

Jeremiah 23:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith.

Analysis

Behold, I am against the prophets...that use their tongues, and say, He saith (הִלְקִיחִים לְשׁוֹנָם וַיַּיִּין אֹמֵן נֹאמְרָם, haloq'chim l'shonam vayyin'amu n'um)—they manufacture oracles then attach the formula אָמֵן ('declares'), the technical term for divine utterance. The phrase 'they oracle an oracle' mocks their pretense—using sacred language as verb.

This is spiritual forgery, counterfeiting God's signature. The formula appears 365 times in Jeremiah, marking authentic prophecy. False prophets exploited it, assuming language itself carried authority. Jesus condemned those saying 'Lord, Lord' yet practicing lawlessness (Matthew 7:21). Right vocabulary without divine reality is theater.

Historical Context

The formula 'declares the LORD' signaled divine speech, not human opinion. False prophets assumed the language itself granted authority regardless of actual commission. This is like signing someone else's name to documents—identity theft at the highest level.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. When do you use religious language without genuine divine guidance?
2. How can communities distinguish authentic prophecy from opinion in spiritual garb?
3. What accountability exists for those claiming to speak for God?

Interlinear Text

עַל הַנְּבִיאִים	הַנְּבִיאִים	נֹאמִים:	יְהוָה	הַלֵּלֵקִים
H2005	H5921	H5030	H5002	H3068
Behold I am against the prophets	He saith	the LORD	that use	
לְשׁוֹנָם	וַיֹּאמְרוּ	נֹאמִים:		
H3956	H5001	H5002		
their tongues	and say	He saith		

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 23:17 (References Lord): They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.

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:

2 Chronicles 18:5 (Prophecy): Therefore the king of Israel gathered together of prophets four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for God will deliver it into the king's hand.