

Ezekiel 11:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Which say, It is not near; let us build houses: this city is the caldron, and we be the flesh.

Analysis

The wicked counsel is quoted: 'It is not near; let us build houses: this city is the caldron, and we are the flesh.' This reveals the leaders' false security and denial of imminent judgment. 'It is not near' contradicts prophetic warnings from Jeremiah and Ezekiel that judgment was imminent. Encouraging people to 'build houses' promoted normalcy bias—life will continue as usual, so invest in long-term plans despite warnings.

The proverb 'this city is the caldron, and we are the flesh' reflects confidence in Jerusalem's protection. In a caldron, flesh is preserved and protected from fire. The leaders claimed Jerusalem's walls would protect them from Babylon's armies just as a pot protects meat from flames. This false confidence in human defenses ignored that God Himself would hand them over to judgment (Ezekiel 11:9-11 inverts their proverb).

From a Reformed perspective, this passage illustrates the danger of false security based on external religion or human confidence rather than covenant faithfulness. The leaders trusted in the city, the temple, and the walls—visible securities—while ignoring the spiritual realities of sin and divine judgment. God's people must ground security in His character and promises, not in human institutions or religious externals (Jeremiah 7:4).

Historical Context

Jerusalem's walls were indeed substantial—archaeological excavations reveal massive fortifications from this period. The temple's presence led many to assume God would never allow its destruction, despite warnings otherwise. Jeremiah faced violent opposition for prophesying Jerusalem's fall (Jeremiah 26:7-16, 37:11-16). The leaders' confidence in physical defenses exemplified misplaced faith.

The caldron metaphor may also reflect Ezekiel's earlier prophecy (Ezekiel 11:3-7, 24:1-14), where God uses the same image with reversed meaning—Jerusalem becomes a caldron of judgment where the people are cooked, not protected. The leaders' confident proverb would be ironically fulfilled as judgment rather than protection. This demonstrates how God sometimes fulfills people's words in ways they didn't intend, exposing the folly of false confidence.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What false securities (reputation, resources, religious heritage) might you be trusting in place of genuine relationship with God?
2. How does the leaders' normalcy bias ('let us build houses') illustrate human tendency to deny uncomfortable truths?
3. In what ways does God sometimes fulfill our confident predictions in ironic, judgment-revealing ways?

Interlinear Text

הָאֵל מֵרִים	לֹא	בִקְרֹב	בְּנֵי אֹת	בְּתֵי יִם	יֵא
Which say	H3808	It is not near	let us build	houses	H1931
H559		H7138	H1129	H1004	
הֵסִיר	וְאֵנִי חֲנוּי	הַבָּשָׂר:			
this city is the caldron	H587	and we be the flesh			
H5518		H1320			

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 12:22 (Parallel theme): Son of man, what is that proverb that ye have in the land of Israel, saying, The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth?

Ezekiel 12:27 (Parallel theme): Son of man, behold, they of the house of Israel say, The vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of the times that are far off.