

**Jer. 27-28: Hananiah and The Ambassadors' Yokes**  
**Ch. 28: A Prophetic Duel**  
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**Overview**

1. Every old-time western, at some point or another, shows two gunslingers facing one another on the main street of town as they are about to "shoot it out" to settle some question or disagreement. The duel is an ancient form of trial, leaving the decision in the hands of God. This chapter in Jer reports such a duel, not between cowboys, but between two men who claim to be prophets: Jer and Hananiah. The question is, which of them actually represents the Lord? How can God's people know which to believe?
2. 26-29 consists of three interchanges. In each,
  - a) Jer. presents a message of some sort;
  - b) There is hostile reaction to the message;
  - c) The Lord vindicates his prophet. (This emphasis represents a change of tone; up to now, Jer has been on the run.)
3. Here's how these sections appear in 27-28:
  - a) 27, Jer presents a general prophecy to many nations, ordering them to submit to Neb.
  - b) 28:1-11, the prophet Hananiah challenges the truth of Jer's words. Takes up Jer's challenge from 27:18.
  - c) 28:12-17, God vindicates Jeremiah, both in word and in deed. The last study covered the first two of these points, in ch. 27; now we turn to ch. 28.
4. The legal background of Deut.
  - a) Recall the test of Deut. 18:20-22; 13:1-5, invited by Jer in the last chapter.
  - b) Careful identification of Hananiah in v.1.
  - c) Elaborate dating of v.1 (this is the only section heading dated down to the month in the entire book).
  - d) Note all the witnesses cited at each stage of the conversation (28:1, 5, 11).
  - e) Emphasis on the title "the prophet"
    - 1) Places in Jer. where he is called "the prophet": 20:2; 25:2; 28:5,6,10,11,12,15; 29:1,29; 32:2; 34:6; 36:8,26; 37:2,3,6,13; 38:9,10,14; 42:2,4; 43:6; 45:1; 46:1,13; 47:1; 49:34; 50:1; 51:59. 31 times in all, 6 in this chapter!
    - 2) Other named prophets called "the prophet:" 28:1,5,10,12,15,17--only here. (But then, this is the only named false prophet; the only other named contemporary prophet is Uriah, ch. 26.)
    - 3) 12 out of 37 times are in ch. 28, almost one-third of all occurrences.

**A. 1-11, Hananiah challenges Jer**

These verses report a conversation. But it's more than an ordinary

conversation. Remember that these are prophets, who wield words as the sword of the Lord. A powerful battle is underway here. Each participant comes to the fore twice.

1. 1-4, Hananiah: In two years God will restore what Neb has taken.
  - a) Han. takes up the illustration of the yoke that Jer introduced in the last chapter; since Jer says that Neb is going to impose a yoke, Han insists that God is breaking that yoke.
  - b) vv.3,4 give the interpretation of the figure: God will return not only the vessels of gold and silver that were taken from the temple, but also Jeconiah the king.

This prophecy is matching Jer's challenge in the previous chapter, and raising it. Jer suggested only that the false prophets prophesy that the remaining vessels not be taken to Babylon. Han goes beyond this and says that those that have already been taken will be returned, and the king to boot!

- c) Note the careful chiastic structure of the oracle, with the figure of breaking the yoke on the outside and the interpretation on the inside. In fact, in Hebrew, the order of the two interpretations is itself chiastic: "I will bring again the vessels, ... and the king and all the captives I will bring again."
- d) It is important to note that Han is quite sure of himself.
  - 1) Prophesying the return of Jeconiah involves the suggestion that the current king, Zedekiah, will be removed. He is opening himself to at least a suspicion of treason by this prophecy. If he were making it up out of whole cloth, he might be a bit more political about it.
  - 2) He fixes a firm date. This is a falsifiable prophecy.
  - 3) All of this suggests that Han is not making up his message, but getting it from somewhere. 1 Kings 22:22,23 shows that this is in fact the case; false prophets are satanically motivated and empowered. You cannot bluff them down, because they really have heard a supernatural voice speaking to them.

*Application:* Don't underestimate the adversary with whom we have to deal.

2. 5-9, Jeremiah: We'll know you by the outcome.  
Again, a cumbersome introductory formula emphasizes the solemnity of this utterance, a direct counterstroke to what Han has said.

Jer's reply emphasizes the sharp distinction between the personal opinion of the prophet and the word of the Lord through him.  
Parallels: Nathan in 2 Sam. 7:3,5; Micaiah in 1 Kings 22:15,17.

- a) 6. Speaking as a private citizen, Jer wishes that Han's words could be true. Like the Lord whom he serves (Ezek. 18:32), Jer takes no personal pleasure in the death of the wicked, and would be delighted to see Neb's efforts foiled and the temple vessels and the captives returned to Jerusalem.
- b) 7-9. Speaking as a prophet of the Lord, he delivers a one-two punch.
  - 1) 8, Precedent indicates that messages of judgment have a good prophetic pedigree. Human sin being what it is, most of the prophetic air-time is dedicated to warnings of judgment. Even the good news, the gospel, only makes sense once we understand the bad news.
  - 2) 9, The rules of Deut. 13, 18 permit Jer to adopt a "wait-and-see" attitude. He need not argue this through theoretically; Han's prophecy is sufficiently precise that Jer is content to rest on the Lord's decision.
- c) *Application*: Once again, the compassion of Jer is an example for us. He longs for the well-being of his people even as he predicts their suffering. He would personally prefer the outcome presented by the false prophet; his message comes, not from his own personal desires, but from the Lord. It is important for us to communicate this to those with whom we deal. It can help us to emphasize that we do not speak of our own initiative.

- 3. 10-11a, Hananiah: Neb. is through in two years. This is simply a summary of his earlier words, emphasized by breaking the yoke that Jer has been symbolically wearing. He is accepting the challenge that Jer has given him, to be judged by the outcome according to Deut. 13, 18. How deluded he is in his error; how sincere ... and yet how sincerely wrong.
- 4. 11b, Jeremiah: Walks away.  
NB: He does not have to have the last word! The world's wisdom would require him to offer some clever rejoinder. But the real challenge is not to Jer, but to the Lord, and Jer is content to leave the battle in His hands.

#### B. **12-17, God vindicates Jeremiah**

Later, God gives Jer two answers to Han, answers that (as a matter of fact) do not have to wait two years.

- 1. Restatement of Jer's prophecy.  
In the conversation, Jer was on the defensive, responding to Han's prophecy. God sends him back on the offensive: Go and reiterate the message I gave you. v.14 is a synopsis of the message to the ambassadors in ch. 27.

v.13, "Thou hast broken the yokes of wood; but thou shalt make

for them yokes of iron," implies that Han himself will recognize the error; just as his current understanding leads him to destroy Jer's symbolic yoke, so the truth of Jer's words will become so evident that he will have to make iron yokes to illustrate their force.

*Application:* The importance of not getting sidetracked into a defensive posture in our witness. Keep on stating the case; don't let the other side trick you into becoming so preoccupied with their points that you fail to press home your own.

## 2. Prediction of Han's death

Now Jer gives a timed prophecy of his own, to show that he can pass the same test for which Han is trying: he predicts that Han will die within the year, and this comes to pass two months later (cf. v.1).

- a) As a prophecy, this shows that Jer can meet the test of Deut.
- b) It is also a judicial proclamation in keeping with Deut. 18:20-22 and 13:1-5.
- c) Finally, it illustrates a common biblical principle, that those who plot evil against others will eventually be trapped by their own devices. In ch. 26, it was the priests and prophets who insisted, "This man is worthy to die" (26:11). Now one of their own number falls instead, at Jer's word.
  - 1) PRO 26:27 Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him.
  - 2) PSA 7:15 He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made.
  - 3) PSA 9:15 The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.
  - 4) PSA 35:7 For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul.  
8 Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.
  - 5) PSA 57:6 They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. Selah.
- d) Note the charge that warrants this treatment: to "make this people to trust in a lie" (15) is to "teach rebellion against the Lord" (16). Anything that takes the faith of people off of the Lord, leads them in rebellion against him. There is no middle ground.

## **Conclusion**

Satan can mask himself as an angel of light, and strut about in perfect masquerade as a servant of God. If you had been alive in the days of Jer, whom would you have believed--Jer or Han? If your

relationship with Scripture is only passive, you could never tell the difference. Our only defense against such deception is a close personal walk with the Lord.

Hymn: Christian, Dost Thou See Them?

### Analysis

27-28. seq p: The Ambassadors' Yokes rejected by Hananiah.

- A. 27, Jer's general prophecy: submit to Neb.  
(See last study)
- B. 28:1-11, Hananiah's challenge.  
interchange p: Note *hanabiy* title at interchanges. This is a battle of prophet vs. prophet.
1. iu: quote p: Hananiah: In two years God will restore what Neb has taken.
- a) quote f: 28:1 WA/Y:HIY B.A/\$.FNFH HA/HIY) B.:/R")\$IYT  
MAM:LEKET CID:QIY.FH MELEK:-Y:HW.DFH {B.I/\$:NAT} [B.A/\$.FNFH]  
HF/R:BI(IYT B.A/XODE\$ HA/X:AMIY\$IY )FMAR )"L/AY X:ANAN:YFH  
BEN-(AZ.W.R HA/N.FBIY) ):A\$ER MI/G.IB:(OWN B.:/B"YT Y:HWFH  
L:/("YN"Y HA/K.OH:ANIYM W:/KFL-HF/(FM L"/)MOR  
28:2 K.OH-)FMAR Y:HWFH C:BF)OWT ):ELOH"Y YI&:RF)"L L"/)MOR
- b) quote: chiasmic amplification p.  
Note that even within the amplifications, the order is VO-OV,  
so that the chiasm has three levels.
- 1) text-1: \$FBAR:T.IY )ET-(OL MELEK: B.FBEL  
2) ampl-1: 28:3 B.:/(OWD \$:NFTAYIM YFMIYM ):ANIY M"\$IYB  
)EL-HA/M.FQOWM HA/Z.EH )ET-K.FL-K.:L"Y B."YT Y:HWFH ):A\$ER  
LFQAX N:BW.KADNE)C.AR MELEK:-B.FBEL MIN-HA/M.FQOWM HA/Z.EH  
WA/Y:BIY)/"M B.FBEL  
3) ampl-2: 28:4 W:/)ET-Y:KFN:YFH BEN-Y:HOWYFQIYM  
MELEK:-Y:HW.DFH W:/)ET-K.FL-G.FLW.T Y:HW.DFH HA/B.F)IYM  
B.FBEL/FH ):ANIY M"\$IYB )EL-HA/M.FQOWM HA/Z.EH N:)UM-Y:HWFH  
4) text-2: K.IY )E\$:B.OR )ET-(OL MELEK: B.FBEL
2. cu: quote p: Jeremiah: We'll know you by the outcome.
- a) quote f:  
28:5 WA/Y.O)MER YIR:M:YFH HA/N.FBIY) )EL-X:ANAN:YFH  
HA/N.FBIY) L:/("YN"Y HA/K.OH:ANIYM W./L:/("YN"Y KFL-HF/(FM  
HF/(OM:DIYM B.:/B"YT Y:HWFH  
28:6 WA/Y.O)MER YIR:M:YFH HA/N.FBIY)
- b) quote: contrast p
- 1) thesis: nested amplification p
- a> text: )FM"N  
b> ampl of text: K."N YA(:A&EH Y:HWFH  
c> ampl of ampl of text: YFQ"M Y:HWFH )ET-D.:BFREY/KF  
)A\$ER NIB.")TF L:/HF\$IYB K.:L"Y B"YT-Y:HWFH  
W:/KFL-HA/G.OWLFH MI/B.FBEL )EL-HA/M.FQOWM HA/Z.EH
- 2) antithesis: quote p
- a> quote f: 28:7 )AK:-\$:MA(-NF) HA/D.FBFR HA/Z.EH ):A\$ER  
)FNOKIY D.OB"R B.:/)FZ:NEY/KF W./B:/)FZ:N"Y K.FL-HF/(FM  
b> quote:

1> 28:8 HA/N.:BIY)IYM ):A\$ER HFYW. L:/PFNAY  
W./L:/PFNEY/KF MIN-HF/(OWLFM WA/Y.IN.FB:)W.  
)EL-):ARFCOWT RAB.OWT W:/(AL-MAM:LFKOWT G.:DOLOWT  
L:/MIL:XFMFH W./L:/RF(FH W./L:/DFBER  
2> 28:9 HA/N.FBIY) ):A\$ER YIN.FB") L:/\$FLOWM B.:/BO)  
D.:BAR HA/N.FBIY) YIW.FDA( HA/N.FBIY) ):A\$ER-\$:LFX/OW  
Y:HWFH B.E/):EMET

3. cu: seq p: Hananiah: Neb. is through in two years.

a) 28:10 WA/Y.IQ.AX X:ANAN:YFH HA/N.FBIY) )ET-HA/M.OW+FH  
M"/(AL CAW.A)R YIR:M:YFH HA/N.FBIY)  
b) WA/Y.I\$:B.:R/"HW.  
c) quote p  
1) quote f: 28:11 WA/Y.O)MER X:ANAN:YFH L:/("YN"Y KFL-HF/(FM  
L"/)MOR K.OH )FMAR Y:HWFH  
2) quote:  
a> K.KFKFH )E\$:B.OR )ET-(OL N:BUKAD:NE)C.AR MELEK:-B.FBEL  
B.:/(OWD \$:NFTAYIM YFMIYM M"/(AL-CAW.A)R K.FL-HA/G.OWYIM

4. ru: seq p: Jeremiah: Walks away. NB: He does not have to  
have the last word!

WA/Y."LEK: YIR:M:YFH HA/N.FBIY) L:/DAR:K./OW P

C. 28:12-17, God vindicates Jeremiah

1. quote p: yoke of iron

a) quote f: 28:12 WA/Y:HIY D:BAR-Y:HWFH )EL-YIR:M:YFH )AX:AR"Y  
\$:BOWR X:ANAN:YFH HA/N.FBIY) )ET-HA/M.OW+FH M"/(AL CAW.A)R  
YIR:M:YFH HA/N.FBIY) L"/)MOR  
b) quote:  
1) 28:13 HFLOWK:  
2) quote p  
a> quote f: W:/)FMAR:T.F )EL-X:ANAN:YFH L"/)MOR  
b> quote: reason p  
1> text: quote p  
a: quote f: K.OH )FMAR Y:HWFH  
b: quote:  
1: MOW+OT ("C \$FBFR:T.F  
2: W:/(F&IYTF TAX:T."Y/HEN MO+OWT B.AR:ZEL  
2> reason: quote p  
a: quote f: 28:14 K.IY KOH-)FMAR Y:HWFH C:BF)OWT  
):ELOH"Y YI&:RF)"L  
b: quote:  
1: (OL B.AR:ZEL NFTAT.IY (AL-CAW.A)R  
K.FL-HA/G.OWYIM HF/)"L.EH LA/(:ABOD  
)ET-N:BUKAD:NE)C.AR MELEK:-B.FBEL  
2: WA/(:ABFDU/HW.  
3: W:/GAM )ET-XAY.AT HA/&.FDEH NFTAT.IY L/OW

2. fulfillment p

a) prophecy: quote p  
1) quote f: 28:15 WA/Y.O)MER YIR:M:YFH HA/N.FBIY)  
)EL-X:ANAN:YFH HA/N.FBIY)  
2) quote: quote p

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a> quote f: $:MA(-NF) X:ANAN:YFH
b> quote: chiastic reason p
  1> reason-1:
    a: LO)-$:LFX/:AKF Y:HWFH
    b: W:/)AT.FH HIB:+AX:T.F )ET-HF/(FM HA/Z.EH (AL-$FQER
  2> text: quote p: Therefore you will die.
    a: quote f: 28:16 LF/K"N K.OH )FMAR Y:HWFH
    b: quote: reason p
      1: text: paraphrase p
        A. HIN/:NIY M:$AL."X/:AKF M"/(AL P.:N"Y
          HF/):ADFMFH
        B. HA/$.FNFH )AT.FH M"T
      2: reason: K.IY-SFRFH DIB.AR:T.F )EL-Y:HWFH
b) fulfillment: 28:17 WA/Y.FMFT X:ANAN:YFH HA/N.FBIY)
  B.A/$.FNFH HA/HIY) B.A/XODE$ HA/$.:BIY(IY P

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