

Jeremiah 22:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And say, Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David, thou, and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these gates:

Analysis

Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, that sittest upon the throne of David—Jeremiah addresses the reigning monarch (likely Jehoiakim or Zedekiah) with the covenant formula *shema debar-YHWH* (שְׁמַע דְּבַר־יְהוָה), 'hear the word of the LORD.' The phrase **that sittest upon the throne of David** (*hayoshev al-kisei David*, הַיֹּשֵׁב עַל־כִּסֵּי דָוִד) is not honorific but accusatory: it reminds the king that his throne derives from the Davidic covenant (2 Samuel 7:12-16), which promised perpetual dynasty only through obedience. The present participle 'sittest' emphasizes current occupation—he sits there now, but will he continue?

Thou, and thy servants, and thy people that enter in by these gates extends covenant accountability beyond the individual king to his administration and subjects. The *avadim* (עֲבָדִים, 'servants') are royal officials, and 'thy people' (*ammecha*, עַמְּךָ) are those who have access to the palace gates. This inclusive address establishes collective responsibility: the king's sin corrupts his court, and the court corrupts the nation. Proverbs 29:12 warns, 'If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked.' The summons to the palace gates recalls Deuteronomy 17:14-20, the Torah's charter for kingship, which the Davidic kings systematically violated.

Historical Context

Jeremiah 22 contains prophecies against multiple kings: Shallum/Jehoahaz (vv. 11-12), Jehoiakim (vv. 13-19), and Coniah/Jehoiachin (vv. 24-30). This opening address applies broadly to the royal house during Jeremiah's ministry (626-586 BC). The reference to 'these gates' suggests the palace entrance where official business was conducted. Ancient Near Eastern palace gates were sites of judicial proceedings and royal decrees. By summoning the entire royal establishment—king, officials, and courtiers—Jeremiah emphasizes that the covenant lawsuit is comprehensive. The 'throne of David' had theological significance: God promised David an everlasting dynasty (2 Samuel 7:16), but this was conditional on obedience (1 Kings 9:4-7). The late monarchy's failure to heed prophetic warnings led to the exile and temporary cessation of Davidic rule, though the promise found ultimate fulfillment in Christ, the eternal son of David (Luke 1:32-33).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does the phrase 'that sittest upon the throne of David' function as both reminder of privilege and warning of conditional covenant?
2. What does the inclusion of 'thy servants, and thy people' teach about the corporate nature of leadership responsibility and national guilt?
3. How does this summons to hear God's word challenge modern assumptions about separation between religious and political authority?

Interlinear Text

עַל	הַיֵּשֶׁב	בְּ	יְהוּדָה	הַ	מֶלֶךְ	יְהוָה	הַ	דִּבַּר	שְׁמַע	עַ	וְאָמַרְתָּ
	that	sittest	of	Judah	O	king	of	the	LORD	Hear	And say
H5921	H3427	H3063	H4428	H3068	H1697	H8085	H559				
וְעַמֶּךָ	וְעַבְדֶּיךָ	אֲתָה	הַ	דָּוִד	כִּסֵּא	אֲ					
and	thy	people	thou	and	thy	servants	of	David	upon	the	throne
H5971	H5650	H859	H1732	H3678							
הָאֵלֶּה:	בְּשַׁעַר	יָם	הַבָּא	יָם							
H428	in	by	these	gates	that	enter					
	H8179	H935									

Additional Cross-References

Luke 1:32 (References Lord): He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

Isaiah 9:7 (Kingdom): Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Isaiah 1:10 (Word): Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.

Jeremiah 22:4 (Kingdom): For if ye do this thing indeed, then shall there enter in by the gates of this house kings sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, he, and his servants, and his people.