

Jeremiah 27:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For I have not sent them, saith the LORD, yet they prophesy a lie in my name; that I might drive you out, and that ye might perish, ye, and the prophets that prophesy unto you.

Analysis

For I have not sent them, saith the LORD—God emphatically declares these prophets lack divine commission. The Hebrew *lo-shalakhti otam* (לֹאֶשְׁלַכְתִּי אוֹתָם, I have not sent them) is emphatic negative—God takes no responsibility for their message. True prophecy requires divine sending (*shalakh*, שָׁלַח); self-appointed prophets, regardless of sincerity, speak only human imagination. This establishes the crucial test: divine commission and conformity to God's revealed word authenticate true prophecy.

Yet they prophesy a lie in my name—The prophets invoke Yahweh's authority (**in my name**, *bishmi*, בִּשְׁמִי) for their false message, making them not just wrong but blasphemous—claiming God said what He never said. This is the third commandment violation: taking God's name in vain (Exodus 20:7). The consequence follows: **that I might drive you out, and that ye might perish, ye, and the prophets that prophesy unto you**—Both false prophets and those who follow them will perish. God's purpose (*lema'an*, לְמַעַן, in order that) is not to destroy but to save, yet when people reject His true word for comforting lies, judgment becomes inevitable. The prophets who promised life would bring death—to themselves and their followers. This sobering reality should make all who claim to speak for God tremble at the responsibility (James 3:1).

Historical Context

The false prophets' fate was sealed when Jerusalem fell. Those who promised Babylon would be quickly defeated perished in the siege or were executed afterward. Jeremiah survived because Babylon recognized his counsel had been friendly to their interests—yet he spoke not for Babylon but for God. The book of Lamentations describes the destruction these false prophets helped bring: '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' (Lamentations 2:14). Their failure to speak God's true word of judgment and call for repentance resulted in the very catastrophe they falsely promised wouldn't occur.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to prophesy 'in God's name' falsely, and how might this happen today through misuse of Scripture?
2. Why does God hold both false teachers and those who follow them accountable?
3. How should the sobering responsibility of teaching or proclaiming God's word affect how we approach ministry and spiritual leadership?

Interlinear Text

לֹא יִכְּ	שְׁלַחְתִּים	נֹאֲם	יְהוָה ה	יְהוָה ם	הַנְּבִיאִים
H3588	H3808			H1992	
For I have not sent		them saith	the LORD	that prophesy	
H7971		H5002	H3068	H5012	
בְּשֵׁם י	לֹשׁ קָר	לִמַּעַן	הַדִּיחַ י	אֶתְכֶם	
		H4616		H853	
in my name	a lie	that I might drive you out			
H8034	H8267	H5080			
וְאַבְדֶּתָ ם		אֶתְ ם	וְהַנְּבִיאִים	הַנְּבִיאִים ים	לָכֶם:
		H859			H0
and that ye might perish		ye and the prophets	that prophesy		
H6		H5030	H5012		

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 27:10 (Prophecy): For they prophesy a lie unto you, to remove you far from your land; and that I should drive you out, and ye should perish.

2 Chronicles 25:16 (Prophecy): And it came to pass, as he talked with him, that the king said unto him, Art thou made of the king's counsel? forbear; why shouldest thou be smitten? Then the prophet forbare, and said, I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened unto my counsel.