

Jeremiah 19:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall straiten them.

Analysis

The most horrific judgment: "And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall straiten them." This describes siege-induced cannibalism—starvation so severe that covenant curses are literally fulfilled (Lev 26:29, Deut 28:53-57). Parents eating their own children represents the absolute depths of human degradation.

This wasn't hyperbole but literal prophecy, fulfilled during the Babylonian siege (Lam 2:20, 4:10, Ezek 5:10). The horror demonstrates how completely sin unravels civilization and humanity. What began with sacrificing children to Molech ends with desperate parents eating their starved children for survival. Sin always escalates, destroying what it initially claimed to preserve. The progression from idolatry to injustice to cannibalism shows rebellion's logical end.

This passage's horror should drive us to Christ, who endured God's wrath so we would never face such judgment. The depths of covenant curse reveal the magnitude of Christ's saving work—He bore infinite wrath to deliver us from these horrors. Reformed theology emphasizes penal substitutionary atonement—Christ suffered the covenant curses we deserved (Gal 3:13), including God-forsakenness (Matt 27:46), so believers inherit covenant blessings through faith.

Historical Context

Siege-induced cannibalism occurred during the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem (Lam 2:20, 4:10) and again during the Roman siege in AD 70 (Josephus, Wars 6.3.4). Archaeological evidence from besieged ancient cities sometimes reveals evidence of desperate survival practices. These horrific historical realities validate biblical prophecy's accuracy and demonstrate human depravity's depths when societal structures collapse under judgment. The warnings stand as eternal testimony to sin's consequences.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does this extreme judgment reveal both the seriousness of sin and the depth of Christ's saving work?
2. What does the progression from idolatry to this horror teach about sin's escalating nature?
3. How should awareness of the covenant curses Christ bore motivate gratitude and obedience?

Interlinear Text

יֹאכֶּל לֹ	אֶת	בָּשָׂר	בְּנֵיהֶם	וְאֵת	בָּשָׂר
And I will cause them to eat	H853	and the flesh	of their sons	H853	and the flesh
H398		H1320	H1121		H1320
בְּנֵיהֶם	וְאִישׁ	בָּשָׂר	רֵעֵהוּ	יֹאכֶּל לֹ	
of their daughters	every one	and the flesh	of his friend	And I will cause them to eat	
H1323	H376	H1320	H7453	H398	
בְּמָצוֹר	וּבְמָצ וּק	אֶשׁ ר	יֵצֵא יָקוֹ	לָהֶם	
in the siege	and straitness	H834	shall straiten	H0	
H4692	H4689		H6693		
אִיְבֵיהֶם	וּמִבְקֹשִׁי	נַפְשָׁם:			
wherewith their enemies	and they that seek	their lives			
H341	H1245	H5315			

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 9:20 (Parallel theme): And he shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry; and he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied: they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm:

Leviticus 26:29 (Parallel theme): And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat.

Lamentations 4:10 (Parallel theme): The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people.

Ezekiel 5:10 (Parallel theme): Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds.

Lamentations 2:20 (Parallel theme): Behold, O LORD, and consider to whom thou hast done this. Shall the women eat their fruit, and children of a span long? shall the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord?

