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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 (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 **forgot 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.