

Jeremiah 8:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom is in them?

Analysis

This verse pronounces judgment on the self-proclaimed wise: 'The wise men are ashamed' (boshu chakamim, בּוֹשׁוּ חֲכָמִים). The Hebrew bosh (בּוֹשׁ) denotes public humiliation, disappointed expectation, and covenant curse. 'They are dismayed and taken' adds chatat (חֲטֹת, shattered, terrified) and lakad (לָקַד, captured, snared)—the wise are caught in their own trap. 'Lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD' uses ma'as (מָאָס, to despise, reject with contempt) with debar-YHWH (דְּבָרֶי־יְהוָה!). This rejection isn't ignorance but deliberate contempt. 'And what wisdom is in them?' The rhetorical question exposes false wisdom: rejecting divine revelation leaves only human folly disguised as sophistication. True wisdom begins with fearing God (Proverbs 1:7); rejecting His word destroys wisdom's foundation.

Historical Context

This indictment targeted Judah's intellectual and religious elite—scribes, priests, prophets, and counselors who should have guided the nation in covenant faithfulness. Instead, they rejected Jeremiah's warnings and embraced false prophets promising peace (Jeremiah 6:14, 8:11). Their 'wisdom' led directly to national catastrophe in 586 BC. Archaeological discoveries of seals from Jeremiah's era confirm the existence of these official scribal classes.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does rejecting God's word expose the folly of all human wisdom, however sophisticated?
2. What modern forms of 'wise' rejection of Scripture do we encounter today?

Interlinear Text

בְּדָבָר	הָבָדָל	הַבְּשָׁר	יְשָׁוָא
H954	The wise	they are dismayed	and taken
H2450		H2865	H3920
			H2009
			the word
			H1697
וְהַיָּה	וְיִחְשָׁמְדּוּ	וְמִתְּנִזְנִזּוּ	לֹא
of the LORD	lo they have rejected	and what wisdom	
H3068	H3988	H2451	H4100
			H0

Additional Cross-References

Job 5:12 (Parallel theme): He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise.

Jeremiah 6:15 (References Lord): Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.

Isaiah 19:11 (Parallel theme): Surely the princes of Zoan are fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish: how say ye unto Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings?

Psalms 19:7 (Word): The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

Jeremiah 6:19 (Word): Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.

Deuteronomy 4:6 (Parallel theme): Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org