

Jeremiah 10:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My tabernacle is spoiled, and all my cords are broken: my children are gone forth of me, and they are not: there is none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains.

Analysis

This verse extends the lament: 'My tabernacle is spoiled, and all my cords are broken.' The Hebrew *ohel* (אֹהֶל, tent) uses nomadic imagery for dwelling place—Jerusalem or the entire nation portrayed as a destroyed tent. 'Cords broken' indicates the tent collapsing, protection removed. 'My children are gone forth of me, and they are not.' Exile has removed the next generation—absence produces desolation. 'There is none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains.' The tent cannot be re-erected; no one remains to restore the community. Complete devastation—dwelling destroyed, children absent, no hope of rebuilding.

Historical Context

Tent imagery appears throughout Israel's history (Numbers 24:5, 2 Samuel 7:2). The tabernacle (*mishkan*) was Israel's original portable sanctuary. Using this imagery for Jerusalem's destruction connects back to wilderness origins while lamenting present collapse. The exile did scatter the population, removing the manpower needed to maintain community structures.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does tent imagery connect destruction to Israel's earlier nomadic identity and tabernacle worship?
2. What does the absence of anyone to 'stretch forth the tent' suggest about complete social collapse?

Interlinear Text

אֶהָלַי	שָׁדָד	וְכָל	מִיתָרַי	נִתְקוּ	בְנֵי
My tabernacle	is spoiled	H3605	and all my cords	are broken	my children
H168	H7703		H4340	H5423	H1121
יָצָא נִי	וְאֵינָם	אֵין	נֹכַח הַ		
are gone forth	H369	H369	of me and they are not there is none to stretch forth		
H3318			H5186		
עוֹד	אֶהָלַי	וּמִקַּיִם	יְרִיעוֹתַי		
H5750	My tabernacle	any more and to set up	my curtains		
	H168	H6965	H3407		

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 4:20 (Parallel theme): Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment.

Jeremiah 31:15 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.

Isaiah 54:2 (Parallel theme): Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;