

Jeremiah 27:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, which speak unto you, saying, Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon:

Analysis

Therefore hearken not ye to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers—God lists five categories of false spiritual advisors leading nations astray. Prophets (nevi'eikhem, נְבִיאֵיכֶם who claimed divine revelation; diviners (qosemeikhem, קְסֻמֵּיכֶם) who practiced prohibited divination (Deuteronomy 18:10); dreamers (chalomoteikhem, חֲלוּמַתֵּיכֶם who interpreted dreams apart from God; enchanters (me'oneneikhem, מְאוּנֵיכֶם who practiced sorcery; and sorcerers (kashefeikhem, כְּשֻׁפֵּיכֶם) who claimed magical powers. The comprehensive list demonstrates how thoroughly false spirituality had infiltrated these nations.

The message they proclaimed—**Ye shall not serve the king of Babylon**—was exactly what people wanted to hear: resistance would succeed, independence would be restored, Babylon would fall quickly. This pleasant lie was far more popular than Jeremiah's hard truth. The warning applies beyond ancient paganism: any spiritual authority contradicting God's revealed word must be rejected, regardless of popularity, apparent power, or comforting message. Jesus warned of false prophets performing signs yet leading people astray (Matthew 24:24). Paul commanded testing all prophecy against Scripture (1 Thessalonians 5:20-21). The standard is not whether a message feels encouraging but whether it aligns with God's revealed truth.

Historical Context

These occult practices were common throughout the Ancient Near East. Babylonian religion featured elaborate divination systems including hepatoscopy (examining animal livers), astrology, and dream interpretation. The nations allied with Judah likely consulted their own religious specialists who encouraged rebellion. Archaeological discoveries including the Mari prophetic texts and Mesopotamian omen literature demonstrate how pervasive these practices were. God had explicitly forbidden Israel from such practices (Deuteronomy 18:9-14), yet they persisted in consulting them. King Saul's consultation of the medium at Endor (1 Samuel 28) illustrates Israel's repeated failure to trust God's word alone. The exile was partly designed to purge this syncretistic tendency from God's people.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What modern equivalents might exist to these ancient forms of false spiritual guidance?
2. How can we discern between true prophetic insight and messages that simply tell us what we want to hear?
3. Why is it dangerous to seek spiritual guidance from sources other than God's revealed word in Scripture?

Interlinear Text

אֲלֵל אֲלֵל תִּשְׁמַע וְאֲלֵל אֲלֵל נְבִיאֵיכֶם

H859

H408

Therefore hearken

אֲלֵל

H413

נְבִיאֵיכֶם מִ

not ye to your prophets

אֲלֵל

H413

H5030

אֲלֵל קְסָמִיכֶם נְבִיאֵיכֶם מִ

nor to your diviners

H7080

H413

nor to your dreamers

H2472

אֲלֵל

H413

אֲלֵל נְבִיאֵיכֶם מִ

H6049

אֲלֵל אֲלֵל פְּשָׁפִיכֶם נְבִיאֵיכֶם מִ

H413

nor to your sorcerers

H3786

H413

H834

H1992

לְאָמֶר בְּ

unto you saying

אֲלֵיכֶם

H413

H559

בְּבָלָם מִלְהָנָה אֶת תַּעֲבֹד וְלֹא לְאָמֶר

unto you saying

H559

H3808

Ye shall not serve

H5647

אֶת

H853

מֶלֶךְ

the king

בָּבִלּוֹן

H4428

H894

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.

Isaiah 8:19 (Parallel theme): And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?

Jeremiah 29:8 (Prophecy): For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed.

Malachi 3:5 (Parallel theme): And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.

Micah 3:7 (Parallel theme): Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded: yea, they shall all cover their lips; for there is no answer of God.

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