

Jeremiah 24:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil; surely thus saith the LORD, So will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt:

Analysis

And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil (בַּתְּאַנִּים פְּגֻעוֹת אֲשֶׁר) —the evil figs represent **Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem...and them that dwell in the land of Egypt**. The comparison to inedible figs, spoiled beyond use (רֹעֵם, ro'a, 'badness/evil'), indicates total corruption. Unlike the good figs (exiles in Babylon, vv. 5-7) who would be restored, these remaining in the land would face comprehensive judgment.

The agricultural metaphor distinguishes between those who submitted to Babylon (preserving their future) and those who resisted (spoiling themselves). Counterintuitively, those taken into exile were 'good figs' while those remaining appeared blessed but were actually cursed. This challenges assumptions that visible prosperity indicates divine favor. Sometimes God's discipline (exile) proves more merciful than apparent freedom (remaining in Jerusalem).

Historical Context

After Nebuchadnezzar's 597 BC deportation of Jehoiachin and the elites, Zedekiah ruled as Babylonian puppet with remaining nobles and population. Many fled to Egypt seeking refuge. Jeremiah's fig vision (594 BC) predicted that those who

stayed or fled to Egypt would fare worse than the exiles—fulfilled when Jerusalem fell (586 BC) and Egyptian refugees were later attacked.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How might apparent freedom or prosperity actually indicate being under divine judgment?
2. When has God's discipline proven more merciful than comfortable circumstances?
3. What 'evil figs' in your life appear good but are actually spiritually spoiled?

Interlinear Text

מִרְעָם	וְכַתְאַיִם	לֹא אָשָׁר	בְּרָע	וְתַ	לְנָהָה	תַּאֲכֵל	לְנָהָה	מִרְעָם
figs	And as the evil					which cannot be eaten	they are so evil	
H8384	H7451	H834	H3808			H398		H7455
צְדָקִי הָוָה	כְּהֵן פִּי	אָמַר רְאֵם	יְהִי הָאָמֵן	כִּי אָמַר	אָתָה	אָתָה	אָתָה	צְדָקִי הָוָה
H3588	H3541	surely thus saith	the LORD	H3651	So will I give	H5414	H853	Zedekiah
		H559	H3068				H6667	
רֹשֶׁל מִלְּךָ	מֶלֶךְ הַיּוֹדָעָה	שְׁרֵי יְהוָה	אֶת תְּנִשְׁאָר	אֶת תְּנִשְׁאָר	יְהוָה אֶת תְּנִשְׁאָר	יְהוָה אֶת תְּנִשְׁאָר	רֹשֶׁל מִלְּךָ	רֹשֶׁל מִלְּךָ
the king	of Judah	and his princes	and the residue	H853	and the residue	H7611	H3389	of Jerusalem
H4428	H3063	H8269		H853		H7611	H3389	
מִצְרָיִם	בָּאָצָר	בָּאָצָר	בָּאָצָר	בָּאָצָר	בָּאָצָר	בָּאָצָר	מִצְרָיִם	מִצְרָיִם
that remain	in the land	and them that dwell	in the land	H2063	and them that dwell	H3427	H776	of Egypt
H7604	H776						H4714	

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 24:2 (Parallel theme): One basket had very good figs, even like the figs that are first ripe: and the other basket had very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad.

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