

Jeremiah 1:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said the LORD unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it.

Analysis

God's response provides the interpretation: 'Then said the LORD unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it.' The commendation 'Thou hast well seen' (hetavta lir'ot, הֵיטִבַּת לִרְאוֹת) acknowledges Jeremiah's correct observation. But God reveals the deeper significance through wordplay: 'I will hasten' (shoqed, שֹׁקֵד, participle of shaqad, שָׁקַד) echoes 'almond' (shaqed, שָׁקֵד). In Hebrew the connection is immediate: shaqed (almond) → shoqed (watching/hastening). God says 'I am watching over my word to perform it'—emphasizing divine vigilance to ensure prophetic fulfillment. The phrase 'my word' (devari, דְּבָרִי) refers to the prophecies God gives Jeremiah. 'To perform it' (la'asoto, לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ) means to execute, accomplish, or bring to completion. This assures Jeremiah that God's promised judgments and restorations will certainly occur—God actively watches to ensure His word comes to pass. No human power can prevent it; no delay nullifies it. This establishes a foundational prophetic principle: God's word is self-fulfilling because God Himself guarantees its execution. The almond tree's early waking symbolizes God's vigilant, proactive fulfillment of prophecy.

Historical Context

This assurance proved vital throughout Jeremiah's ministry as prophecies seemed delayed or unlikely. He announced Jerusalem's destruction when the city appeared secure, proclaimed seventy years exile when false prophets promised quick return, and foresaw Babylon's fall when Babylon seemed invincible. Yet every prophecy was fulfilled exactly—Jerusalem destroyed (586 BC), exile lasted seventy years

(605-538 BC or 586-516 BC depending on calculation), Babylon fell to Persia (539 BC), and exiles returned under Cyrus's decree (538 BC). God's 'hastening' didn't mean immediate fulfillment but certain execution at the appointed time. This pattern continues in New Testament prophecy—Christ's return may seem delayed (2 Peter 3:9), but God is 'watching' to perform His word at the predetermined moment. Peter uses this very principle: God is 'not slack concerning his promise' (2 Peter 3:9). The reliability of fulfilled Old Testament prophecy provides confidence in yet-unfulfilled promises.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does knowing that God watches over His word to perform it give confidence when circumstances seem to contradict His promises?
2. What difference does it make to recognize that delays in God's promises don't indicate failure or forgetfulness but divine timing?

Interlinear Text

וַיֹּאמֶר	יְהוָה ה	אֵלַי	הֵיטֵב בָּתָּ	לָרָא וְ	כִּי
Then said	the LORD	H413	unto me Thou hast well	seen	H3588
H559	H3068		H3190	H7200	
שֶׁקֶד	אֲנִי	עַל	דְּבַר י	לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ	
for I will hasten	H589	H5921	my word	to perform	
H8245			H1697	H6213	

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 12:28 (Word): Therefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; There shall none of my words be prolonged any more, but the word which I have spoken shall be done, saith the Lord GOD.

Ezekiel 12:25 (Word): For I am the LORD: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass; it shall be no more prolonged: for in your days, O rebellious house, will I say the word, and will perform it, saith the Lord GOD.

Deuteronomy 5:28 (Word): And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken.

Deuteronomy 32:35 (Parallel theme): To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.

Luke 10:28 (Parallel theme): And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

Amos 8:2 (References Lord): And he said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then said the LORD unto me, The end is come upon my people of Israel; I will not again pass by them any more.