

Jeremiah 23:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly.

Analysis

The anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have executed...the thoughts of his heart (לֹא יָשׁוּב אֶף־יְהוָה עַד־עָשָׂתוֹ, lo yashuv af-YHWH ad-asoto)—divine anger won't reverse until completing its purpose. The phrase מְזִמּוֹת לִבּוֹ (m'zimmot libbo, 'thoughts/plans of his heart') shows intentional judgment, not emotional reaction. **In the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly**—retrospectively, the exiles would understand God's justice.

The verb בִּין (bin, 'understand') appears doubled for emphasis—'understand with understanding.' Hindsight vindicates divine judgment as purposeful. Daniel later studied Jeremiah's 70-year prophecy and understood (Daniel 9:2). Time proves God's word reliable and human resistance futile.

Historical Context

Written before 586 BC, this prophecy was vindicated when Babylon destroyed Jerusalem. Exiles eventually understood that Jeremiah spoke truth while false prophets lied. The 'latter days' perspective demonstrates how divine purposes unfold across generations.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What situations might you understand perfectly only in hindsight as God's purposeful work?
2. How does knowing God's anger has specific purpose change your response to discipline?
3. What past mysteries in your life do you now understand as divine intention?

Interlinear Text

ל א	יָשׁוּב	אַף	יְהוָה	עַד	עָשָׂתָּ וְ	וְעַד
H3808	shall not return	The anger	of the LORD	H5704	until he have executed	H5704
	H7725	H639	H3068		H6213	
	וְהָקִימָהּ	מַחְשַׁבֹתָיו	לִבּוֹ	בְּאַחֲרֵית	הַיָּמִים	
	and till he have performed	the thoughts	of his heart	in the latter	days	
	H6965	H4209	H3820	H319	H3117	
	וְתִבְחַן	בָּהּ	בִּינָהּ:			
	ye shall consider	H0	it perfectly			
	H995		H998			

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 30:24 (References Lord): The fierce anger of the LORD shall not return, until he have done it, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it.

Isaiah 55:11 (Parallel theme): So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Isaiah 14:24 (References Lord): The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:

Proverbs 21:30 (References Lord): There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD.

Zechariah 1:6 (References Lord): But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned and said, Like as the LORD of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us.

Genesis 49:1 (Parallel theme): And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.