

Jeremiah 23:40

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.

Analysis

And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten, וְנִתְתַּתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם חֶרֶף עֹזֶם וְכָלָמוֹת עֹזֶם אֲשֶׁר לֹא תִשְׁכַּח (v'natatti aleikhem cherpat olam ukhlimmut olam asher lo tisshakech). The dual judgment—חֶרֶף (cherpah, 'reproach/disgrace') and כָּלָמָה (k'limmah, 'shame/humiliation')—both modified by עֹזֶם (olam, 'everlasting/perpetual') creates emphatic finality. The irony is sharp: though God will forget them (v. 39), their shame **shall not be forgotten** (לֹא תִשְׁכַּח, lo tisshakech). They wanted to be remembered; they will be—as objects of reproach.

This reverses covenant blessing. God promised Abraham, 'I will make thy name great' (Genesis 12:2). Now His people will have everlasting infamy instead. The 'reproach' (חֶרֶף) is public disgrace—nations mocking Judah's fall. The 'shame' (כָּלָמָה) is internal humiliation—psychological devastation of recognizing deserved judgment. Being forgotten by God yet remembered in shame is tragic irony. Jesus warned similarly: better to never have been born (Matthew 26:24). The chapter concludes where it began—false prophecy leads to everlasting shame. Truth may be temporarily unpopular, but lies produce permanent disgrace.

Historical Context

Jewish exile became proverbial in the ancient world—Babylon, then Rome (70 AD), used 'Judah' as example of divine abandonment and national catastrophe. For 2,500+ years, the reproach of exile has marked Jewish history, from Babylonian

taunts to modern anti-Semitism. Yet God's covenant faithfulness eventually overcame even 'everlasting' reproach—Israel's restoration demonstrates that with God, even perpetual shame can be redeemed, though never forgotten as warning to future generations.

Related Passages

James 2:17 – Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What legacy are you creating—one of faithfulness or one of 'everlasting reproach'?
2. How does the fear of being forgotten by God compare to being remembered in shame?
3. In what ways can even 'perpetual shame' serve redemptive purposes as warning to others?

Interlinear Text

וְלֹא אַשְׁרָה	תִּשְׁכַּח	לֹא אַשְׁרָה	וְלֹא אַשְׁרָה	וְלֹא אַשְׁרָה	וְלֹא אַשְׁרָה
And I will bring	reproach	an everlasting	shame	an everlasting	

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 20:11 (Eternal Life): But the LORD is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be

greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten.

Jeremiah 42:18 (Parallel theme): For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; As mine anger and my fury hath been poured forth upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem; so shall my fury be poured forth upon you, when ye shall enter into Egypt: and ye shall be an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach; and ye shall see this place no more.

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