

Lying Prophets

“And he said unto him, I also am a prophet as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of Jehovah, saying...” (1 Kings 13:18).

The term “lied” is used three times in the scriptures: (1) in our text, where an old prophet lied to a young prophet, (2) concerning Israel, and how they “lied unto him (*Jehovah, ret*) with their tongue,” (Psalms 78:36) and (3) Ananias and Sapphira who “lied...unto God,” i.e., they lied “to the Holy Spirit” (Acts 5:4).

As there may be a great deal of the last two acts, i.e., lying to God, each individual will give an account, as stated by the Lord, saying, “I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matthew 12:36-37). Concerning the first, i.e., lying prophets, and or teachers, we want to direct our attention to a time and circumstance when false prophets, and/or priests attempted to destroy through lies and deception.

Our consideration involves Nehemiah. Nehemiah had arrived in Jerusalem, from Persia, and was seeking the well-being of the remnant in Judæa. This inflamed the ire of Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem. These men attempted to lure Nehemiah into dangerous, and/or compromising positions, or, to threaten him with legal action.

One of the attempts of Sanballat and his cohorts thought to do Nehemiah mischief. Thus, they attempted to draw Nehemiah away from Jerusalem: to kill him or at least to do him great harm. Four times they sent messengers to request Nehemiah’s attention, to which Nehemiah said, “I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down” (Nehemiah 6:2-4).

On another occasion, Tobiah and Sanballat had hired Shemaiah (She-may-ah) the son of Delaiah (De-lay-ya), to deceive Nehemiah, under the pretense of seeking Nehemiah’s safety, saying, “Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple: for they will come to slay thee.” Delaiah (De-lay-ya) was one of the twenty-four courses of the sons of Aaron who attended to the service of the temple. Nehemiah was not of the house of Aaron, and would have sinned had he followed the advice, saying, “For this cause was he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, and that they might have matter of an evil report, that they might reproach me.” Thus, Nehemiah said, “Remember, O my God, Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works, and also the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear (Nehemiah 6:10-14).

As it was with Nehemiah, Peter said, “But there arose prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction” (2 Peter 2:1).

In both circumstances, i.e., Nehemiah and Peter, problems were to arise from within: in the Law and Prophets the opposition and lying came from wicked priests and prophets; in the gospel dispensation they would arise in the form of false teachers. Are you on guard against false teachers? The Apostle Paul warned: “Now I beseech you brethren, mark them that are causing the division and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent” (Romans 16:17-18).

Remember the words of the Apostle Paul, saying, “I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciple after them” (Acts 20:29-30). Make sure you have a love of the truth, and therein stand.