

Jeremiah 23:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?

Analysis

Is not my word like as a fire...and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? (כִּי אֲשֶׁר וְכִפְטוּשׁ יְפָצֵץ בְּלָעַל, ka'esh...ukh'pattish y'fotsets sala)—fire (אֲשֶׁר) and hammer (כִּפְטוּשׁ) describe transformative, destructive power. Fire refines and consumes; hammers shatter resistant stone (בְּלָעַל). The verb פָּצֵץ (patsats) means total fragmentation.

Hebrews 4:12 echoes this: 'The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword.' Fire melts metals; hammers break stone for building. God's word either refines or destroys. The hardest hearts cannot withstand its impact. False prophecy lacks this power—it tickles, not transforms. Authentic divine word breaks through resistance with uncontrollable force.

Historical Context

Ancient metallurgy used fire for refining precious metals (Malachi 3:2-3). Stone-working employed hammers and chisels. These technologies provided tangible metaphors for spiritual reality. Jeremiah experienced God's word as 'fire shut up in my bones' (Jeremiah 20:9)—he couldn't contain it.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. When has God's word functioned like fire or hammer, shattering comfortable illusions?
2. What rock of resistance needs God's word-hammer to break through?
3. How can you tell whether teaching has fire-and-hammer power or is mere chaff?

Interlinear Text

וְכִפְעַל יְהִי הָאָמֵן כִּי דְבָרִי שָׁאֵל אָתָּה
H3808 like H3541 Is not my word H1697 H784 H5002 H3068 H6360
the LORD and like a hammer

אָתָּה שְׁלֹשׁ אֶלְעָמָד
H6327 in pieces H5553 the rock

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 4:12 (Word): For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Jeremiah 5:14 (Word): Wherefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, Because ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.

Luke 24:32 (Word): And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

Jeremiah 20:9 (Word): Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.

John 6:63 (Word): It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

Revelation 11:5 (Parallel theme): And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

Acts 2:3 (Parallel theme): And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

Acts 2:37 (Parallel theme): Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

2 Corinthians 2:16 (Parallel theme): To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?