

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 בֶּצֶט (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** (דָּם נָקִי, dam naqi—judicial murder of the righteous), **oppression** (עֲשֵׂה, osheq—exploitation of the powerless), and **violence** (מְרוּצָה, 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 Urijah (Jeremiah 26:20-23).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

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

עַל	אֵם	כִּי	וְלִבְךָ	עֵינֶיךָ	אֵין	כִּי
H5921	H518	H3588	H3820	H5869	H369	H3588
			and thine heart	But thine eyes		
וְעַל	לְשֹׁף וְ	הַנָּקִי	דָּם	וְעַל	בְּצַעַךְ	
H5921	H8210	H5355	H1818	H5921	H1215	
	and for to shed	innocent	blood		are not but for thy covetousness	
לַעֲשׂוֹת:	הַמְרוֹצָה	וְעַל	הָעֹשֶׁק			
H6213	H4835	H5921	H6233			
to do	and for violence		and for oppression			

Additional Cross-References

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.