְּכָל	בְּשָׁמְ	לִאמְרָה
		H5971	H559

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 27:1 (Kingdom): In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah came this word unto Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

Joshua 9:3 (Parallel theme): And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai,