

Jeremiah 11:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore thus saith the LORD of the men of Anathoth, that seek thy life, saying, Prophecy not in the name of the LORD, that thou die not by our hand:

Analysis

This verse names the conspirators: 'Therefore thus saith the LORD of the men of Anathoth, that seek thy life.' Jeremiah's own townspeople seek to kill him. 'Saying, Prophecy not in the name of the LORD, that thou die not by our hand.' They demand prophetic silence or death. The opposition isn't to Jeremiah personally but to his message—'in the name of the LORD' (beshem YHWH). Silencing the prophet means silencing God's word. This anticipates persecution of prophets throughout history—the message provokes the violence, not the messenger.

Historical Context

Anathoth was a Levitical city (Joshua 21:18), making this priestly opposition to prophecy. Jeremiah's family may have descended from Abiathar, the priest Solomon banished to Anathoth (1 Kings 2:26-27). Perhaps they resented prophecies threatening their religious establishment. The phrase 'seek thy life' (mevaqshim eth-nafsheka) appears repeatedly in Jeremiah's confessions.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. Why would Jeremiah's own hometown and possibly family seek to kill him?
2. What does the demand to 'stop prophesying or die' reveal about the threat true prophecy poses to false religion?

Interlinear Text

וְכֹה לֵכִי	לֵאמֹר	יְהוָה	עַל	אֲנִשׁ י	עֲנֵת וְת	
H3651	H3541	Therefore thus saith	of the LORD	H5921	H376	of Anathoth
		H559	H3068			H6068
הַמְבַקֵּשׁ יִם	אֶת	נַפְשְׁךָ	לֵאמֹר	ל א	תִּנְבֵּא	
that seek	H853	thy life	Therefore thus saith	H3808	Prophecy	
H1245		H5315	H559		H5012	
בְּשֵׁם	יְהוָה	וְל א	תָּמ וְת	בְּיָדֵנוּ:		
not in the name	of the LORD	H3808	that thou die	not by our hand		
H8034	H3068		H4191	H3027		

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 30:10 (Prophecy): Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits:

Jeremiah 20:10 (Parallel theme): For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report, say they, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, saying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him.

Amos 2:12 (Prophecy): But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophecy not.