

Jeremiah 17:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus said the LORD unto me; Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem;

Analysis

God commissions Jeremiah to a public prophetic act, positioning him strategically "in the gate of the children of the people"—likely the main public entrance to Jerusalem where both common folk and royalty passed. The command to stand "whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem" emphasizes comprehensive witness. No one, regardless of social status, could avoid hearing God's word.

Gates in ancient cities served as centers of commerce, legal proceedings, and public assembly (Ruth 4:1-11, Deut 21:19). Positioning Jeremiah there ensured maximum exposure for his message. The prophetic word would confront all social classes—from kings to commoners—demonstrating that covenant obligations apply universally. No one stands exempt from God's law or immune to His judgment.

This public proclamation models the church's calling to bear witness in the marketplace of ideas, not merely within religious enclaves. Christ commanded proclamation of the gospel to all nations (Matt 28:19), and the apostles preached in public forums (Acts 17:17). Truth must confront culture at every level, speaking to rulers and citizens alike with the authority of God's word.

Historical Context

Jerusalem's gates were named and had specific functions—the Sheep Gate, Fish Gate, Water Gate, etc. (Neh 3). The gates were not merely defensive structures but vital social spaces where community life transpired. Prophets regularly delivered oracles at city gates (1 Kgs 22:10, Jer 7:2, 19:2). This public setting ensured that Jeremiah's message couldn't be dismissed as private opinion or marginal discourse but confronted the entire community as God's authoritative word.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. Where are the 'gates' of modern society where God's word needs to be publicly proclaimed?
2. How do you balance respectful engagement with prophetic boldness when addressing cultural and political issues?
3. In what ways does the church's witness need to reach beyond comfortable religious spaces into the public square?

Interlinear Text

שַׁעַר־יְהוָה אֶמְרָה כֹּה
Thus said the LORD unto me Go and stand and in all the gates

H3541 H559 H3068 H413 H1980 H5975 H8179

בְּנֵי־בָּנִים אֲשֶׁר יִבּוּ אֲשֶׁר בָּזְבֻּן
of the children of the people whereby the kings of Judah

H1121 H5971 H834 H935 H0 H4428 H3063

וְבָכְלַבְנִים שַׁעַר־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר
and by the which they go out and in all the gates

H834 H3318 H0 H3605 H8179

יְרוּשָׁלָם:
of Jerusalem

H3389

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 7:2 (References Lord): Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all ye of Judah, that enter in at these gates to worship the LORD.

Jeremiah 26:2 (References Lord): Thus saith the LORD; Stand in the court of the LORD'S house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the LORD'S house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word: