

# Jeremiah 23:36

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the burden of the LORD shall ye mention no more: for every man's word shall be his burden; for ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the LORD of hosts our God.

## Analysis

**And the burden of the LORD shall ye mention no more: for every man's word shall be his burden** (וּמַשָּׂא יְהוָה לֹא תִזְכְּרוּ-עוֹד כִּי הַמַּשָּׂא יְהוָה לְאִישׁ דְּבָרוֹ, umassa YHWH lo tizkeru-od ki hammassa yihyeh l'ish d'varo). The prohibition continues: stop mentioning מַשָּׂא יְהוָה (massa YHWH). Why? **For every man's word shall be his burden**—the wordplay becomes judgment. Those who frivolously spoke of God's 'burden' will discover their own words become their burden, bringing condemnation. **For ye have perverted the words of the living God, of the LORD of hosts our God** (וַהֲפַכְתֶּם אֶת-דְּבָרֵי אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵינוּ, vahafakhtem et-divrei elohim chayyim YHWH tseva'ot eloheinu).

The verb הִפָּךְ (hafakh, 'overturn/pervert/twist') describes deliberate distortion. They've corrupted the words of אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים (elohim chayyim, 'the living God')—not dead idols but the active, speaking God. The full divine title 'LORD of hosts our God' (יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵינוּ) emphasizes both transcendent power (Yahweh of armies) and covenantal intimacy (our God). Perverting such a God's words invites catastrophe. Jesus condemned Pharisees for making God's word void through tradition (Mark 7:13). When human words replace divine words, claiming divine authority, those words become a burden of judgment their speakers cannot bear.

## Historical Context

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The charge of 'perverting' God's words indicts the systematic theological corruption pervading Judah's religious establishment. This wasn't isolated error but institutionalized distortion—schools, guilds, and courts all participating in twisting divine revelation to serve human agendas. The phrase 'living God' contrasts Yahweh with Babylon's dead idols, emphasizing the tragedy: they perverted words from the only God who actually speaks.

## Related Passages

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**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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1. How have you 'perverted' God's words by selective reading, manipulation, or distortion to suit preferences?
2. In what ways do your words become your 'burden,' bringing judgment rather than life?
3. What does it mean that you answer to 'the living God' rather than dead, silent ideologies?

## Interlinear Text

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הַמֶּשֶׁשׁ א	יְהוָה ה	ל א	תִּזְכְּרוּ	ע וְ	כִּי	הַמֶּשֶׁשׁ א
And the burden	of the LORD	H3808	shall ye mention	H5750	H3588	And the burden
H4853	H3068		H2142			H4853
יְהִיָּה	לֹא יֵשׁ	דְּבָרֵי	וְהִפְכֹתָם	אֶת	דְּבָרֵי	
H1961	no more for every man's	the words	for ye have perverted	H853	the words	
	H376	H1697	H2015		H1697	
אֱלֹהֵינוּ:	חַיִּים	יְהוָה ה	צָבָא וְ	אֱלֹהֵינוּ:		
God	of the living	of the LORD	of hosts	God		
H430	H2416	H3068	H6635	H430		

## Additional Cross-References

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**Isaiah 3:8** (References Lord): For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory.

**2 Peter 3:16** (Word): As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

**Psalms 64:8** (Parallel theme): So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away.

**Psalms 120:3** (Parallel theme): What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?

**Jeremiah 10:10** (References God): But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation.

**2 Kings 19:4** (Word): It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left.

