

Jeremiah 16:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They shall die of grievous deaths; they shall not be lamented; neither shall they be buried; but they shall be as dung upon the face of the earth: and they shall be consumed by the sword, and by famine; and their carcasses shall be meat for the fowls of heaven, and for the beasts of the earth.

Analysis

The horrific fate described: 'They shall die of grievous deaths; they shall not be lamented; neither shall they be buried; but they shall be as dung upon the face of the earth.' Multiple horrors: grievous deaths, no mourning, no burial, bodies left as refuse ('dung'). Continued: 'and they shall be consumed by the sword, and by famine; and their carcasses shall be meat for the fowls of heaven, and for the beasts of the earth.' The triad (sword, famine, pestilence) plus exposure to scavengers represents total curse (Deuteronomy 28:26). This explains why Jeremiah shouldn't have children—such fates await the coming generation. The comprehensive nature of judgment makes normal life impossible.

Historical Context

These specific horrors were fulfilled during and after the Babylonian siege when countless died, burial was impossible, and bodies were left for scavengers in Jerusalem's streets and surrounding areas.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does detailed description of coming judgment serve prophetic purposes?
2. What does denial of burial and mourning symbolize about the completeness of covenant curse?
3. How should graphic depictions of judgment affect our understanding of sin's seriousness?

Interlinear Text

מָמוּתַי	תִּחְלָא יָם	יָמָם תּוֹ	לֹא	יִסְפְּדוּ	וְלֹא
deaths	of grievous	They shall die	H3808	they shall not be lamented	H3808
H4463	H8463	H4191		H5594	
יִקָּבְרוּ	לֹד מִן	עַל	פָּנָיו		
neither shall they be buried	but they shall be as dung	H5921	upon the face		
H6912	H1828		H6440		
הָאֲדָמָה	וְיָהִי וְ	וּבֶחַרְבַּ	וּבִרְעָב	וְכָל וְ	
of the earth	H1961	by the sword	and by famine	and they shall be consumed	
H127		H2719	H7458	H3615	
וְהָיָה	נִבְלָתָם	לְמֶאֱכָל	לְעוֹף	הַשָּׁמַיִם	
H1961	and their carcasses	shall be meat	for the fowls	of heaven	
	H5038	H3978	H5775	H8064	
וּלְבֵהֵמָה	הָאֲרֶץ:				
and for the beasts	of the earth				
H929	H776				

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 25:33 (Parallel theme): And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground.

Psalms 83:10 (Parallel theme): Which perished at En-dor: they became as dung for the earth.

Jeremiah 9:22 (Parallel theme): Speak, Thus saith the LORD, Even the carcasses of men shall fall as dung upon the open field, and as the handful after the harvestman, and none shall gather them.

Jeremiah 34:20 (Parallel theme): I will even give them into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life: and their dead bodies shall be for meat unto the fowls of the heaven, and to the beasts of the earth.

Zephaniah 1:17 (Parallel theme): And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung.

Isaiah 18:6 (Parallel theme): They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.

Jeremiah 7:33 (Parallel theme): And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray them away.