

Jeremiah 16:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And ye have done worse than your fathers; for, behold, ye walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto me:

Analysis

The indictment continues, addressing the current generation: 'And ye have done worse than your fathers; for, behold, ye walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto me.' Not only have they continued ancestral sins, they've exceeded them ('worse than your fathers'). The phrase 'imagination of his evil heart' identifies the source: internal corruption producing external rebellion. The result: 'that they may not hearken unto me'—willful deafness to God. The progression from fathers' sins to worse contemporary sins illustrates how resisted light increases darkness. Each generation that rejects truth becomes harder than the previous.

Historical Context

Despite Josiah's reforms and Jeremiah's decades of ministry, Judah quickly reverted to idolatry and injustice after Josiah's death, often exceeding previous generations' wickedness.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does each generation that rejects truth tend to become worse than predecessors?
2. What is the relationship between following evil heart-imaginations and deafness to God?
3. What responsibility do we bear not to exceed our fathers' sins but to repent of them?

Interlinear Text

וְלֹא שָׁתְּמַבּוֹתִיכְּ מִאָתָּה	לְעֵשׂ וְתִּכְלִיל	בְּרִיעַתְּ מִאָתָּה	וְלֹא תִּמְלִיכְתִּי	וְלֹא תִּמְלִיכְתִּי	וְלֹא תִּמְלִיכְתִּי
H859	worse H7489	And ye have done H6213	than your fathers H1	H2005	ye walk H1980
אֲוֹשֶׁת	אַחֲרֵי	שְׁרֵר וְתִּכְלִיל	לְבָבָוּ	בְּבָבָוּ	לְבָבָתִי
every one	after	the imagination	heart	of his evil	H1115
H376	H310	H8307	H3820	H7451	
שְׁמַעַן	אַלְיָן				
that they may not hearken	H413				
H8085					

Additional Cross-References

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 13:10 (Evil): This evil people, which refuse to hear my words, which walk in the imagination of their heart, and walk after other gods, to serve them, and to worship them, shall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing.

Jeremiah 9:14 (Parallel theme): But have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them:

Ecclesiastes 9:3 (Evil): This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of

evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.

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.

Mark 7:21 (Evil): For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

1 Samuel 15:23 (Parallel theme): For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

Judges 2:19 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way.

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