

Jeremiah 23:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD.

Analysis

I am against them that prophesy false dreams...and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness (פְּחָזוּת, uv'fachazvtam)—the term פְּחָזוּת (pachazut, 'lightness/recklessness/frivolity') describes cavalier irresponsibility treating sacred matters frivolously. **Yet I sent them not...therefore they shall not profit this people at all.**

These prophets are theological arsonists spreading lies recklessly, causing people to err (הָפַח, ta'ah, 'go astray'). Result? No profit (יִשְׁעִילוּ, yo'ilu). Despite religious activity and influence, zero spiritual value. Jesus warned against blind guides leading blind into ditches (Matthew 15:14). Ministry without divine sending produces activity without fruit.

Historical Context

The false prophets' 'lightness' likely included entertainment, flattering rhetoric—making prophecy palatable and popular. They treated serious covenant matters casually, packaging truth-claims as performance. Contrast Jeremiah's anguish: 'My bowels!' (4:19), weeping over destruction. True prophets bore weight; false prophets treated it lightly.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Where do you see lightness treating sacred matters casually in contemporary Christianity?
2. How might your influence be producing activity without actual profit?
3. What distinguishes weight of authentic ministry from lightness of religious performance?

Interlinear Text

עַל הַ נְבִיאִי	בְּשִׁקְרִיהֶם חֲלֹמֹת
H2005 H5921	H5012 H2472 H8267
Behold I am against them that prophesy	dreams by their lies

נֹאֵם יְהוָה: וַיִּסְפְּרוּם אֶת וַיֵּתַע וְלָעַם
H5002 H3068 H5608 H8582 H853 H5971
saith the LORD and do tell to err them and cause my people

בְּשִׁקְרִיהֶם וּבְפִחְזוֹתָם לֹא שְׁלַחְתִּי יָם
H8267 H6350 H595 H3808 H7971 H3808
by their lies and by their lightness yet I sent

צִוְתִּי יָם יוֹעַ יְלֹ לֹא יוֹעַ יְלֹ לָעַם
H6680 H3276 H3808 H3276 H5971
them not nor commanded at all at all them and cause my people

נֹאֵם יְהוָה: הִזָּה
H2088 H5002 H3068
saith the LORD

Additional Cross-References

Lamentations 2:14 (Prophecy): Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee: and they have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity; but have seen for thee false burdens and causes of banishment.

Zephaniah 3:4 (Prophecy): Her prophets are light and treacherous persons: her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law.

Jeremiah 7:8 (Parallel theme): Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit.

Revelation 19:20 (Prophecy): And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Isaiah 3:12 (Parallel theme): As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.

Jeremiah 29:31 (References Lord): Send to all them of the captivity, saying, Thus saith the LORD concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite; Because that Shemaiah hath prophesied unto you, and I sent him not, and he caused you to trust in a lie:

Jeremiah 23:16 (Prophecy): Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD.

Jeremiah 23:25 (Prophecy): I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed.

Matthew 15:14 (Parallel theme): Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

Deuteronomy 18:20 (Prophecy): But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.