

Lecture 7- False Prophets in the Old Testament

1- Earliest occurrence

The concern over false prophets was described in Deuteronomy.

Deut. 13:1–3

If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, 2 And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; 3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul

2- The plague of False prophets in Israel and their description

1 Ki 22:11–12, Mic. 3:5–8; Jer. 4:9–10; Mic. 3:7; Ezek. 13:3, 6; Jer. 4:10; 6:14; Ezek. 13:10

Ezekiel chapter 34.

Bad shepherds—the false prophets	Good shepherds—the genuine prophets
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They feed themselves, not the flock. <i>Verses 2–3</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They give the flock rest in good pastures. <i>Verse 15</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They do not take care of the weak and sick. <i>Verse 4</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They heal the sick. <i>Verse 16</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They do not go and look for the lost. <i>Verse 4</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They search out the lost sheep. <i>Verse 11</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They do not allow themselves to be fed by the Great Shepherd. <i>Verse 10</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They shepherd the flock with justice. <i>Verse 16</i>

The false prophet was motivated by a desire for popularity- ex: Jeremiah revealed the judgments of God (Jer 4:19), while the false prophets declared no judgment (Jer. 6:14; 8:11). The desire of the people to have it this way was revealed by Isaiah “Don’t tell us the truth. Tell us nice things. Tell us lies” (Is 30:10).

**Two nameless prophet, one speaks truth the other lies 1 Kings 13

**Jeremiah versus Hananiah the son of Azzur a prophet from Gibeon (Jer 28:1). Once again Hananiah prophesied what the people wanted to hear

Comparing similarities that describe false prophets in Ezekiel 13-14 Jer 23:9-40

- 1- They spoke out of their own will (vv. 1–3, 17).
- 2- They make the people disobedient instead of obedient (v. 4).
- 3- They are more interested in making a profit off the people instead of telling the truth
- 4- They built prophesy on lies that made the people defenseless against their enemy (v. 5).
- 5-Being deceived they also deceived by claiming superior revelations (vv. 6–7)
- 6- They would resist sin (vv. 6–9)
- 7- they preached peace, prosperity, and safety to people who were living in sin and under the judgments of God(vv. 10–12)
- 8- Their prophecies further provoked the wrath of God (vv. 13–16).
- 9- Used lying signs and wonders to legitimize what they said (vv. 17–21).
- 10- The very examples of these preachers was that of iniquity which also justified the sins of the people (vv. 22–23).
- 11- Their own self-will was the worst form of idolatry for the people of God (14:1–7).
- 12- Those who supported false prophets would share in the same judgment that would be poured out on the false prophets.

3- False prophets and Elijah-

False Prophets prophets associated with the court of King Ahab (1 Kgs 18:19–40; 22:5–12)); Revelation as Jezebel also claims the title of prophet (prophētis) but is in fact a false prophet (Rev 2:20); teaching false doctrine (Matt 7:15; 24:11, 24; Mark 13:22; 2 Pet 2:1).

²⁰ So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel. ²¹ And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord *be* God, follow him: but if Baal, *then* follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

1 Ki 18:20–21

4- False Prophets and the Prophet Jeremy- prophets who prophesied lies

(Jer 14:14; 27:10)

Je 14:14–15

¹⁴ Then the Lord said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.

¹⁵ Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, and I sent them not

The list of their judgments are given- the same judgments that will fall on all who listen
Jer 14:16- 17

Je 23:21–32

I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. ²² But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings. ²³ Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? ²⁴ Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord. ²⁵ I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. ²⁶ How long shall *this* be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, *they are* prophets of the deceit of their own heart; ²⁷ Which think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams which they tell every man to his neighbour, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal. ²⁸ The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What *is* the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. ²⁹ *Is* not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer *that* breaketh the rock in pieces? ³⁰ Therefore, behold, I *am* against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words every one from his neighbour. ³¹ Behold, I *am* against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. ³² Behold, I *am* against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord.

extra:

Only four female prophets, all true prophets of God, are mentioned by name in the Old Testament: Deborah (Judg 4:4–5:31), Huldah (2 Kgs 22:14), Miriam (Exod 15:20), and Noadiah (Neh 6:14).

5- Jezebel and her legacy of false prophets