

The Attackers: Principles on Disinformation: Warnings to Believers to Be on Guard: 2 Pet 2:1-3; 3:16b; 2 John 7-9; The Lord's Warnings to Judah through the Prophet Jeremiah: Divine Opposition against False Prophets; the Derisive Reaction to Jeremiah's Message; Verbicide or Jeremiah's "Oracles," Jer 23:30-33

#### IV. Principles on Disinformation:

1. Disinformation is designed to manipulate people into believing the false message and then to act on it.
2. Disinformation is any communication which contains intentionally false and misleading material combined with true information which seeks to mislead and manipulate.
3. Misinformation seeks to deliberately delude people by imposing a distorted idea about reality.
4. This system of delusion is the subject of several passages of Scripture that stand as warnings to believers to be ever vigilant in defending their souls against the intrusion of the lie.

**2 Peter 2:1** - There came into existence false prophets, just as there shall be among you, who infiltrate destructive deviations from doctrine, antagonistically renouncing the supreme Lord who redeemed them, bringing impending destruction upon themselves.

**v. 2** - Many will follow their insatiable lust, because of whom the way of truth will be maligned;

**v. 3** - and in the sphere of their covetousness—lust for pleasure in a frantic search for happiness—the false teachers will mold their thinking by means of disinformation [πλαστός (*plastós*): **deceitful; to shape words to achieve a desired end**]; whose judgment from eternity past is still in the decree, and their destruction at the Great White Throne has not been canceled. (EXT)

**2 Peter 3:16b** - [Paul's letters] contain some things that are difficult to understand which those who are not a disciple and are unstable twist and distort, as they do the rest of the Scripture, to their own destruction. (EXT)

**2 John 7** - Many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. Such is the deceiver and the antichrist.

**2 John 8** - Look out for yourselves that you might not lose your momentum which you have accomplished but that you might receive a full reward.

**v. 9** - No one has fellowship with God who keeps on advancing out of bounds and does not remain in the teachings of the doctrines of Christ. He who remains in the teachings of Christ keeps on having fellowship with both the Father and the Son. (EXT)

5. Through Jeremiah, the Lord lays the false prophets low with a series of indictments for teaching false doctrines while claiming they are quoting Him:

**Jeremiah 23:30** - “Therefore behold, I am against the prophets [ **false teachers** ],” declares the Lord, “who steal My words from each other.

**v. 31** - “Behold, I am against the prophets,” declares the Lord, “who use their tongues and declare, ‘The Lord declares.’” (NASB)

6. These false prophets take the teachings of the true prophets and misapply them in order to lend credence to their deceptions.

7. Once this assortment of deceptions is developed, the false prophets make the delusive claim that they got the information from the Lord.

**Jeremiah 23:32** - Behold, I am against those who have prophesied false dreams,” declares the Lord, “and related them and led My people astray by their falsehoods and reckless boasting; yet I did not send them or command them, nor do they furnish this people the slightest benefit,” declares the Lord. (NASB)

8. “Falsehoods” is the Hebrew word **שָׁקַר (shaqar)**: to engage in deceit:

Used of words which are false in the sense that they are groundless, without basis of fact or reality. In a different context, Jeremiah (8:10) says that from prophet to priest everyone is greedy for gain and practices deceit (*sheqer*).<sup>1</sup>

9. The Lord verifies the fact that disinformation when attributed to a respected source will lead the people astray.

**Jeremiah 23:33** - “Now when this people or the prophet or a priest asks you saying, ‘What is the oracle of the Lord?’ then you shall say to them, ‘What oracle?’ The Lord declares, ‘I will abandon you.’” (NASB)

10. Here we find Jeremiah involved in some Hebrew paronomasia.<sup>2</sup> The Hebrew word for “oracle” is מַשָּׂא (*massa'*) which is a derivative of the verb נָשָׂא (*nasa'*): “to lift up” and connotes a burden in a physical sense.
11. *Massa'* came to signify the message that the prophet of God was ordered to prophesy to the people. What was a “burden” on the mind of God was now a “burden” in the mind of the prophet.
12. These “burdens” for “oracles” were pronouncements of divine and national discipline on the citizens of client nation Israel if they did not return to truth and recover from reversionism.
13. But the people remained negative and in their cosmic status began to mock Jeremiah with derision, “What’s the “burden” for today, Jeremiah?” “What new “burden” of doom do we face today, Jeremiah?”
14. Those who have been propagandized by disinformation are incapable of reading historical trends and as a result they are blind to the truth when it is presented and, assuming it is the ramblings of a fanatic, they mock his oracles.

<sup>1</sup> R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, “נָשָׂא,” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1980), 956.

<sup>2</sup> “Paronomasia, punning; the term used in ancient rhetoric to refer to any play on the sounds of words” (Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1990], 162).

15. Their sarcastic badgering of Jeremiah soon became a catchphrase to mock the pronouncement of the prophet.
16. The word *massa'* became the bud of jokes whereby the oracles from Jeremiah were laughingly ignored.
17. In verse 33, God instructs Jeremiah on how to handle the problem: "When this people or the prophet or a priest asks you saying, 'What is the oracle of the Lord?' then you shall say to them, 'What oracle?' The Lord declares, 'I will abandon you.'"