

Jeremiah 11:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then shall the cities of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem go, and cry unto the gods unto whom they offer incense: but they shall not save them at all in the time of their trouble.

Analysis

This verse exposes false worship's futility: 'Then shall the cities of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem go, and cry unto the gods unto whom they offer incense.' When judgment comes, the people will desperately appeal to their idols. 'But they shall not save them at all in the time of their trouble.' The Hebrew *yashea* (יָשַׁע) is the verb for deliverance, salvation—precisely what idols cannot provide. 'At all' (*hashea*) intensifies the negative—no help whatsoever. 'In the time of their trouble' (*be'eth ra'atham*) is when gods prove their reality or exposure as fraud. YHWH repeatedly delivered Israel 'in trouble'; idols will fail absolutely.

Historical Context

The exposure of idol impotence during crisis was a consistent prophetic theme (Isaiah 46:1-7, Jeremiah 2:27-28). Archaeological evidence from destroyed Canaanite cities shows temples burned with their idols—the gods could not protect even their own shrines. The Babylonian conquest would prove the point: Marduk's victory seemed to prove his power, but Jeremiah 50-51 promises Babylon's gods will similarly fall.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. Why do people often cling to false sources of security until crisis exposes their emptiness?
2. What does the idols' failure 'in time of trouble' reveal about testing what we truly trust?

Interlinear Text

וְהָלַכְוּ go H1980	עַרְיָ Then shall the cities H5892	יְהוּדָה of Judah H3063	וְיֹשְׁבֵיהֶם and inhabitants H3427	יְרוּשָׁלַם of Jerusalem H3389	וְיִצְעֲקוּ and cry H2199
אֶל H413	אֱלֹהֵי יָם unto the gods H430	אֲשֶׁר H834	הֵם H1992	מִקְטֹרֶם unto whom they offer incense H6999	לָהֶם H0
יֹשֵׁעַ יְעוֹ but they shall not save H3467	לֹא H3808	יֹשֵׁעַ יְעוֹ but they shall not save H3467	לָהֶם H0	בְּעֵת in the time H6256	
רַעְתָּם: of their trouble H7451					

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 2:28 (Salvation): But where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble: for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah.

Deuteronomy 32:37 (References God): And he shall say, Where are their gods,
their rock in whom they trusted,

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