

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־דְּבָר־יְהוָה), 'hear the word of the LORD.' The phrase **that sittest upon the throne of David** (hayoshev al-kisei David, הַיֹּשֵׁב עַל־כִּסֵּא דָוִיד) 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 (עבדים, 'servants') are royal officials, and 'thy people' (ammecha, עַמְךָ) 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	הַשִּׁבְעָה	יְהוָה	שְׁמָעָה	וְאָמַרְתָּ
And say	Hear	the word	of the LORD	O king
H559	H8085	H1697	H3068	H4428
בְּסֵךְ	אַתָּה	אַתָּה	יְהִי	וְעַמְךָ
upon the throne	of David	H859	thou and thy servants	and thy people
H3678	H1732		H5650	H5971
בְּבַאֲמָת	בְּשַׁעַר	בְּאַלְהָה		
that enter	in by these gates	H428		
H935	H8179			

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.