

Jeremiah 21:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And touching the house of the king of Judah, say, Hear ye the word of the LORD;

Analysis

And touching the house of the king of Judah, say, Hear ye the word of the LORD—this verse introduces a distinct oracle directed at the royal house ('house of the king of Judah,' beyt melech yehudah, בֵּית מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה). The phrase 'touching' (le-, ל) means 'concerning' or 'regarding.' The imperative 'Hear ye' (שמעו, shim'u) is the covenantal call to obedience found throughout Scripture (Deuteronomy 6:4, 'Hear, O Israel'). 'The word of the LORD' (devar-YHWH, דְּבַר־יְהוָה) emphasizes divine authority—what follows is not Jeremiah's opinion but God's revealed will.

This transitional verse marks a shift from addressing Zedekiah's specific inquiry (vv. 1-10) to general prophetic instruction to the Davidic dynasty. The royal house bore special responsibility because God's covenant with David (2 Samuel 7:12-16) promised an eternal throne conditioned on obedience (1 Kings 9:4-7). Jeremiah's ministry consistently called the royal house to 'execute judgment and righteousness' (Jeremiah 22:3) as the primary duty of Davidic kings. The tragedy was that Judah's kings failed this calling, exploiting the poor and shedding innocent blood (Jeremiah 22:17). This passage shows that royal authority derives from divine mandate, not inherent right—kings must submit to God's word or face judgment. Ultimately, only King Jesus perfectly fulfills the Davidic covenant, ruling with perfect justice (Isaiah 9:7, Luke 1:32-33).

Historical Context

This oracle comes from the same period as verses 1-10 (circa 588 BC during Jerusalem's siege) but broadens to address the Davidic dynasty's persistent failure. The 'house of the king' includes not just Zedekiah but his officials and the royal court. Historically, Judah's kings from Solomon's later years through the exile increasingly violated covenant justice. Manasseh filled Jerusalem with innocent blood (2 Kings 21:16). Jehoiakim murdered the prophet Uriah (Jeremiah 26:20-23) and exploited laborers (Jeremiah 22:13-17). Zedekiah, though less actively evil, was weak and allowed his officials to persecute Jeremiah (Jeremiah 38:5). The Davidic covenant promised an eternal dynasty but included conditional clauses: obedience brought blessing, disobedience brought exile (1 Kings 9:6-9). The Babylonian exile temporarily ended the Davidic monarchy, fulfilled only ultimately in Christ, David's greater son who reigns forever. The call 'Hear the word of the LORD' echoes throughout Jeremiah's prophecies to Judah's kings, showing that even royal authority must submit to divine revelation.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does the call for the royal house to 'hear the word of the LORD' establish the principle that all human authority—even divinely appointed leadership—remains under God's word?
2. In what ways does Judah's royal house's failure to execute justice prepare us to appreciate Christ as the perfect Davidic King?

Interlinear Text

וּלְבֵית	מֶלֶךְ	יְהוּדָה	שִׁמְעוּ	דְּבַר	יְהוָה:
And touching the house	of the king	of Judah	say Hear	ye the word	of the LORD
H1004	H4428	H3063	H8085	H1697	H3068

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 17:20 (Kingdom): And say unto them, Hear ye the word of the LORD, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates:

Micah 3:1 (Parallel theme): And I said, Hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the house of Israel; Is it not for you to know judgment?

Jeremiah 13:18 (Kingdom): Say unto the king and to the queen, Humble yourselves, sit down: for your principalities shall come down, even the crown of your glory.