

“

SET A GUARD,
O Lord, over my mouth
KEEP WATCH OVER
the door of my lips

Psalm 141:3

”

VBS

20

16

Day 2

Truth v. Lying



calvary chapel of philadelphia

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Truth v. Lying

The Objective is the key concept for this weeks lesson. It should be the main focus of the study

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The “Main passage” is the basis of the study, where the other verse support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the “reward box” found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God’s Word

Objective The goal of this lesson is to demonstrate the biblical importance of telling the truth rather than lying through the story of Jeremiah and Hananiah.

Key Verses

Jeremiah 28—Main Teaching Passage

Jeremiah 39

John 14:16; 17:17

Genesis 3; Exodus 20:16; John 8:44

Memory Verse - Proverbs 12:22

Lying lips *are* an abomination to the LORD,
But those who deal truthfully *are* His delight.

Hook

Ask the students to think of a time when someone told them a lie and fooled them. Have some of them share the results of the lie. Did they face negative consequences for believing this lie? Did the liar face consequences? How did they feel when they found out they were lied to?

In today’s story, we will see two prophets: a liar and a truthful prophet. Tell the class to pay careful attention to what happens to each of these prophets.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

Today's story takes place in a time when God's people in Judah were living in great fear. Babylon, the strongest nation in the world, had their sights set on conquering Jerusalem. For years the prophet Jeremiah had warned the people that it was because of their sins that God allowed this to happen. He urged them to repent and threatened that Babylon would capture them if not. Jeremiah wore a wooden yoke (a bar that hooked two oxen together) around his neck to symbolize their impending bondage to Babylon. In today's story, a prophet named Hananiah came preaching another message. He proclaimed that all that Babylon had taken from Judah would be returned in two years and there would be peace. Jeremiah responded that he wished this message were so, but that his message was much more in line with the message of the rest of the prophets. Instead of listening to Jeremiah, Hananiah took the yoke and smashed it, saying that the Lord would set Judah free from Babylon the way he set Jeremiah free from the yoke. However, Hananiah was in error, and his actions had caused the people of Judah to believe in a lie. The Lord declared that because Hananiah had broken the yoke of wood, the Lord would replace it with a yoke of iron. This symbolized an even harsher punishment at the hands of the Babylonians. In addition, Hananiah needed to be punished for preaching this lie. He had falsely caused Judah to hope in deliverance from Babylon. As a result, the Lord said that he would die that year. Just a few months later, the Lord's threat came true and Hananiah died. Meanwhile, Jeremiah continued to preach the same message: Judah needed to repent, or else judgment was coming and they would be captured by Babylon. In Jeremiah 39, we discover that his prophecies were fulfilled and Jerusalem did fall. However, because Jeremiah remained faithful to God, Jeremiah 39:11-14 says that in the attack, the king of Babylon took care of Jeremiah and made sure no harm came to him.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK

In today's story, we see two prophets with two very different messages. Hananiah came preaching a message of peace and hope, but Jeremiah preached a message of judgment and repentance. Hananiah's message was much more positive. Even Jeremiah wished it were true. The only problem was that his message was a lie, and because of that, Hananiah was doing something evil. We might not initially think of telling this "good news" as lying, but his message was actually extremely dangerous. Hananiah was telling the people that they didn't need to repent, that God would deliver them from Babylon, and that they could continue and sin yet still expect peace. He had to be stopped because his message was the exact opposite of what the Lord wanted to tell His people. No matter how hopeful the message, Hananiah was spreading a lie.

LOOK (Continued)

Hananiah's lies brought both personal and national consequences. Personally, he died as a part of God's judgment on his sin. The nation of Judah suffered because they trusted in Hananiah's lie and did not repent. Because they did not change their behavior, they were taken captive into Babylon. Jeremiah also had a consequence for his true message. Because he told the truth, even when it was unpopular, God blessed him and took care of him when the Babylonians came. He did not suffer with the rest of the people of Judah.

The themes of truth and lying are found throughout the Bible. The ninth commandment of the Ten Commandments tells us not to lie (Exodus 20:16). The Old Testament is filled with all sorts of examples of men and women who told the truth and were blessed, or who lied and faced punishment. Jesus said that He is the Truth (John 14:6). John 17:17 tells us that the Word of God is truth. Satan's first scheme was to lie about the Word of God (Genesis 3), and John 8:44 calls Satan the father of lies. The message is clear: telling the truth is important to God.

There are a few important applications for our life from this lesson. The biggest one and the most obvious one is to tell the truth and not lie. This may seem obvious, but it bears repeating. No matter how inconsequential the lie may seem or how much we might think the truth will cost, telling the truth is always better than telling a lie. Second, as we will see throughout the week, it is important to focus not only on not sinning, but on doing what is right. In this case, our goal should not simply be not lying, but telling the truth. This is not an insignificant distinction. When people simply focus on not sinning, they tend to replace one sin with another. It is better instead to seek to speak truth, and we will naturally also have speech that is free of deceit.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life.

TOOK

As a class, memorize Proverbs 12:22.

Review the lesson by asking the class to think of practical situations where it may be hard to tell the truth. Encourage them to be truthful in those situations.

Pray: Praise the Lord for being the God of truth. Ask Him for help to speak in truth and not in deceit.

Parent Question: Why does God care whether I tell the truth or lie?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Jeremiah 28 by David Guzik

Jeremiah 28 – Broken Yokes and Iron Yokes

A. Hannaniah and the broken yoke.

1. (1-4) Hananiah contradicts Jeremiah.

And it happened in the same year, at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year *and* in the fifth month, *that* Hananiah the son of Azur the prophet, who was from Gibeon, spoke to me in the house of the Lord in the presence of the priests and of all the people, saying, “Thus speaks the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, saying: ‘I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two full years I will bring back to this place all the vessels of the Lord’s house, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place and carried to Babylon. And I will bring back to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah who went to Babylon,’ says the Lord, ‘for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.’”

a. **At the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah:** Zedekiah was the puppet king put on the throne of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. In this season Nebuchadnezzar was distracted by problems in other parts of his empire. Judah and some of the surrounding nations thought it was a smart time to rebel against what seemed to be a weakened king of Babylon. In Jeremiah 27, the prophet spoke to a gathering of representatives of those kingdoms, who came to Zedekiah to plot their strategy.

b. **Hananiah:** This prophet and son of a prophet didn’t like Jeremiah’s gloomy message to the gathered kings ([Jeremiah 27:1-11](#)). Jeremiah came to them wearing the yoke an animal would use, to show that they would remain subjected to Nebuchadnezzar and their dreams of successful revolt would be unfulfilled.

i. “Hananiah’s name means ‘Yahweh has been gracious.’ It was an appropriate name for a prophet who believed strongly, if mistakenly, that Judah’s fortunes would soon be restored.” (Thompson)

ii. **Who was from Gibeon:** Hananiah came from a place with a reputation for deception and violence. “It had a number of important historical associations. The Gibeonites had deceived the Israelites in Joshua’s day ([Joshua 9:1-15](#)). It was the scene of a contest between Saul’s men and David’s men ([2 Samuel 20:12-17](#)). Here Joab killed Amasa ([2 Samuel 20:8-10](#)).” (Thompson)

iii. “He was a native of Gibeon, the modern El-Jib, five miles northwest of Jerusalem. It was one of the priestly cities; so, like Jeremiah, Hananiah may have been a priest (cf. [Joshua 21:17](#)).” (Feinberg)

c. **I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon:** Hananiah spoke in the name of the Lord, contradicting the message of Jeremiah recorded in the previous chapter. Jeremiah said they would be under the yoke of the king of Babylon; Hananiah said the Lord had **broken the yoke**.

d. **I will bring back to this place all the vessels of the Lord’s house:** Hananiah’s supposed prophecy explained that because the power of Nebuchadnezzar had been broken, the **vessels** of the temple would be returned, King **Jeconiah** would return, along with **all the captives of Judah who went to Babylon**. All this would happen **within two full years**. This was a big, dramatic message – something the frightened people of

Judah would *love* to hear.

- i. “Hananiah predicted a return of the captives and the temple vessels within two years, emphasizing the time element by putting it first.” (Feinberg)
- ii. “No doubt Hananiah’s message was very popular. It was bold, patriotic, and uplifting. Whose church would you rather go to?” (Ryken)
- iii. “Men who follow simply their own thoughts, or are deeply dyed with the spirit of society around, are apt to prophesy smooth things to such as live selfish and worldly lives.” (Meyer)
- iv. Nevertheless, this was another direct contradiction to Jeremiah’s previous prophecy. When Jeremiah prophesied exile and captivity, Hananiah prophesied return and restoration. They *both* spoke in the name of the Lord, and it seemed that they could not *both* be right.

2. (5-6) Jeremiah responds with an amen.

Then the prophet Jeremiah spoke to the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the priests and in the presence of all the people who stood in the house of the Lord, and the prophet Jeremiah said, “Amen! The Lord do so; the Lord perform your words which you have prophesied, to bring back the vessels of the Lord’s house and all who were carried away captive, from Babylon to this place.”

- a. **Then the prophet Jeremiah spoke:** Jeremiah responded publically to Hananiah. Hananiah had publically contradicted him, essentially calling Jeremiah a false prophet. Therefore Jeremiah publically responded.
- b. **Amen! The Lord do so:** The words to come would make it clear that Jeremiah did not believe this, but he began by agreeing with Hananiah that it would be nice if it were true. If the **vessels of the Lord’s house** and the exiled captives came back, Jeremiah would be happy. He would be glad to be wrong.
- i. “Jeremiah’s reply to this is an ironic ‘*Yes indeed! Would that God might do so*’, probably conveying his sense of doubt by his tone of voice.” (Harrison)
- ii. “When someone tries to minimize the judgment of God, it is appropriate for the Christian to say, ‘I hope you’re right.’” (Ryken)

3. (7-9) Jeremiah responds by defending his prophetic ministry.

“Nevertheless hear now this word that I speak in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people: The prophets who have been before me and before you of old prophesied against many countries and great kingdoms—of war and disaster and pestilence. As for the prophet who prophesies of peace, when the word of the prophet comes to pass, the prophet will be known as one whom the Lord has truly sent.”

- a. **The prophets who have been before me and before you:** Jeremiah had wished Hananiah’s words were true. Then he challenged Hananiah, starting with the word **nevertheless**, and reminding everyone that *most* of the prophets before them had negative, unwelcome messages.
- i. “Namely, Joel, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and others; all of whom denounced similar evils against a corrupt people.” (Clarke)
- ii. “These verses should not be interpreted to mean that the entire message of all the prophets before Jeremiah was one of judgment. Jeremiah’s meaning was that the usual message of the earlier prophets was one of

doom, and that the when he spoke of judgment he was more in the line of the predecessors than Hananiah.” (Thompson)

b. **As for the prophet who prophesies of peace, when the word of the prophet comes to pass:** Jeremiah didn’t deny that sometimes God’s messengers bring a word of **peace**. He simply said that such a word should be believed when it actually comes to pass, especially when it has a time associated with the prophecy (*within two full years*, 28:3).

4. (10-11) The broken yoke.

Then Hananiah the prophet took the yoke off the prophet Jeremiah’s neck and broke it. And Hananiah spoke in the presence of all the people, saying, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Even so I will break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years.’” And the prophet Jeremiah went his way.

a. **Hananiah the prophet took the yoke off the prophet Jeremiah’s neck and broke it:** Jeremiah had this yoke when he spoke to King Zedekiah and the messengers from other nations ([Jeremiah 27:1-3](#)). Apparently some days or weeks later ([Jeremiah 27:1](#) and [28:1](#)) he walked the temple courts still wearing the yoke, as a public illustration of his prophecy. Hananiah didn’t like the message of the yoke, so he took it from Jeremiah and **broke it**.

i. “A visual prophecy like the yoke made a great impression on the people. So Hananiah took the yoke from Jeremiah’s neck and smashed it, to show that Nebuchadnezzar’s power would be shattered in two years.” (Feinberg)

b. **Even so I will break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar:** Hananiah said this in the name of the Lord. He illustrated his message that the revolt against Nebuchadnezzar would succeed by breaking the yoke and explaining the meaning of the broken yoke, again giving a time measure for it to happen.

i. It seems plain from the words and actions of Hananiah that he *really believed* his prophetic word was a message from the Lord. He seemed sincere and invested in the message. Yet none of that made it *true*, and in fact it was *not true*.

c. **The prophet Jeremiah went his way:** By all appearances Hananiah won this public dispute between the prophets. He seemed to overpower Jeremiah, he said the last word, and Jeremiah walked away without a response. In this case, appearances were not true and neither was Hananiah.

B. Yokes of wood, yokes of iron.

1. (12-14) A yoke of iron to replace a yoke of wood.

Now the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, after Hananiah the prophet had broken the yoke from the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, saying, “Go and tell Hananiah, saying, “Thus says the Lord: “You have broken the yokes of wood, but you have made in their place yokes of iron.” For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “I have put a yoke of iron on the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they shall serve him. I have given him the beasts of the field also.””

a. **You have broken the yokes of wood, but you have made in their place yokes of iron:** We aren’t told how Jeremiah felt when he left the confrontation with Hananiah at the temple. Yet later God gave him a message to send to Hananiah, who could break the wood yoke Jeremiah wore as a prophetic illustration, but could never break the **yokes of iron** God would set upon those who opposed Nebuchadnezzar.

i. Notably, Jeremiah said, **you have made in their place yokes of iron**. The people made their own **yokes**, much stronger than the **yokes of wood** God appointed for them. “The inference is that the people, having rejected the wooden yoke of submission laid upon them for their sins, would find the indestructible iron yoke of servitude infinitely more uncomfortable.” (Cundall)

ii. The **yokes of iron** can be understood as God’s stricter discipline upon His people. If we resist God’s gentler discipline – **yokes of wood** – we may find ourselves under much more unpleasant **yokes of iron**. It is far better to surrender the better yoke of Jesus Christ ([Matthew 11:28-30](#)).

iii. The **yokes of iron** may also be expressed in sinful habits that we allow to enslave us. **Yokes** are instruments of servitude. “Do you think it will be easy to serve the base-born parts of your nature, when you set them on the throne and tell them to govern you?” (Maclaren)

iv. “I will ask you a question. You have got rid of the yoke of wood: how about your shoulders now? Your Sundays, are they very pleasant? Your family, is it very happy? Your mind, is it very much at ease? Oh, no!” (Spurgeon)

v. Happily, the power of God can break even an iron yoke – *if* we will only turn to Him and trust Him again.

b. **I have put a yoke of iron on the neck of all these nations**: Their proposed rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar would fail. They would **serve him**, and Nebuchadnezzar’s dominion would be so complete that he would rule over **the beasts of the field**.

i. “A symbolic wooden yoke *could* be broken, but the Babylonian overlordship was certain.” (Cundall)

2. (15-17) The word to Hananiah.

Then the prophet Jeremiah said to Hananiah the prophet, “Hear now, Hananiah, the Lord has not sent you, but you make this people trust in a lie. Therefore thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, I will cast you from the face of the earth. This year you shall die, because you have taught rebellion against the Lord.’” So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month.

a. **Hear now, Hananiah, the Lord has not sent you, but you make this people trust a lie**: Jeremiah felt it important to directly and publicly tell Hananiah that whatever his intentions, he was a false prophet. Worse, he harmed the people of Judah, leading them to **trust in a lie** – a **lie** that they *wanted* to believe, because it was a much more positive message than Jeremiah’s.

i. “This was a bold speech in the presence of those priests and people who were prejudiced in favour of this false prophet, who prophesied to them smooth things. In such cases men wish to be *deceived*.” (Clarke)

ii. “What we might describe as wishful and unorthodox teaching, God more briefly calls *a lie* ([Jeremiah 28:15](#)) and *rebellion* ([Jeremiah 28:16](#)). He condemns it not only as offending against truth and against his authority, but as doing a fatal disservice to the hearers: *you have made this people trust in a lie* ([Jeremiah 28:15](#)).” (Kidner)

iii. **You make this people to trust in a lie**: “How much of human prophesying is covered by that word! All those philosophies which attempt to interpret life without the light of revelation — all so-called theologies, which result from speculations which invalidate the revelation; make men trust in lies, and that because they are the utterances of men not sent by Jehovah.” (Morgan)

b. **This year you shall die**: This was *God’s* message to Hananiah. He gave a time measure for his prophecy, so God gave him a time measure in return: Hananiah would die within the **year**, and he did.

i. He died in the **seventh month**, only two months after this confrontation ([Jeremiah 28:1](#)). Two months is not a long time, but it is plenty of time to repent if one has any inclination to repent.

ii. “God, in mercy, gave him about *two months*, in which he might prepare to meet his Judge. Here, then the *true prophet was demonstrated*, and the *false prophet detected*. The death of Hananiah, thus predicted, was God’s *seal* to the words of his prophet; and must have gained his other predictions great credit among the people.” (Clarke)

c. **Because you have taught rebellion against the Lord:** It is impossible to say what Hananiah’s intentions were, but it is not impossible to measure the effect of his lies. Whether he meant to or not, he **taught rebellion against the Lord**, and God would stop him from continuing to do so.