

Jeremiah 29:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the LORD.

Analysis

God emphatically declares these prophets are false—'I have not sent them.' This is the crucial test of true prophecy: divine commission. The false prophets claimed to speak 'in my name,' invoking Yahweh's authority, yet God never commissioned them. They were self-appointed, speaking from their own imagination rather than divine revelation. This makes their sin not merely error but presumption—claiming God said what He never said.

The phrase 'they prophesy falsely unto you' uses the same word for prophecy as true prophets, highlighting that false prophecy mimics authentic prophecy. False teachers use biblical language, claim divine inspiration, and may even perform signs. The distinction is not in style or sincerity but in actual divine commission and faithfulness to God's revealed word. Jeremiah himself was sent (1:7); these prophets were not.

This establishes the criterion for testing all religious claims: does this message align with God's revealed word in Scripture? Paul commended the Bereans for examining his teaching against Scripture (Acts 17:11). No claim to special revelation, prophetic gifting, or spiritual authority trumps the written word. If a message contradicts Scripture, regardless of who speaks it or what signs accompany it, it is false. The final authority is God's revealed word, not human experience or claims to divine inspiration.

Historical Context

The issue of true versus false prophecy plagued Israel throughout its history. Deuteronomy 18:20-22 provided tests: prophets who spoke in other gods' names or whose predictions didn't come to pass were false. But what about prophets who spoke in Yahweh's name and made predictions that weren't immediately verifiable? Jeremiah's seventy-year prophecy would take decades to be confirmed. The ultimate test was conformity to God's known revelation and covenant—did the prophecy align with God's revealed character and promises?

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What tests does Scripture provide for discerning true from false prophets and teachers?
2. How should we respond when someone claims 'God told me' something that contradicts or adds to Scripture?
3. What is the relationship between ongoing claims to prophetic gifting and the finality and sufficiency of Scripture?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	בִשְׁקֶר	הֵם	נִבְּאִים	לָכֵן	בִּשְׁמִי	לֵא
H3588	falsely	H1992	For they prophesy	H0	unto you in my name	H3808
	H8267		H5012		H8034	
שְׁלַחַתִּי	נֶאֱמַר	יְהוָה:				
I have not sent	them saith	the LORD				
H7971	H5002	H3068				

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 27:15 (Prophecy): For I have not sent them, saith the LORD, yet they prophesy a lie in my name; that I might drive you out, and that ye might perish, ye, and the prophets that prophesy unto you.

Jeremiah 29:31 (References Lord): Send to all them of the captivity, saying, Thus saith the LORD concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite; Because that Shemaiah hath prophesied unto you, and I sent him not, and he caused you to trust in a lie:

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