

# Come to Understanding

**They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding,  
and they that murmured shall learn doctrine. — Isaiah 29:24**

May 1, 2006

Volume 5 Number 9

## The Gospel of Hananiah

It is tempting to accept writings and prophecies as true because they are ancient. They are especially appealing when they are called “Gospels.” After all, the word “Gospel” means “Good News.” Therefore, many have readily embraced such writings as the “Gospel of Thomas,” the “Gospel of Mary,” and, recently, the “Gospel of Judas.” They bring the news that, perhaps, there are alternative Gospels to those that have been widely accepted as the Word of God.

We can learn much about alternative Gospels when we study the prophecies of Jeremiah and Hananiah. The two prophets brought very different messages to the people of Judah as they were being taken captive by the king of Babylon. After Jeremiah had unsuccessfully pleaded with Judah to repent from their false worship and to only serve Yahweh, he finally painted a very gloomy picture for them. He said that they were destined to serve the king of Babylon for seventy years:

- 8 Therefore thus says Yahweh of hosts; Because you have not heard my words,
- 9 Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, says Yahweh, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and a hissing, and perpetual desolations.
- 10 Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle.
- 11 And this whole land shall be a desolation, *and* an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. -Jeremiah 25

After narrowly escaping being put to death for uttering this dreaded prophesy, Jeremiah continued to faithfully proclaim the unpopular words of Yahweh. Putting a yoke upon his own neck and sending yokes to the king of Judah, as well as to the kings of other nearby countries, Jeremiah further prophesied:

- 8 And it shall come to pass, *that* the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, says Yahweh, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand. -Jeremiah 27

Because of their refusal to repent, Yahweh had determined that Judah and other countries would serve the king of Babylon for seventy years or suffer dire consequences.

Hananiah offered an alternative prophesy. As the people gathered at the house of Yahweh, he brought them good news (a “Gospel”), which he claimed to be from Yahweh:

- 1 And it came to pass the same year, in 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, which *was* of Gibeon, spoke to me in the house of Yahweh, in the presence of the priests and of all the people, saying,
- 2 Thus speaks Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. -Jeremiah 28

He said the yoke of the king of Babylon was broken. He further said that the captivity would only last for two years:

- 3 Within two full years will I bring again into this place all the vessels of Yahweh’s house, that Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon took away from this place, and carried them to Babylon:
- 4 And I will bring again to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah, that went into Babylon, says Yahweh: for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon. -Jeremiah 28

We can only imagine the applause that Hananiah must have received as he delivered the wonderful prophesy. In contrast to the gloomy seventy years of captivity that Jeremiah had prophesied, Hananiah said that the future of Judah would soon be bright. He claimed Judah would be spared from Yahweh’s harsh judgment... without repenting from their rebellion against His word!

**So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense,  
and caused them to understand the reading. — Nehemiah 8:8**

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Even Jeremiah said, “Amen” to these wonderful words of Hananiah. No one, including Jeremiah, welcomes the judgment that comes with disobedience against Yahweh:

- 5 Then the prophet Jeremiah said to the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the priests, and in the presence of all the people that stood in the house of Yahweh,
- 6 Even the prophet Jeremiah said, Amen: Yahweh do so: Yahweh perform your words which you have prophesied, to bring again the vessels of Yahweh’s house, and all that is carried away captive, from Babylon into this place. -Jeremiah 28

The Gospel of Hananiah sounded good. The promise of a blessing of peace from Yahweh, without obeying His word was appealing to Judah. However, it was not true. It was not the word of Yahweh, who had told Israel that they had only two options available to them. They could either obey Him and be blessed or disobey Him and be cursed:

- 26 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;
- 27 A blessing, if you obey the commandments of Yahweh your God, which I command you this day:
- 28 And a curse, if you will not obey the commandments of Yahweh your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which you have not known. -Deuteronomy 11

In order to obey Yahweh’s word, Judah would have needed to repent from their false worship practices and trust only in Yahweh.

Pleasant prophecies that promise peace and liberty, as well as prosperity, without repentance are pleasing to people who refuse to know and obey the word of Yahweh. Isaiah recorded these desires for false prophets:

- 8 Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come forever and ever:
- 9 That this *is* a rebellious people, lying children, children *that* will not hear the law of Yahweh:
- 10 Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits:

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- 11 Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us. -Isaiah 30

They were saying, in effect, tell us lies. Tell us that we will have Yahweh’s blessings without obeying Him. While they pretended to want to hear from Yahweh, they really wanted to distance themselves from Him and His word.

Paul described deceivers who, serving their own bellies, use “good words and fair speeches” to deceive the hearts of the simple:

- 18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Yahshua the Messiah, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. -Romans 16

Peter called those who use great swelling words of vanity “wells without water.” They appeal to the desires of the flesh instead of a desire to perform the will of God. The people who believe the false promises of liberty are actually brought into bondage:

- 18 For when they speak great swelling *words* of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, *through much* wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.
- 19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. -2 Peter 2

Jeremiah explained that prophecies from Yahweh will come to pass:

- 9 The prophet which prophecies of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, *then* shall the prophet be known, that Yahweh has truly sent him. -Jeremiah 28

For Judah’s refusal to repent, Jeremiah prophesied seventy years of captivity and bondage. On the other hand, Hananiah promised that they would be set free in two years to live in peace and liberty, without repentance. History showed Jeremiah to be true and Hananiah to be false. Trusting in lies, Judah refused to repent. Therefore, Jerusalem, along with the house of Yahweh, was destroyed and the captivity of Judah lasted seventy years. Hananiah brought good news, but it was false.

Things that are ancient are not necessarily true. Will we believe a lie because our ancestors believed it? Do we naively think that that which is old is true? Satan (the devil) is old, but Yahshua (Jesus) called him “a liar, and the father of it” (see John 8:44).

When the next ancient manuscript is found, can we distinguish between the Word of Yahweh and another “Gospel of Hananiah?” Will it be the true “Good News,” or will it be another promise of peace and liberty, without repentance?