

Jeremiah 13:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus saith the LORD unto me, Go and get thee a linen girdle, and put it upon thy loins, and put it not in water.

Analysis

This verse begins a symbolic action: 'Thus saith the LORD unto me, Go and get thee a linen girdle, and put it upon thy loins, and put it not in water.' God commands Jeremiah to acquire an ezor pishtim (אַזֹר פִּשְׁתִּים, linen waistband/undergarment). The instruction is specific: wear it but 'put it not in water' (lo-tavi'ehu bamayim)—don't wash it. This creates a dirty, sweaty garment clinging to the prophet's body. The symbolic act continues through verse 11, illustrating Judah's intimate relationship with God and subsequent corruption. Linen was priestly material (Exodus 28:42), emphasizing sacred connection.

Historical Context

Sign-acts (prophetic symbolic actions) were common prophetic methodology—Isaiah walked naked (Isaiah 20), Ezekiel performed numerous symbolic acts (Ezekiel 4-5, 12), Hosea married a prostitute (Hosea 1). These actions embodied the message, making it memorable and unavoidable. The linen girdle as priestly material connected to Judah's calling as 'kingdom of priests' (Exodus 19:6) now corrupted.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. Why might God command a symbolic action rather than simply delivering verbal prophecy?
2. What does linen material suggest about Judah's intended priestly identity?

Interlinear Text

כֹּה	אָמַר	יְהוָה	אֵלַי	קָל וְנָ	וְקַנְיָתִי	לָב	אֶזְוֹר
H3541	Thus saith	the LORD	H413	unto me Go	and get	H0	girdle
	H559	H3068		H1980	H7069		H232
יָם	פָּשֶׁת	וְשָׂמַתָּ	עָלַי	מִתְּנֵה	וּבַיָּם	לֹא	תִבְאָהוּ:
	thee a linen	and put	H5921	it upon thy loins	it not in water	H3808	and put
	H6593	H7760		H4975	H4325		H935

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 1:1 (Parallel theme): God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

Jeremiah 13:11 (References Lord): For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith the LORD; that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory: but they would not hear.