

Jeremiah 28:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The prophets that have been before me and before thee of old prophesied both against many countries, and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of pestilence.

Analysis

The prophets that have been before me and before thee of old prophesied both against many countries, and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of pestilence (הַנְּבִיאִים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ לִפְנֵי וּלְפָנֶיךָ מִן־הָעוֹלָם וַיִּנְבְּאוּ...מִלְחָמָה וְלַרָּעָה וְלַדָּבָר, han'vi'im asher hayu l'fanai ul'fanekha min-ha'olam vayinnav'u...milchamah ul'ra'ah ul'daver)—Jeremiah appeals to prophetic precedent (מִן־הָעוֹלָם, min-ha'olam, 'from of old'). The pattern: true prophets historically proclaimed judgment (war, evil, pestilence) more than peace. This doesn't mean good news is automatically false, but it establishes that difficult messages align with prophetic tradition.

The threefold judgment—war (מִלְחָמָה), evil (רָעָה), pestilence (דָּבָר)—echoes covenant curses (Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28). Jeremiah argues that prophets proclaiming only prosperity and peace without calling for repentance break with historical pattern. Think of Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, Micah—all proclaimed judgment. The burden of proof lies with those claiming exemption from covenant curses, not those warning of them.

Historical Context

Virtually every canonical prophet before Jeremiah (8th-7th centuries BC) proclaimed judgment: Isaiah warned Judah, Hosea condemned Israel, Amos declared exile, Micah predicted Jerusalem's destruction. The consistent prophetic

message called Israel back to covenant through warnings of consequences. False prophets' novelty was unqualified assurance regardless of behavior.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does historical theological tradition help evaluate contemporary teaching?
2. Why might messages of judgment and repentance be more common than unconditional peace in Scripture?
3. What would it mean to break with prophetic tradition in your theological context?

Interlinear Text

הַנְּבִיאִים	אֲשֶׁר	הָיָה	וּלְפָנָיִךְ	וּלְפָנָיִךְ	מִן	הָעוֹלָם
The prophets	H834	H1961	me and before	me and before	H4480	thee of old
H5030			H6440	H6440		H5769
וַיִּנָּבֵא	אֶל	אֲרָצֹת	רַבּוֹת	וְעַל	מַמְלָכֹת	וְעַל
prophesied	H413	countries	both against many	H5921	kingdoms	
H5012		H776	H7227		H4467	
גָּדֹל	וְעַל	לְמַלְחָמָה	וְלַרָּעָה	וְלַדֶּבֶר:		
and against great		of war	and of evil	and of pestilence		
H1419		H4421	H7451	H1698		

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 17:1 (Parallel theme): And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

Isaiah 13:18 (Parallel theme): Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children.

Amos 1:2 (Parallel theme): And he said, The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither.

1 Kings 22:8 (Kingdom): And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.