

# What Does Straw Have in Common With Wheat?

**23: 23-32**

**DIG:** How will the false and true prophet be exposed for what they are? What is the difference between straw and wheat? How can you question a prophet's dream? Where did they come from? When someone says, "I have 'a word' for you from the Lord," how can you be certain that what they are saying is true? How does God's Word contrast with the contrived dreams of the faithless? How are people led astray today?

**REFLECT:** Do you pray, "Your will be done?" or "My will be done?" Who has control of the steering wheel of your life? When you take the wheel, how often have you ended up in the ditch? What does it take for you to submit? When was the last time you tried to hide from God? How did that work out? What are you supposed to do if a dream that you have conflicts with the Word of God? Is YHVH sovereign in your life?

**597 BC during the eleven-year reign of Zedekiah**

"Am I only God when near," asks ADONAI, "and not when far away" (23:23 CJB)? That YHVH was near was the false promise of the Temple cult. The false prophets always sought to draw ADONAI too near to their own secret desires and therefore tended to minimize His sovereign freedom. In effect, they were playing God. "Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them" declares the LORD (23:24a). The false prophets cannot hide from God to escape their punishment. What He is about to say is based on His omnipresence (Psalm 139:7-10; Amos 9:1-4). There is no place to hide.

"Do I not fill heaven and earth" (23:24b)? Since God is everywhere (omnipresence), He knows what goes on everywhere. The false prophets were saying, "I just received a revelation from God by virtue of a dream." Therefore, here, the LORD deals with these false dreams of these false prophets. I have heard what the false prophets say who prophesy lies in My name. They say: I had a dream! I had a dream (doubling for emphasis)! The origin of their false revelation was themselves! Because they had a dream, they assumed it was from God. Ever have a nightmare? Is that from God also? They became the final authority . . . not Scripture, not YHVH'. Now Ha'Shem asks some specific questions: How long will this continue in the hearts of those lying prophets, who prophesy the delusions of their own minds. How long will they continue to impose upon the people? Can the true Word of God reside in the hearts of people who prophesy lies of their own

**imagination?** They think the dreams they tell one another will make My people forget My name through Ba'al worship (23:25-27). Just as their fathers forgot God's name because of Ba'al worship, now their children forget God's name because of these lying dreams. Due to their dishonesty, the people did not know the true nature of ADONAI.

Today there are people who portray YHVH as angry, vengeful, and eager to punish people for every minor offense. The LORD, however, describes Himself as merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abounding in goodness and truth (Exodus 34:6). Others show the world a picture of a loving God who is too kind to punish wrongdoing. But God describes Himself as One who exercises judgment and righteousness (9:24b). He is both Ha'Shem, a just Judge, and ADONAI, a loving Father. If we emphasize one over the other . . . we paint a false picture of God. Everyone must face Yeshua as Savior or Judge. The most important thing we can know about YHVH and proclaim to the world is that He does not want to punish anyone. The LORD is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. Instead He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance (Second Peter 3:9). But to be truly loving, He must also be absolutely just.<sup>257</sup>

**The difference between true prophecy and false prophecy is shown as the difference between straw and wheat:** The false prophet who has a dream may relate his dream as merely a dream, but not as a prophecy from God. However, let him who has My word speak My word in truth. The true Word of God is symbolized in three figures of speech: wheat, fire and a hammer: What does straw or chaff (the dreams of the false prophets) have in common with wheat (the word of the true prophet)? declares ADONAI. Is not My word like fire?" declares the LORD, "and like a hammer which shatters a rock (23:28-29 NASB)? One will destroy the other because the Word of God is not only like wheat, it's like fire. Fire burns straw. The Word of God is also like a hammer. **In the near historical future** (see Ga - [The Fall of Jerusalem](#)) it will break these false prophets like a hammer shatters a rock. It accomplishes its task, smashing any obstacle in its way.

God speaks to us in many different ways - through His Word, through the prompting of the Ruach HaKodesh, through His still small voice (First Kings 19:12). In Jeremiah's time, the southern kingdom of Judah was under attack from the Babylonians. Already, some of the people had been taken captive to Babylon, along with most of the gold and silver. There were many false prophets going around saying that they had a dream that the people and the Temple items taken during the first deportation (see Ca - [Jehoiakim Ruled For 11 Years from 609/608 to 598 BC](#)) would soon be returned. This is what Jeremiah is speaking out against. They may have dreamed a dream, but the dream was not from God.

But we need to realize that if we do have a dream or vision, these are **straw** compared with the **wheat - the Word of God, the Bible**. If there is a conflict between the **Word of God** and our feelings we must trust in what the **Bible** says. The canon of **Scripture** is closed and today **ADONAI** speaks to us through **His Word** (see Ed - **Both Prophet and Priest are Godless**). It is a **lamp unto our feet** (Psalm 119:105). The **Holy Spirit** still convicts us of our sins, but **He** will not contradict **His word** with a message given in a **dream** or **vision**. If they are contradictory, then that **dream** or **vision** is not from **God**. **Thus, declares the LORD, I am against the false prophets in three ways.**

**First, God** is against those who steal from one another words supposedly from **Me** (29:30). The **lying prophets** were so devoid of personal inspiration, not having personally received a **word from God**, which they could only repeat what they heard others say. They kept on stealing empty words from each other in a vain attempt to impress everyone how godly they were. No doubt they also borrowed liberally from the true prophets when it suited their treacherous purposes.

**Second, Yes, I am against the false prophets who wag their own tongues and yet say, "ADONAI declares" (23:31).** The origin of their false prophecies was their own tongues (James 3:1-12). They used the formula of a true prophet, but then they invented the prophecy out of their own mouth. They wag (Hebrew verb: *laqach*, literally they use) their tongues. **The rabbis interpret it to mean to teach. "They teach their tongue to speak a lie."** Then they speak an oracle. There is a play on words: They speak (Hebrew: *na'am*) and oracle (Hebrew: *n'um*), or they oracle an oracle. They thirsted for an opportunity to try and palm off anything they could as an oracle, but, in reality, it was merely their own words with something of a flourish as though it was really from the **LORD**.

**Third, the effect of such dreams, fantasies, and distortions is that Judah is led astray, away from God's will into deathly disobedience. I am against those who concoct prophecies out of fake dreams. They tell them, and by their lies and arrogance they lead my people astray. They fake revelation by means of dreams, which are actually lying dreams. The words and lead my people astray refer to all three of their ways of acting: inventing, stealing and lying. So in summary ADONAI proclaims: I didn't send them, I didn't commission them, and they don't do this people any good at all (23:32 CJB).**

Behind the dispute concerning true and false prophets is a dispute about the character of **God**. The false prophets taught that **YHVH** was ever near and ever committed to **Jerusalem** and the **Temple** no matter what (see Cc - **False Religion is Worthless**). In sharp contrast, **Jeremiah** bore witness to a **God** who is "afar off," free, sovereign, and not held hostage by the religious establishment of **Jerusalem**. The issue in dispute was not

necessarily the content of a certain prophecy, but about **God's** relationship with Judah. Up until now the dispute centered on what **the** false **prophets** did and said. But now it is clear that the foundational question is the reality and character of **God**. This is the central concern of **Jeremiah** from which everything else flows.