

Jeremiah 1:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth.
And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in
thy mouth.

Analysis

This verse describes a dramatic symbolic act: 'Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.' The physical touch—God extending His hand and touching Jeremiah's mouth—signifies divine empowerment for prophetic speech. This gesture recalls Isaiah's cleansing (Isaiah 6:6-7, where a seraph touched his lips with a coal) and anticipates the disciples' Pentecost empowerment (Acts 2). The Hebrew 'put forth his hand' (shalach yad, שָׁלַח יָד) indicates intentional divine action, not mystical vision. God's declaration 'I have put my words in thy mouth' (natati devarai befikha, נָתָתִי דְּבָרַי בְּפִיךָ) establishes that prophetic proclamation originates with God, not the prophet. The verb 'put' (natan, נָתַן) means to give, grant, or place—God deposits His message in the prophet's mouth like placing treasure in a vessel. This addresses Jeremiah's objection ('I cannot speak') by promising divine enablement. The prophet becomes God's mouthpiece, speaking words not originating in human wisdom but given by revelation.

Historical Context

This physical symbolism of God touching Jeremiah's mouth and placing words there establishes the prophet's authority and defines biblical inspiration. Prophets didn't invent their messages, deduce them through human reasoning, or simply offer inspired commentary on events. Rather, God revealed specific words they must proclaim. Moses made this distinction explicit: true prophets speak God's

actual words; false prophets speak their own inventions (Deuteronomy 18:18-20). Later, Jeremiah would contrast true prophecy (those who 'stood in the counsel of the LORD,' Jeremiah 23:18) with false prophets who spoke 'visions of their own heart' (Jeremiah 23:16). The New Testament affirms this understanding of prophetic inspiration: 'holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost' (2 Peter 1:21). This verse provides Old Testament foundation for Scripture's divine origin—the biblical text contains God's words, not merely human religious ideas.

Related Passages

James 2:17 – Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does understanding that biblical prophets spoke God's actual words affect how we approach and submit to Scripture's authority?
2. In what ways might we be tempted to speak our own ideas 'for God' rather than faithfully proclaiming what He has actually revealed in Scripture?

Interlinear Text

וְשָׁלַח	יְהוָה	אֶת	יְדֵךְ	וְעַל	בְּפִיךְ
put forth	And the LORD	H853	his hand	and touched	H5921 in thy mouth
H7971	H3068		H3027	H5060	H6310

דִּבְּכָר	נָתַתْ תְּמִ	הִנֵּה הַאֲלֵ	וְאָמַר
said	And the LORD	H413	H2009
H559	H3068		

בְּפִיךְ
in thy mouth

Additional Cross-References

Luke 21:15 (Parallel theme): For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

Luke 12:12 (Parallel theme): For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

Isaiah 51:16 (Word): And I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.

Isaiah 50:4 (Word): The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.

Matthew 10:19 (Parallel theme): But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

Jeremiah 5:14 (Word): Wherefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.

Ezekiel 3:10 (Word): Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears.

Isaiah 49:2 (Word): And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me;