

THE BOOK OF YIRMIYAHU
Rav David Sabato

Shiur #17: Yirmiyahu and Chananya Son of Azur (chapter 28)

INTRODUCTION

Yirmiyahu's struggle with the false prophets reaches its climax in chapter 28. The chapter centers around the direct confrontation between Yirmiyahu and one of the false prophets during the days of Tzidkiyahu, Chananya son of Azur, who publicly contradicted Yirmiyahu's prophecies. The biblical account outlines the figure of the false prophet in contrast to the unique figure of the true prophet. Chapter 28 is also a direct continuation of Yirmiyahu's prophecies against the false prophets in chapter 27, as is evident from the opening verse: "And it came to pass **the same year**, in the beginning of the reign of Tzidkiyahu king of Yehuda." As we will see in the course of this study, there are also clear internal connections between the chapters (the struggle against the claim of peace, the return of the vessels of the house of God, in the presence of the priests and the people). The general prophecy against the false prophets in chapter 27 is attached to a name and a face in chapter 28. Here in chapter 28, we encounter for the first time a real false prophet and we are witness to a direct confrontation between him and Yirmiyahu.

CHANANYA'S PROPHECY

(1) And it came to pass the same year, in the beginning of the reign of Tzidkiyahu king of Yehuda, in the fourth year and in the fifth month, that Chananya the son of Azur the prophet, who was of Giv'on, spoke to me in the house of the Lord, in the presence of the priests and of all the people, saying.

The story opens with a presentation that connects it chronologically to the previous prophecy: in the same year; the place: the house of the Lord; those present for the confrontation: Yirmiyahu, Chananya, the people, and the priests.

The first part of the chapter records the words of Chananya son of Azur, who is referred to as a "prophet" throughout the chapter. Chananya's words are directed against those of Yirmiyahu: "He spoke to me." His words are arranged in a chiasmic structure:

I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylonia.
Within two full years will I bring again to **this place**

all the vessels of the Lord's house, that Nevuchadnetzar king of Babylonia took away from **this place**, and carried them to Babylonia.

And Yekhonya the son of Yehoyakim, king of Yehuda, with all the captives of Yehuda that went into Babylonia,

I will bring again to **this place**, says the Lord:
for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylonia.

The structure of these verses highlights the connection between the return of the Temple's vessels and the return of the exiles. Striking also is the threefold repetition of the words "this place," denoting the Temple, which stood at the center of the prophecies of the false prophets. Breaking the yoke alludes, of course, to Yirmiyahu's symbolic act in chapter 27, where, at God's command, he places the yoke on his neck to symbolize the acceptance of the yoke of Babylonia. The fact that we are dealing with the same year teaches that Chananya's prophecy has a clear political context; he tries to neutralize Yirmiyahu's impact on the attempt to rebel against Babylonia, which was taking form in Jerusalem at that time.

This tendency emerges from a comparison between the prophecy of Chananya and the prophecies of the false prophets in chapter 27. There Yirmiyahu related to the prophecies of the false prophets concerning the return of the vessels of the house of God, and here Chananya makes the prophecy concerning the return of the vessels more concrete, "Within two full years," in the same way that Yirmiyahu spells out the time of the redemption. Chananya also adds a prophecy concerning the return of the exiles from Babylonia together with the vessels of the house of God.¹ In addition, in both the opening and the closing of the section he mentions the breaking of the yoke of the king of Babylonia, in contrast to Yirmiyahu's prophecy about placing that yoke on the neck. The opening clause, "Thus speaks the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel," parallels the opening of Yirmiyahu's prophecy concerning the kings of the nations in the previous chapter, and, as stated, comes to negate it.

YIRMIYAHU'S RESPONSE

The main surprise in the story lies in Yirmiyahu's unexpected response to the words of Chananya, which, in contrast to the words of Chananya, does not open with a sweeping rejection of the competing prophecy, but rather with the possibility of its fulfillment (5-9):

Then the prophet Yirmeya said to the prophet Chananya in the presence of the priests and in the presence of all the people that stood in the house of the Lord, and the prophet Yirmeya said: Amen, may the Lord do so; may the Lord perform your words which you have

¹ The prophecy creates a clear parallel between the return of the vessels and the return of the exiles. This indicates that the taking of the vessels was understood as a symbol of the exile of the glory of God, and thus the return of the vessels (which is mentioned first) will lead also to the return of the exiles.

prophesied, to bring back the vessels of the Lord's house, and all that were carried away captive, from Babylonia to this place. Nevertheless, hear you now this word that I speak in your ears and in the ears of all the people; the prophets that have been before us and before you of old prophesied both against many countries and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of pestilence. As for the prophet who prophesies for peace, when the word of that prophet shall come to pass, then shall it be known that the Lord has truly sent the prophet.

Like Chananya, Yirmiyahu turns to him in the presence of the congregation standing in the house of God. The emphasis of this point leads to the doubling of the words, "And Yirmiyahu said," owing to the length of the passage. His words are divided into two. He first presents the positive possibility according to which Chananya's words will indeed be fulfilled, and he even expresses his desire for that outcome (6): "Amen, may the Lord do so." In the second part (7-9), Yirmiyahu qualifies his remarks ("Nevertheless"), and proposes a criterion for distinguishing between a true prophecy and a false one.

Yirmiyahu's criterion is based on the section dealing with a prophet in *Devarim* 18. It is therefore appropriate to examine the relationship between that passage and the words of Yirmiyahu:

And if you say in your heart: How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken? Know that when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken, but the prophet has spoken it out of presumption; you shall not be afraid of him. (*Devarim* 18:21-22)

The book of *Devarim* presents one clear criterion – the fulfillment of the prophet's words of prophecy. The connection between the Torah section concerning a prophecy and Yirmiyahu's debate with Chananya is stated explicitly in the *Sifri* (*Devarim* 178):

"And if you say" – You will one day say: "How shall we know the word [which the Lord has not spoken]?" Yirmiyahu says: Behold, the vessels of the house of the Lord will go to Babylonia, and Chananya says: Behold, the vessels of the house of the Lord will be brought back from Babylonia. And I do not know whom to believe! [Therefore] the verse states: "When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord... that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken." Which is the word that God has spoken? That which [the prophet] said and it came [true].

Yirmiyahu, however, adds another important condition to the criterion mentioned in the passage concerning a prophet: He limits it to the case of a prophecy of peace, like that delivered by Chananya. According to Yirmiyahu, only a prophecy of peace must stand the test of fulfillment; a prophecy of calamity, like that of Yirmiyahu, need not do so. Yirmiyahu himself does not

spell out the reason for this distinction. This is the way the *Yerushalmi* explains it (*Sanhedrin* 11:4):

[Chananya] said to him: Give a sign for your words. He said to him: I prophesy evil, and so I cannot give a sign to my words. For the Holy One, blessed is He, says that He will bring evil and then repents. But you prophesy good; it is you who must give a sign to your words! He said to him: No, it is you who must bring a sign to your words. He said to him... I will give a sign and wonder in that man [Chananya]: This year he will die, because he uttered rebellion against the Lord. And that is what happened: "So Chananya the prophet died the same year, in the seventh month."

The words of the *Yerushalmi* were later explained and codified by the Rambam in *Hilkhot Yesodei Ha-Torah* (10:4):

[The above principles do not apply to] prophecies of calamity that a prophet will utter, e.g., "So and so will die," "This or that year will be a year of famine or a year of war," and the like. If his words do not come true, this does not nullify the validity of his prophecy, nor do we say [in condemnation of him]: "Behold, he spoke and his words were not fulfilled." [This is because] the Holy One, Blessed is He, is slow to anger, abundant in kindness, and forgiving of evil. Thus, it is possible that they will repent and [their sin] will be forgiven, as in the case of the people of Ninveh, or that [retribution] will be held in abeyance, as in the case of Chizkiyahu.

[This does not apply regarding prophecies for the good.] If [a prophet] promised that good will come and such and such will occur, and the good about which he prophesied did not materialize, he is surely a false prophet. Any good which God decrees, even if [the decree] is conditional, will never be nullified. We find [God] nullifying a positive prophecy only during the destruction of the first Temple. He had promised the righteous that they would not die together with the wicked; however, He nullified this prophecy, as explained in tractate *Shabbat*. We can conclude from this that a prophet should be tested on the basis of his positive prophecies. This was what Yirmiyahu meant by his reply to Chananya son of Azur, when he was prophesying doom and Chananya was promising a [glorious future]. He told Chananya: "If my words are not fulfilled, this will not lead to the conclusion that I am a false prophet. If your promises are not fulfilled, however, it will be proven that you are a false prophet," as implied by (*Yirmiyahu* 28:7): "Nevertheless, hear you now this word... As for the prophet who prophesies for peace, when the word of that prophet shall come to pass, then shall it be known that the Lord has truly sent the prophet."²

² There are several difficulties with this explanation. First, the prophecy concerning the potter's house teaches that even a prophecy of peace can be nullified. And furthermore, according to this explanation, Yirmiyahu always comes out on top in relation to Chananya because of the very fact that he is a prophet of calamity, and so he always enjoys the presumption of being a true prophet. Amos Chakham, in his article, "*Ha-Ma'avak bein Nevi'ei Ha-Emet Le-Nevi'ei Ha-Sheker*," *Iyyunim Be-Sefer Yirmiyahu*, II, p. 216, ites the explanation

It may be possible to find a hint in this direction in the words of Yirmiyahu himself. Yirmiyahu does not draw a simple contrast between prophecies of calamity and prophecies of peace, but rather contrasts the early true prophets, who prophesied calamities: "The prophets that have been before me and before you of old prophesied both against many countries and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of pestilence," to a prophet of peace like Chananya: "The prophet who prophesies for peace..." Yirmiyahu accepts the possibility that a true prophet will prophesy a prophecy of peace, but he characterizes the true prophets, traditionally, as prophets of calamity! What is the reason for this? The *Malbim* explains as follows:

"Nevertheless, hear you now... the prophets...." Most of the prophets delivered prophecies of calamity, because the prophet's mission is to inform the people of the evil that will befall them so that they should repent, and for this God would send a prophet, but not to inform them of the good that will come in the near future, for why should He inform them of this by way of a prophet? He would not send a prophet to inform of future good unless this was necessary in order to strengthen the prophet...

This explanation emerges also from the section dealing with a prophet in *Devarim* 18. The Torah emphasizes there that unlike the prognostications of the magicians and sorcerers, God's prophet has a different purpose. Predicting the future is merely a tool in the hand of the prophet to change and repair the reality of the present. Hence, the primary purpose of a prophecy of calamity is precisely its cancellation, and without a doubt this is Yirmiyahu's primary goal in his prophecies of calamity. In contrast, the false prophets prophesy peace because their aim is not to shock and repair, but rather to calm and maintain the status quo.³

Yirmiyahu's words do not make an impression upon Chananya, and instead of responding substantively to Yirmiyahu's arguments, he chooses to intensify the debate (11-12):

Then Chananya the prophet took the bar from off the prophet Yirmeya's neck and broke it. And Chananya spoke in the presence of all the people, saying: Thus said the Lord: Even so will I break the yoke of Nevukhadnetzar king of Babylonia from the neck of all the nations within the space of two years. And the prophet Yirmeya went his way.

of the *Ho'il Moshe*, according to whom the Rambam means that if there are two prophets, one of whom prophesies war and the other prophesies peace, only then do we wait for the results, and decide on their basis who is the true prophet and who is the false one.

³ In this context, I wish to cite from Judge Hayyim Cohen, *Zekhuyot Adam Ba-Mikra U-Ba-Talmud*, p. 71: "False prophets... used freedom of speech not to spread the word of God and Divine ethics, but to find favor in the eyes of the kings and rulers of their day. These were for the most part prophets of good, whereas among the true prophets there were also prophets of fury... Their voice was heard from every stage, in the markets and in the streets, whether it found favor in the eyes of the rulers or those who heard them, or whether it was to their chagrin."

Placing the bar on Yirmiyahu's neck was a symbolic prophetic act that was meant to demonstrate the validity of the prophecy to the people, and in corresponding manner Chananya responds with a dramatic "prophetic" act of his own. He takes the yoke from off of Yirmiyahu's neck and breaks it, and in this way he tries to overcome Yirmiyahu's prophecy in actual practice, canceling the prophecy in the presence of the people. Chananya adds here to his previous prophecy that the yoke will be broken "from the neck of all the nations."

Surprisingly, this phase ends in the victory, so to speak, of Chananya. The defeated Yirmiyahu does not respond to Chananya's provocative action, and he goes on his way in silence. A similar situation occurs in the story of the confrontation between a false prophet and a true prophet in I *Melakhim* 22. There, the false prophet Tzidkiya son of Kena'ana responds to the words of the true prophet Mikhyahu son of Yimla by striking him on the cheek, as an act of public humiliation and degradation intended to detract from the credibility of his prophecy in the eyes of his audience.⁴

YIRMIYAHU'S LATE RESPONSE AND ITS MEANING

Only after he goes on his way does God come to Yirmiyahu and cancel Chananya's prophecy (12-14):

Then the word of the Lord came to Yirmeya, after Chananya the prophet had broken the yoke from off the neck of the prophet Yirmeya, saying: Go and tell Chananya, saying: Thus says the Lord: You have broken the bars of wood, but you shall make instead of them bars of iron. For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nevukhadnetzar, king of Babylonia; and they shall serve him, and I have given him the beasts of the field also.

The command to replace the bars of wood with bars of iron represents the overcoming of Chananya's violent act, and it symbolically reinforces Yirmiyahu's prophecy and the yoke of the king of Babylonia, which becomes unbreakable. Yirmiyahu is ordered to go back to Chananya and deliver the true prophecy in his presence.

Yirmiyahu fulfills his command, adding certain personal remarks to Chananya (15-16):

Then said the prophet Yirmeya to Chananya the prophet: Hear now, Chananya: The Lord **has not sent you**, but you make this people to trust in a lie. Therefore, thus says the Lord: Behold, **I will send you**

⁴ In both stories, the false prophets prophesy victory for the king, as opposed to the true prophets. Tzidkiya son of Kena'ana prophesies victory for Achav over Aram, and Chananya prophesies victory for Tzidkiyahu over Babylonia. In both cases, there is a symbolic act: Tzidkiyahu take iron horns and says that Achav will gore Aram with them, and Chananya breaks Yirmiyahu's yoke.

from off the face of the earth; this year you shall die, because you have uttered rebellion against the Lord.

What he says here should be compared to what he said in the first section. First, here he concludes that Chananya is a false prophet, something which he had not said previously. There he only said, "Nevertheless hear you now," thus qualifying his praise for Chananya's prophecy and presenting a criterion for distinguishing between truth and falsehood. But here Yirmiyahu says, "Hear now, Chananya" (without "nevertheless"), and he asserts in unequivocal manner: God has not sent you! Chananya's punishment is determined measure for measure – since "the Lord had not sent you," therefore, "I will send you from off the face of the earth."

The final verse in the chapter states: "So Chananya the prophet died the same year in the seventh month." Yirmiyahu's words are fulfilled in the same year, after only two months, and thus both sides of the debate are fully decided. Yirmiyahu turns out to be a true prophet whose prophecy is fulfilled in a timely manner, and Chananya turns out to be a false prophet who is punished with death. While Chananya mentions a date in two years time, Yirmiyahu mentions an earlier date: "This year you shall die." This closes the circle that was opened at the beginning of the chapter: "The same year."⁵

The chiasmic structure of the chapter emphasizes the contrast between the first part (1-11) and the second part (12-17), which stems from God's reaction at the beginning of the second part:

[A] Introduction: Chananya's prophecy "the same year" (1-4).

[B] Yirmiyahu's words to Chananya: Indecision – the condition for true prophecy (5-9).

[C] Chananya breaks the yoke; Yirmiyahu goes on his way (10-11).

[C1] The word of God: Yirmiyahu goes back to Chananya; the yoke of wood is replaced by a yoke of iron (12-14).

[B1] Yirmiyahu's words to Chananya: Decision – Chananya delivers a false prophecy (15-16).

[A1] Conclusion: Chananya's death "the same year" (17).

In light of the story's ending and its chiasmic structure, there arises a question regarding the timing of Yirmiyahu's response. His delay in responding led to Yirmiyahu's temporary defeat in the debate and to the decline in his own prestige and that of his prophecy in the eyes of the people, who were apparently impressed with Chananya's assertiveness in contrast to Yirmiyahu's hesitancy. Why, then, didn't Yirmiyahu say to Chananya already at the outset that he is a false prophet?

⁵ In the passage from the *Yerushalmi* cited above, Yirmiyahu's setting a time is understood as a response to Chananya's objection to the conditions for confirming a prophecy set by Yirmiyahu: "[Chananya] said to him: No, it is you who must bring a sign to your words. He said to him... I will give a sign and wonder in that man [Chananya]: This year he will die, because he uttered rebellion against the Lord. And that's what happened: 'So Chananya the prophet died the same year in the seventh month.'"

"ONE WHO PROPHESES THAT WHICH WAS NOT SAID TO HIM" – THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHANANYA AND YIRMIYAHU

It seems that the time gap is not accidental, and in the background lies another fundamental difference between true prophets and false prophets. Let us turn to the words of Martin Buber, in his essay "*False Prophets*":⁶

When Hananiah took the yoke from Jeremiah's neck, broke it, and announced to the people that within two years God would break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar from the necks of all the nations, Jeremiah went his way in silence. Not until God sent him to Hananiah with a message did Jeremiah go to him and say what he had to say.

I am always deeply moved when I come to this passage, and always learn from it anew. Of all the prophets, Jeremiah is the only one who knew he was elected to his office at the very hour of his birth – in accordance with the gravity of the historical juncture and the decisions it dictated. He felt that the hand of God had touched his mouth and with that touch had enabled him to speak the words of God. It was God Himself who told him that he was "set over the nations and over the kingdoms" (1:10) and that the judgment of God which would be realized in history would be communicated to him. And even more: it was in response to God's command that Jeremiah had laid the bar, which Hananiah broke, on his own neck as a sign that in this historical juncture it was God's will that the nations be subject to Nebuchadnezzar, his strange "servant" (43:10). Yet, in spite of all this, he was silent when the bar was broken and went his way. He went in order to listen for God's word. Why did he go? Obviously, because in spite of everything there were still things he did not know. Hananiah had spoken like a man who "knows it all." Jeremiah had heard him speak like a man who "knows it all," but there were still things Jeremiah himself did not know. God had, indeed, spoken to him only an hour before. But this was another hour. History is a dynamic process, and history means one hour is never like the one that has gone before. God operates in history, and God is not a machine which, once it has been wound up, keeps on running until it runs down. He is a living God... At this hour, God wills this or that for mankind, but He has endowed mankind with a will of its own... So, mankind can change its will from one hour to the next, and God, who is deeply concerned about mankind and its will, and the possible changes it may undergo, can, when that will changes, change His plan for mankind... One must not rely on one's knowledge. One must go one's way and listen all over again.

Yirmiyahu hears the words of Chananya which negate his prophecy, but he does not counter them, but merely warns Chananya against false prophecy. Moreover, Yirmiyahu who loves his people with all his heart, hopes and wants to believe that his own prophecy of calamity will be cancelled –

⁶ Martin Buber, *On the Bible: Eighteen Studies*, pp. 166-167.

"Amen, may the Lord do so." Only after God speaks to him does he know that this was a false prophecy. What this means, according to Buber, is that a true prophet is aware of the possibility of change and of the dynamic quality of prophecy, as we saw in the prophecy concerning the potter's house: "At one time I speak concerning a nation... And at another time, I speak concerning a nation" (18:7, 9). The decree is not fixed and absolute, but rather dynamic and conditioned on the situation.

In contrast, Chananya presents the opposite position. In order to understand Chananya's position, we must first examine his character as a prophet. *Chazal* already noted Chananya's uniqueness as a false prophet, describing him as follows in the Tosefta (*Sanhedrin* 14:14):

One who prophesies that which he did not hear – Tzidkiyahu son of Kena'ana. And one to whom [the prophecy] was not told, like Chananya son of Azur, for he would hear things from the mouth of Yirmiyahu the prophet, who would prophesy in the upper market, and then he [Chananya] would repeat the prophecy in the lower market.

Chananya, unlike Tzidkiyahu son of Kena'ana, would not invent a truly false prophecy; rather, he would deliver a prophecy that had not been told to him. According to the Tosefta, the source of his prophecy was none other than Yirmiyahu! Indeed, the connection between Yirmiyahu and Chananya in this chapter is striking. Chananya is a sort of negative image of Yirmiyahu; he speaks in his language, makes a similar presentation, and reverses his prophecy. The *Yerushalmi* (*Sanhedrin* 11:5) adds an interesting definition to Chananya:

One who prophesies that which was not said to him – Like Chananya son of Azur... Chananya son of Azur **was a true prophet, but *lo kiboset***, and he heard what Yirmiyahu was prophesying in the upper market, and he went down and prophesied it in the lower market.

The commentaries to the *Yerushalmi* had difficulty with the words *lo kiboset*. Prof. Saul Lieberman⁷ understood that this is actually one word borrowed from Greek, *lokiboset*, which means "plagiarizer." In other words, he was a literary thief of prophesies. But if so, it is difficult to understand what precisely Chananya's severe sin was. Moreover, his words indicate that he completely reversed Yirmiyahu's prophecy!

A slightly different interpretation is offered in the *Talmud Bavli* (*Sanhedrin* 89a):

Yirmiyahu stood in the upper market, and said: "Thus says the Lord of hosts: Behold, I will break the bow of Elam" (39:35). Thereupon, Chananya son of Azur drew an *a minori* conclusion: If Elam, which only came to assist Babylon, yet the Holy one, blessed is He, said, "Behold, I will break the bow of Elam," then how much more so the Chaldeans

⁷ In his book, *Greek and Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*.

[i.e., Babylonians] themselves! So he went to the lower market and proclaimed: "Thus speaks the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel saying: I have broken the yoke of the kingdom of Babylonia."

According to the *Bavli*, Chananya's sin was not only his "copying" of a prophecy, but also his drawing erroneous conclusions from the true prophecy of Yirmiyahu.

It is possible to suggest another explanation of the idea of Chananya's plagiarism that is a sort of combination of these two explanations. Chananya's prophecy regarding the breaking of the yoke of the Babylonian king is reminiscent of a prophecy of Yeshayahu that was delivered in a similar situation – Ashur's ascent to Jerusalem: "O My people that dwell in Zion, be not afraid of Ashur: he shall smite you with a rod.... And it shall come to pass on that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off your shoulder, **and his yoke from off your neck**" (*Yeshayahu* 10:24-27). In light of this similarity, Chananya should be seen as a prophet who tries to apply this earlier true prophecy to his own period, not understanding that this is a different period and a different reality. The falseness in his prophecy stems from his failure to understand that God's word does not fit every generation in the same way, and in this regard, he is the total opposite of Yirmiyahu, the true prophet.

We noted in the past the fundamental differences between Yirmiyahu and Yeshayahu, regarding, among other things, Jerusalem and the empire of his day, which are based on the different reality that each of them faced. This is what Buber writes later in his later essay:

Hananiah was no liar. He told what truth he knew. But the unfortunate thing was that he did not know any truth. He has been rightfully called a caricature of Isaiah, even a parrot of Isaiah. Isaiah gave voice to God's will to break the yoke of Ashur from off the neck of Judea. Hananiah concluded from this that God promised to break the yoke of Babylon, for the situation is the same. But the situation is not the same. When Isaiah spoke his word, Israel had a historic role... In the generation of Josiah the historical conditions changed... But Hananiah knew nothing of all this; in his eyes God was like a man who is true to his principles. He bound himself by the promise that was given to Isaiah; He promised to protect "this city." Because of this, now at this historic hour, so completely different, the false prophets put into His mouth that He will give Israel true peace "in this place." Hananiah does not know that there is such a thing in the world, an entirely different historic hour; he does not know that there is guilt in the world because of which opportunities are missed. He also does not know that there is repentance in the world, because of which possibilities present themselves that only a moment ago did not exist.

APPENDIX: THE STRUCTURE OF THE STORY

(1) And it came to pass the same year, in the beginning of the reign of Tzidkiyahu king of Yehuda, in the fourth year and in the fifth month, that Chananya the son of Azur the prophet, who was of Giv'on, spoke to me in the house of the Lord, in the presence of the priests and of all the people, saying.

(2) I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylonia.

(3) Within two full years will I bring again to **this place**

all the vessels of the Lord's house, that Nevuchadnetzar king of Babylonia took away from **this place**, and carried them to Babylonia.

(4) And Yekhonya the son of Yehoyakim, king of Yehuda, with all the captives of Yehuda that went into Babylonia,

I will bring again to **this place**, says the Lord:

for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylonia.

(5) Then the prophet Yirmeya said to the prophet Chananya in the presence of the priests, and in the presence of all the people that stood in the house of the Lord,

(6) and the prophet Yirmeya said:

Amen, may the Lord do so; may the Lord perform your words which you have prophesied,

to bring back the vessels of the Lord's house, and all that were carried away captive, from Babylonia to this place.

(7) Nevertheless hear you now this word that I speak in your ears, and in the ears of all the people:

(8) The prophets that have been before us and before you of old prophesied both against many countries and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of pestilence.

(9) As for the prophet who prophesies for peace, when the word of that prophet shall come to pass, then shall it be known that the Lord has truly sent the prophet.

(10) Then Chananya the prophet took the bar from off the prophet Yirmeya's neck, and broke it.

(11) And Chananya spoke in the presence of all the people, saying:

Thus said the Lord: Even so will I break the yoke of Nevukhadnetzar king of Babylonia from the neck of all the nations within the space of two years.

And the prophet Yirmeya **went** his way.

(12) Then the word of the Lord came to Yirmeya, after Chananya the prophet had broken the yoke from off the neck of the prophet Yirmeya, saying:

(13) **Go** and tell Chananya, saying:

Thus says the Lord: You have broken the bars of wood but you shall make instead of them bars of iron.

(14) For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel:

I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nevukhadnetzar, king of Babylonia; and they shall serve him, and I have given him the beasts of the field also.

(15) Then said the prophet Yirmeya to Chananya the prophet: Hear now, Chananya: The Lord has not **sent you,** but you make this people to trust in a lie.

(16) Therefore, thus says the Lord: Behold, **I will send you** from off the face of the earth; this year you shall die, because you have uttered rebellion against the Lord.

(17) So Chananya the prophet died **the same year in the seventh month.**

(Translated by David Strauss)