

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 (בָּרוּךְ יְהוָה הַלְּקָחִים לְשׁוֹנָם וַיֹּאמְרוּ בָּם) —they manufacture oracles then attach the formula בָּם ('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

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for 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	הַנּוּ	רְבִבְיא	מִ	תָּאָמַן	הַ	יְהִי	לְקָרְבָּן
H2005	H5921	Behold I am against the prophets	H5030	He saith	H5002	the LORD	that use
						H3068	H3947
לְשׁוֹנָן	מִ	תָּאָמַן	וְ				
their tongues	and say	He saith					
H3956	H5001	H5002					

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, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy 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.