

Jeremiah 27:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore hearken not unto the words of the prophets that speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon: for they prophesy a lie unto you.

Analysis

Therefore hearken not unto the words of the prophets that speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon—God repeats the warning (cf. v. 9), emphasizing its urgency. The phrase **hearken not** (al-tishme'u, אֲלֹתְשִׁמְעַע) is emphatic prohibition—absolutely do not listen. These prophets spoke what people wanted to hear: nationalist promises of quick deliverance and restored independence. Their message was religiously attractive (trust God, not pagan Babylon) but theologically wrong (God had ordained Babylon's temporary dominance).

For they prophesy a lie unto you—The repeated accusation sheker (שְׁקָרָה, lie/falsehood) establishes these aren't sincere believers who happen to be mistaken; they are purveyors of deception. The danger of false prophecy is that it comes in God's name, uses religious language, and appeals to noble instincts (patriotism, faith in God's protection), yet leads away from God's actual will. Distinguishing true from false prophecy requires comparing the message to God's revealed word and character. These prophets promised what contradicted God's explicit revelation through Jeremiah. When prophecy contradicts Scripture, regardless of the prophet's sincerity or charisma, it must be rejected. Truth is not determined by popular vote, emotional appeal, or national sentiment, but by correspondence to God's revealed word.

Historical Context

Multiple false prophets operated during this period. Hananiah famously contradicted Jeremiah, breaking the symbolic yoke and promising return from exile within two years (Jeremiah 28). He died within that year as God's judgment. Other false prophets in Jerusalem and Babylon promised quick deliverance, encouraging rebellion against Babylonian authority. Their influence was strong because their message aligned with natural human desires for independence and divine protection. Jeremiah's counsel seemed defeatist and even treasonous—he was imprisoned and nearly killed for it (Jeremiah 37-38). Yet history vindicated God's true prophet: those who followed false prophets perished in Jerusalem's destruction; those who heeded Jeremiah's counsel survived.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How can we distinguish between true prophetic voices and false teachers who use religious language but contradict Scripture?
2. What makes false teaching so dangerous when it appeals to legitimate desires like faith in God or hope for deliverance?
3. In what ways might we be tempted to prefer comforting falsehoods over difficult truths from God's word?

Interlinear Text

לְאָמֵן רְאָמֵן הַפְּנָבָא יְמִינָה וְאַל תִּשְׁמַע וְאַל דְּבָרִים
H408 Therefore hearken H413 not unto the words H1697 of the prophets H5030 that speak
H8085 H1697 H5030 H559

לְאָמֵן רְאָמֵן הַפְּנָבָא יְמִינָה וְאַל תִּשְׁמַע וְאַל תְּעַבֵּד לְאָמֵן רְאָמֵן הַפְּנָבָא יְמִינָה וְאַל תִּשְׁמַע וְאַל תְּעַבֵּד
H413 that speak H3808 Ye shall not serve H853 the king H4428 of Babylon H3588
H559 H5647 H4428 H894

לְכָמָן: נְבָא יְמִינָה וְאַל תִּשְׁמַע וְאַל תְּעַבֵּד
a lie H1992 for they prophesy H0
H8267 H5012

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 14:14 (Prophecy): Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.

Jeremiah 23:21 (Prophecy): I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.