

False Prophets

People who preach false ideas about what the religion is all about.

- OT doesn't use the term false prophet, but makes it clear that some prophets are not authentic. (Septuagint translators introduce the term pseudoprophets).
- False prophets prophesied lies (Jer 6:13 ; 27:14 ; Zech 13:3)
- deceived the people with their dreams (Jer 29:8)
- prophesied by the alleged authority of Baal (Jer 2:8 ; 23:13)
- threatened the lives of the true prophets (Jer 26:7)
- dared to speak when they had not stood in the council of Yahweh and received a word directly from the Lord (Jer 23:18).
- their prophecies promised peace when there was no peace to be had (Jer 6:14 ; 8:11 ; 14:3 ; 23:17 ; Jeremiah 28:2 Jeremiah 28:11 ; Ezek 13:10 ; Micah 3:5)
- for their visions were drawn out of their own hearts (Jer 14:14 ; 23:16 ; Ezek 13:2-3 ; 22:28). Some false prophets used magic (Eze 13:17-23)
- others appeared to use divination, soothsaying, witchcraft, necromancy, and sorcery, which were all forbidden arts and practices in the classical passage that set forth divine revelation in contrast to such practices (Deut 18:9-13).
- The false prophets gave the people what they wanted to hear and thereby placed "whitewash" (Ezekiel 13:10-12 Ezekiel 13:14-15 ; 22:28) over every situation, no matter how adverse it appeared.
- The fullest discussion of charges that could be brought against false prophets can be found in Jeremiah 23:9-39.
 - Jeremiah condemns the pseudoprophets on four grounds: (1) they are men of immoral character (v. 14"they commit adultery and live a lie"); (2) they seek popular acclaim with their unconditional pledge of immunity from all imminent disasters (vv. 17-22); (3) they fail to distinguish their own dreams from a word from God (vv. 25-29); and (4) they are plagiarists who steal from one another words allegedly from the Lord (vv. 30-39). Rather than having a "burden" from the Lord, they themselves were another burden both to the Lord and to the misled people!
- The theology of the false prophets was characterized by the following:
 - (1) a selective appeal to the Davidic/Zion and Sinaitic covenants as a type of fire insurance against any threatened calamity;

- (2) an exclusive teaching of hope/salvation with no attention given to any potential adversities for lack of obedience to God's Word; and
- (3) a constant appeal to what the masses wanted to hear as a basis for promoting their own power and the status quo. This list is very similar to the four charges that Jeremiah brought in 23:9-39.
- The Criteria for Testing False Prophecy. The loci classici for determining true from false prophecy are Deuteronomy 13:1-5 and 18:15-22. These texts teach five tests for a true prophet: (1) he must be Jewish (Deut 18:18); (2) he must speak in the name of the Lord (Deut 18:19-20); (3) what he says must come to pass, the most proximate fulfillments being the validators of the more distant predictions (Deut 18:21-22); (4) he must perform signs, wonders, or miracles that accompany his words (Deut 13:1-2a); and (5) his message must conform to what God had revealed previously (Deut 13:2b-5).

Additional Notes

- ~~primarily about those who preach false ideas about what the religion is all about.~~
privitized religion of individual well being & wealth rather