

2. The Contest

In seeking to avoid the will of God (both for the present and the predictive future, the people were led by the prophet Hananiah (28:1). He contradicted Jeremiah and predicted that within two years (28:3) the enemy would be overthrown and all taken from Jerusalem would be returned. His prediction was that in that time the Lord would break the yoke of the king of Babylon (28:4). During this time the prophet Jeremiah had been going about the city wearing a yoke of wood...a symbol of the captivity to Babylon. Encountering Hananiah (28:5-9) he states that he hopes the words of Hananiah are true but he implies they are not in a cryptic remark in vs 8-9. At this point Hananiah takes the wooden yoke from the shoulders of Jeremiah and breaks it (28:10) and notes (vs. 11) that this is what the Lord will soon do to Nebuchadnezzar. Stunned at the dramatic boldness, Jeremiah goes away to reflect (28:11). He soon returns and announces that Hananiah in truth is making the people yokes of iron. He re-affirms his prediction (28:13-14) and gives a counter sign. Denouncing Hananiah as a false prophet (v. 15) he predicts his (Hananiah's) death before the end of the year. We read in vs. 17 that Hananiah died in the seventh month (the action occurs in the fifth month) and the fulfillment of this prophetic sign indicates to all that the Lord has spoken by Jeremiah and he is the true prophet. It indicates that there is no substitute for the Word of God in facing the decisions and crises of life.

3. Discussion: In Hananiah and his ministry we have a good example of how men try to substitute for the Word. We note the following:

a. Human Substitutions:

(1) Contrary opinions...usually devised to please the ears and imagination of the hearer.

(2) Dramatic experiences...and these run a gamut of things but they are all intended to show us some way to solution other than what the Word calls for.