

# Jeremiah 29:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Because they have committed villany in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives, and have spoken lying words in my name, which I have not commanded them; even I know, and am a witness, saith the LORD.

## Analysis

**Because they have committed villany in Israel**—The Hebrew נְבִלָה (nevalah, villany) is a strong term denoting disgraceful, senseless evil—the same word for Shechem's rape of Dinah (Gen 34:7) and Achan's theft (Josh 7:15). It implies covenant-breaking that defiles the entire community.

**And have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives, and have spoken lying words in my name**—Sexual immorality and false prophecy are paired, revealing the connection between personal sin and public deception. The Hebrew נָאֹף (na'af, adultery) and דְּבַר שֶׁקֶר (davar sheqer, lying words) form a double indictment. Men who violate covenant in private (marriage) will violate covenant in public (prophecy). Jeremiah exposes what the community might not have known: **even I know, and am a witness, saith the LORD**—God sees both bedroom and pulpit, and judges hypocrisy in both.

## Historical Context

False prophets in Jeremiah's era often lived immorally (23:14), unlike true prophets who stood in God's counsel (23:18, 22). The connection between sexual sin and false teaching appears throughout Scripture (2 Pet 2:14, Jude 4, Rev 2:20).

Character and doctrine cannot be separated; corruption in one area breeds corruption in the other.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Study Questions

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1. Why are sexual immorality and false teaching so often linked in Scripture? What's the common root?
2. How does private sin disqualify public ministry? What does 'even I know' reveal about God's standards?
3. What safeguards protect leaders from the dual snares of sexual sin and doctrinal compromise?

## Interlinear Text

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וְעַל כֵּן	אֲשֶׁר	עָשׂוּ	וְנִבְלָה	לְבִישָׁרָא	וְנִגְאָפוּ
H3282	H834	H6213	H5039	H3478	H5003
		Because they have committed	villany	in Israel	adultery
אֶת	נָשֵׁי	כְּעֵינֵיהֶם	וַיְדַבֵּר	דְּבָרֵי	בְּשִׁמִּי
H854	H802	H7453	H1696	H1697	H8034
	wives	with their neighbours	and have spoken	words	in my name
					lying
לְוָא	אֲשֶׁר	צִוִּיתִי	וְאֲנֹכִי	הַיָּדְעָה	
H834	H3808	H6680	H595	H3045	
		which I have not commanded		them even I know	
וְעַד	נֹאמַר	יְהוָה:			
H5707	H5002	H3068			
and am a witness	saith	the LORD			

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 23:14** (Parallel theme): I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness: they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.

**Malachi 3:5** (Witness): 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.

**Hebrews 4:13** (Parallel theme): Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

**Proverbs 5:21** (References Lord): For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.

**Jeremiah 16:17** (Parallel theme): For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes.

**Jeremiah 29:21** (References Lord): Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, of Ahab the son of Kolaiah, and of Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, which prophesy a lie unto you in my name; Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall slay them before your eyes;