

Jeremiah 11:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the imagination of their evil heart: therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do; but they did them not.

Analysis

This verse indicts persistent disobedience: 'Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear.' The Hebrew *lo sham'u* (לֹא שָׁמְעוּ) and *lo hitu* (לֹא הִטּוּ) describe willful refusal to listen attentively. 'Inclined their ear' (*hittah ozen*) means to bend the ear toward the speaker—active, focused listening. 'But walked every one in the imagination of their evil heart.' The phrase *sheriruth lev hara* (שְׁרִירוּת לֵב הָרָע) indicates stubborn, obstinate heart pursuing its own evil inclinations. 'Therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant.' The covenant curses, long delayed, will finally be executed. 'Which I commanded them to do, but they did not.' The indictment concludes with their fundamental failure: commanded but did not do.

Historical Context

This summary covers Israel's history from Sinai to Jeremiah—a pattern of prophetic warning met with stubborn refusal. The 'imagination/stubbornness of evil heart' became Jeremiah's standard description of Judah's problem (3:17, 7:24, 9:14, 13:10, 16:12, 18:12, 23:17). The approaching Babylonian judgment represented accumulated covenant curses finally activated after divine patience exhausted.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does 'not inclining the ear' reveal about the active choice involved in refusing God's word?
2. How does the phrase 'stubbornness of their evil heart' describe the root problem behind disobedience?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּלְכּוּ אֲזָנָם אֶת הַט וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ וְלֹא
H1980 H241 H853 H5186 H3808 H8085 H3808
their ear not nor inclined

עָלֶיהָ וְאֶבְרַח יָא הֵכָּה עַל לִבָּם בְּשִׁרְיֹת וְכָל יֵשׁ
H5921 H935 H7451 H3820 H8307 H376
of their evil therefore I will bring heart in the imagination every one

אֲשֶׁר הִזָּאת אֶת הַבְּרִית וְדִבַּרְתִּי כָל אֶת
H834 H2063 H1285 H1697 H3605 H853
upon them all the words of this covenant

עָשׂוּ: וְלֹא א עָשׂוּ: צִוִּיתִי
H6213 H3808 H6680 H6213
but they did which I commanded but they did

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 7:24 (Evil): But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.

Jeremiah 7:26 (Parallel theme): Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers.

Jeremiah 35:15 (Evil): I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me.

Jeremiah 3:17 (Evil): At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.

Ezekiel 20:8 (Parallel theme): But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: they did not every man cast away the abominations of their eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt: then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish my anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.