

IDENTIFYING THE RIGHT KIND OF MESSENGER

"I am . . . the One making the word of his servant come true, and the One that carries out completely the counsel of his own messengers."—ISAIAH 44:25, 26.

JEHOVAH GOD is the Grand Identifier of his true messengers. He identifies them by making the messages he delivers through them come true. Jehovah is also the Great Exposer of false messengers. How does he expose them? He frustrates their signs and predictions. In this way he shows that they are self-appointed prognosticators, whose messages really spring from their own false reasoning—yes, their foolish, fleshly thinking!

² Both Isaiah and Ezekiel claimed to be messengers of Jehovah God. Were they? Let us see. Isaiah prophesied in Jerusalem from about 778 B.C.E. to sometime after 732 B.C.E. Ezekiel was exiled to Babylon in 617 B.C.E. He prophesied to his Jewish brothers there. Both prophets boldly announced that Jerusalem would be destroyed. Other prophets said that God would not let this happen. Who proved to be the right kind of messengers?

Jehovah Exposes False Prophets

³ Ezekiel, while in Babylon, was given a vision of what was going on in Jerusa-

1. How does Jehovah identify the right kind of messengers, and how does he expose the false?
2. What conflict between messengers occurred in Israelite times?
- 3, 4. (a) What two opposing messages were delivered to Israelites in Babylon, and how did Jehovah expose a false messenger? (b) What did Jehovah say would happen to false prophets?

lem's temple. At the entrance of its eastern gate were 25 men. Among them were two princes, Jaazaniah and Pelatiah. How did Jehovah view them? Ezekiel 11:2, 3 answers: "Son of man, these are the men that are scheming hurtfulness and advising bad counsel against this city; that are saying, 'Is not the building of houses close at hand?'" These presumptuous peace messengers were saying, "There is no danger to Jerusalem. Why, soon we are going to build more houses in her!" So God told Ezekiel to counterprophecy against these lying prophets. In verse 13 of chapter 11, Ezekiel tells us what happened to one of them: "It came about that as soon as I prophesied Pelatiah the son of Benaiah himself died." This probably happened because Pelatiah was the most prominent and influential prince and the foremost idolater. His sudden death proved that he was a false prophet!

⁴ Jehovah's execution of Pelatiah did not stop the other false prophets from lying in God's name. These deceivers continued in their mad course of predicting things against God's will. So Jehovah God told Ezekiel: "Woe to the stupid prophets, who are walking after their own spirit, when there is nothing that they have seen!" Like Pelatiah, they would be "no more" for defiantly visioning for Jerusalem "a vision of