

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 וְמַשָּׁא יְהֻהָּ לֹא תִזְכְּרֹעַד כִּי הַמַּשָּׁא וְהַיְהָ לְאִישׁ דְּבָרוֹ). The prohibition continues: stop mentioning **massa** יהֻהָּ (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**, וְהַפְּכָתָם אֶת־דְּבָרֵי אֱלֹהִים מִים יְהֻהָּ צְבָאֹת אֱלֹהִינוּ) vahafakhtem et-divrei elohim chayyim YHWH tseva'ot eloheinu).

The verb **הַפְּגַע** (hafakh, 'overturn/pervert/twist') describes deliberate distortion. They've corrupted the words of **אֱלֹהִים חַיִם** (elohim chayyim, 'the living God')—not dead idols but the active, speaking God. The full divine title 'LORD of hosts our God' (יהֻהָּ צְבָאֹת אֱלֹהִינוּ) 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

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

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

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

המִשְׁאָה	כִּי עִזָּה	תִּזְכְּרוּ	לֹא	יְהִי הָ	הַמִּשְׁאָה
And the burden	of the LORD	H3808	shall ye mention	H5750	And the burden
H4853	H3068	H2142	H3588	H4853	
יְהִי	לֹא יְשַׁ	דְּבָרִי	וְפָכַת מָ	אַתָּה	דְּבָרִי
H1961	no more for every man's	H376	the words	H2015	the words
		H1697	for ye have perverted	H853	H1697
אֱלֹהִינוּ	אֱלֹהִינוּ	אֱלֹהִינוּ	אֱלֹהִינוּ	אֱלֹהִינוּ	
God	of the living	of the LORD	of hosts	God	
H430	H2416	H3068	H6635	H430	

Additional Cross-References

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.

