

# Jeremiah 22:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But thine eyes and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it.

## Analysis

**But thine eyes and thine heart are not but for thy covetousness**—the Hebrew **עֲצָרָה** (betsa, 'unjust gain') describes violent greed that tears apart social fabric. Jehoiakim's entire orientation (eyes = perception, heart = will) fixated on accumulation through oppression. The fourfold indictment follows: **covetousness**, **shedding innocent blood** (**דָם נָקִי**, dam naqi—judicial murder of the righteous), **oppression** (**עֲשֵׂה**, osheq—exploitation of the powerless), and **violence** (**מְרוֹצָה**, merutsah—literally 'running' toward brutality).

This catalogue of crimes exposes the king's heart as a factory of injustice. Paul later warned that **the love of money is the root of all evil** (1 Timothy 6:10)—Jehoiakim embodied this principle. His reign illustrated how covetousness metastasizes into bloodshed, oppression, and violence when unchecked by fear of God.

## Historical Context

Jehoiakim ruled as an Egyptian vassal initially, paying heavy tribute by taxing his people mercilessly (2 Kings 23:35). He built a luxurious palace using forced labor (Jeremiah 22:13-14), ignoring his father Josiah's reforms. Historical records suggest he murdered prophets who opposed him, including possibly Uriah (Jeremiah 26:20-23).

## Related Passages

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**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. How does covetousness function as the root from which other sins grow in your life?
2. What 'innocent blood' might be on the hands of economic systems you participate in?
3. Where do you see the progression from greed to violence in contemporary society?

## Interlinear Text

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עַל אֶם כִּי יְלַבֵּב עִינֵּךְ יְלַבֵּב אֵין כִּי  
H3588 H369 But thine eyes and thine heart H3588 H518 H5921  
H5869 H3820

עַל לְשָׁפָ וְלִפְנֵי בְּצָעַךְ כְּנָזְבֵן יְמִינְךָ  
are not but for thy covetousness H1215 H5921 blood H1818 innocent H5355 and for to shed H8210 H5921

לְעַשְׂוֹת: הַמְּרוֹאֵת הַעֲשֵׂה שְׁקָדֵן  
and for oppression H6233 H5921 and for violence H4835 to do H6213

## Additional Cross-References

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**2 Peter 2:14** (Parallel theme): Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

**Jeremiah 22:3** (Blood): Thus saith the LORD; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place.

**Ezekiel 19:6** (Parallel theme): And he went up and down among the lions, he became a young lion, and learned to catch the prey, and devoured men.

**2 Kings 24:4** (Blood): And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon.

**Psalms 10:3** (Parallel theme): For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth.

**Ezekiel 33:31** (Parallel theme): And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.