

Jeremiah 29:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying,
Because thou hast sent letters in thy name unto all the people
that are at Jerusalem, and to Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah
the priest, and to all the priests, saying,

Analysis

Because thou hast sent letters in thy name (בְּשִׁמְכָהּ, b'shimkha)—Shemaiah's sin was self-authorization, sending correspondence under his own authority rather than divine commission. This contrasts sharply with true prophets who speak b'shem Yahweh ('in the name of the LORD'). His letters targeted **Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest**, seeking to manipulate religious leadership to suppress Jeremiah.

The phrase **unto all the people that are at Jerusalem** reveals Shemaiah's ambition—not private correspondence but a public campaign to undermine God's true prophet. False teaching always seeks platforms and influence, wrapping self-will in religious language. Paul would later warn of those who 'suppose that gain is godliness' (1 Timothy 6:5).

Historical Context

Zephaniah served as a temple officer during Zedekiah's reign (circa 594-586 BC), positioned to enforce religious order. Shemaiah's letter campaign exploited official channels, attempting to use institutional authority against prophetic truth—a pattern recurring throughout Scripture (Amos 7:10-13, Acts 4:1-3).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How do you distinguish between speaking with God-given authority versus claiming authority that God has not granted?
2. When has institutional religious authority been used to silence rather than amplify God's truth?
3. What warning does Shemaiah's public letter campaign offer about using communication platforms to spread false teaching?

Interlinear Text

לֵאמֹר: יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאלֹהֵי יְצָבָא וְתִּהְיֶה הָאֵלֹהִים: לֵאמֹר:
H3541 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts the God of Israel Thus speaketh
H559 H3068 H6635 H430 H3478 H559

אֵל סִפְרֵי יָמַי בְּשִׁמְךָ הַזֶּה שָׁלַחְתָּ אֵתָּה אֲשֶׁר יְעִנֵּנִי
H3282 H834 H859 Because thou hast sent in thy name letters H413
H7971 H8034 H5612

כָּל הָעָם אֲשֶׁר בִּירוּשָׁלַם וְאֵל צְפַנְיָה וְכָל הָעָם
H3605 unto all the people H834 that are at Jerusalem H413 and to Zephaniah
H5971 H3389 H6846

בֶּן מַעֲשִׂיָה וְכָל הַכֹּהֲנִים וְאֵל כָּל הַכֹּהֲנִים
the son of Maaseiah and to all the priests H413 H3605 and to all the priests
H1121 H4641 H3548 H3548

לֵאמֹר:

Thus speaketh
H559

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 37:3 (References God): And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, Pray now unto the LORD our God for us.

Jeremiah 29:29 (Parallel theme): And Zephaniah the priest read this letter in the ears of Jeremiah the prophet.

Jeremiah 52:24 (Parallel theme): And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door:

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