

Jeremiah 26:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man is worthy to die; for he hath prophesied against this city, as ye have heard with your ears.

Analysis

Then spake the priests and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, saying, This man is worthy to die—The Hebrew מִשְׁפַּט־מוֹת (mishpat-mavet) means 'judgment of death' or capital sentence. The accusers were priests (כֹּהֲנִים, kohanim) and prophets (נְבִיאִים, nevi'im)—the religious establishment whose authority and livelihood Jeremiah threatened. These were false prophets who prophesied peace when God decreed judgment (6:14, 8:11), creating direct conflict with Jeremiah's message. Their charge invoked Deuteronomy 18:20: 'The prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak...that prophet shall die.'

For he hath prophesied against this city—The accusation frames Jeremiah as seditious, prophesying Jerusalem's destruction. This charge was technically accurate but spiritually blind—Jeremiah prophesied destruction as conditional warning, offering repentance as remedy (v. 13, 'Amend your ways and your doings'). The religious leaders twisted his message into unconditional doom-saying, ignoring the call to repentance. This foreshadows how religious authorities later accused Jesus of blasphemy, distorting His claims to secure execution (Mark 14:63-64).

Historical Context

The priests' and prophets' alliance against Jeremiah represents the corrupt religious establishment that had accommodated syncretism, idolatry, and social injustice while maintaining temple rituals. Jeremiah threatened their position by declaring that ritual without righteousness was worthless and that God would destroy the temple they controlled. Economic factors also motivated opposition—the temple system employed priests, prophets, and support staff whose income depended on maintaining the status quo. True prophets who disrupted this system faced deadly opposition throughout Israel's history (1 Kings 19:10, 2 Chronicles 24:20-21).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Why do religious establishments often resist prophetic voices that call for genuine repentance and reform?
2. How did the priests and prophets' distortion of Jeremiah's message—ignoring the call to repentance—exemplify spiritual blindness?
3. In what ways might religious leaders today be tempted to protect institutional interests rather than proclaim God's full counsel?

Interlinear Text

כָּל	וְאֵל	הַשָּׂרִים	אֶל	וְהַנְּבִיאִים	הַכֹּהֲנִים	יָאמַר
H3605	H413	H8269	H413	H5030	H3548	H559
	unto the	princes		and the	priests	Then spake
						and to all the people
כִּי	הִזָּה	לֹא יֵשׁ	מָוֶת	מְשַׁפֵּט	יָאמַר	הָעָם
H3588	H2088	H376	H4194	H4941	H559	H5971
	This man	to die		is worthy	Then spake	
						for he hath prophesied
שָׁמַעְתֶּם	ר	הִזָּאת	כְּאֵשׁ	הָעִיר	אֶל	נְבִיא
H8085	H834	H2063	H413	H5892	H5012	
	as ye have heard	against this city				
						with your ears
						H241

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 38:4 (Parallel theme): Therefore the princes said unto the king, We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt.

Matthew 26:66 (Parallel theme): What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.

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.