

Jeremiah 29:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The LORD hath made thee priest in the stead of Jehoiada the priest, that ye should be officers in the house of the LORD, for every man that is mad, and maketh himself a prophet, that thou shouldest put him in prison, and in the stocks.

Analysis

For every man that is mad, and maketh himself a prophet—the Hebrew מִשְׁתָּגָה (mishtage'a, 'acting insanely') recalls how David feigned madness (1 Samuel 21:13, same root). Shemaiah cynically equates prophetic inspiration with insanity, demanding Jeremiah be placed **in prison, and in the stocks** (מַהְפֵּקָה, mahpekhet)—the same instrument used against Jeremiah in 20:2.

In the stead of Jehoiada the priest invokes the faithful priest who preserved Joash (2 Kings 11-12), establishing a supposed precedent for priestly authority to suppress dangerous 'prophets.' But Shemaiah distorts history—Jehoiada preserved God's anointed king, while Shemaiah seeks to destroy God's anointed prophet. Faithfulness requires discerning when authority serves God's purposes versus when it serves self-preservation.

Historical Context

Jehoiada (835-796 BC) courageously opposed the illegitimate queen Athaliah to restore David's line. Shemaiah's appeal to his example was historically specious—Jehoiada acted with divine warrant, while Shemaiah opposed it. This shows how false teachers manipulate biblical precedent.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How can you tell the difference between prophetic 'madness' that challenges worldly wisdom and actual spiritual deception?
2. When has historical precedent been wrongly invoked to justify silencing uncomfortable truth?
3. What does Shemaiah's attempted use of state power reveal about the alliance between false religion and coercive authority?

Interlinear Text

הָ The LORD	הָמַתָּ hath made	הָ the priest	בְּמִתְחָדָה H8478	וְיַעֲמֹד in the stead of	יְהוֹיָדָע Jehoiada	הָ the priest
H3068	H5414	H3548		H3077		H3548
לֹ H1961	קְרִ that ye should be	קְרִים officers	בְּבֵית H1004	יְהוָה The LORD	לְכָל H3605	אֲשֶׁר for every man
		H6496		H3068		H376
מַשְׁגַּע that is mad	וּמִתְנַבֵּב and maketh himself	אָמֵן a prophet	וְיַעֲמֹד hath made	אֵל H853	בְּמִתְחָדָה H413	אֵל him in prison
H7696	H5012		H5414	H413		H4115
בְּצִנְעָן and in the stocks						
H413		H6729				

Additional Cross-References

2 Kings 9:11 (References Lord): Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord: and one said unto him, Is all well? wherefore came this mad fellow to thee? And he said unto them, Ye know the man, and his communication.

Acts 26:24 (Parallel theme): And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

John 10:20 (Parallel theme): And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?

Hosea 9:7 (Prophecy): The days of visitation are come, the days of recompence are come; Israel shall know it: the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred.

Acts 16:24 (Creation): Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

Mark 3:21 (Parallel theme): And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.