

Jeremiah 12:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins.

Analysis

This verse describes the wicked's condition: 'Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root.' The Hebrew verb *nata* (נָטָה, plant) uses agricultural imagery—God Himself established them. 'They grow, yea, they bring forth fruit.' They flourish and are productive. 'Thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins.' This is the key accusation: they speak of God (YHWH is 'near in mouth') but He is 'far from their kidneys/inner parts' (*rachok mikliyothem*). Their religious speech lacks heart reality. They maintain religious vocabulary without genuine devotion. This describes the hypocrite—outwardly religious, inwardly distant from God.

Historical Context

The contrast between mouth and heart echoes Isaiah 29:13 ('this people draw near me with their mouth...but have removed their heart far from me') and anticipates Jesus' quotation of Isaiah against the Pharisees (Matthew 15:8). Judah's leaders maintained temple worship and covenant language while practicing idolatry and injustice. Their prosperity despite hypocrisy troubled Jeremiah.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does the contrast between 'near in mouth' and 'far from heart' define religious hypocrisy?
2. Why does God sometimes allow hypocrites to prosper, at least temporarily?

Interlinear Text

נִטְעָתָם	גַּם	שָׁכַחְשׁוּ	גַּם יֵלֶכְוּ	
Thou hast planted	H1571	them yea they have taken root	H1980	H1571
H5193		H8327		
עַשׂוּ	פֶּרִי	קָרֹב	אֵתָהּ	בְּפִיהֶם
yea they bring forth	fruit	thou art near	H859	in their mouth
H6213	H6529	H7138		H6310
				H7350
מִכְלִיּוֹתֵיהֶם:				
their reins				
H3629				

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 29:13 (Parallel theme): Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

Titus 1:16 (Parallel theme): They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

Matthew 15:8 (Parallel theme): This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

Jeremiah 11:17 (Parallel theme): For the LORD of hosts, that planted thee, hath pronounced evil against thee, for the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke me to anger in offering incense unto Baal.

Jeremiah 45:4 (Parallel theme): Thus shalt thou say unto him, The LORD saith thus; Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land.

Ezekiel 33:31 (Parallel theme): And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.