

-Save This Page as a PDF-

What Does Straw Have in Common With Wheat?

23: 23-32

What does straw have in common with wheat? 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 (**Psalms 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.²⁵⁷

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.