

Jeremiah 28:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Hananiah the prophet took the yoke from off the prophet Jeremiah's neck, and brake it.

Analysis

Then Hananiah the prophet took the yoke from off the prophet Jeremiah's neck, and brake it (וַיִּקַּח הַנָּבִיא אֶת־הַמוֹטָה מֵעַל צֹאֵר יִרְמְיָה הַנָּבִיא וַיִּשְׁבְּרֶהוּ) vayyiqach chananyah hannavi et-hammotah me'al tsavvar yirm'yah hannavi vayyishb'rehu)—Hananiah performs symbolic counter-prophecy. Jeremiah had worn a wooden yoke symbolizing submission to Babylon (27:2-7); Hananiah breaks it, symbolizing liberation from Babylonian rule. The verb שָׁבַר (shavar, 'break') represents dramatic physical action—prophetic theater.

This demonstrates how false prophecy often employs dramatic symbolism to persuade. The broken yoke was powerful visual communication, probably eliciting crowd approval. Hananiah's action forced Jeremiah into apparent public defeat—the true prophet stood with broken yoke while false prophet claimed victory. Sometimes faithfulness looks like failure. Jesus on the cross appeared defeated while accomplishing victory. Hananiah's dramatic gesture proves nothing about truth; it merely appeals to what people want to believe.

Historical Context

Prophetic symbolic acts were common in Scripture—Isaiah walked naked (Isaiah 20), Ezekiel dug through walls (Ezekiel 12), Hosea married a prostitute (Hosea 1-3). These actions communicated messages viscerally. Hananiah appropriated this tradition for false purposes, showing how authentic forms can convey inauthentic

content. The broken yoke seemed to win the moment, but verse 13 reveals God's response: iron yokes replace wooden ones.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How do you distinguish between dramatic spiritual theater and authentic prophetic symbolism?
2. When has faithfulness looked like failure in your experience?
3. What role do physical, visual demonstrations play in persuading communities toward truth or lies?

Interlinear Text

וָקַח	הַחֲנָנִיָּה	הַנֶּבֶךְ	אֶת	הַמֹּטָה	לְ	צוֹ
took	Then Hananiah	from off the prophet	H853	the yoke	H5921	neck
H3947	H2608	H5030		H4133		H6677

יִרְמְיָה	הַנֶּבֶךְ	וְשִׁבְרָהּ:
Jeremiah's	from off the prophet	and brake
H3414	H5030	H7665

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 27:2 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD to me; Make thee bonds and yokes, and put them upon thy neck,