

Jeremiah 25:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear.

Analysis

And the LORD hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear. The phrase ‘āḇāḏāyw hannēḥî’îm (עֲבָדָיו הַנְּהִיִּים, his servants the prophets) identifies these messengers as God's authorized representatives. The repetition of 'rising early and sending' emphasizes divine diligence—God took initiative repeatedly to warn His people. The phrase ḥittû ‘et-’oznēkem (הִטּוּ אֶת-אָזְנוֹכֶם, inclined your ear) describes active listening, leaning in to hear. Judah refused even this basic receptivity.

This verse establishes a pattern of prophetic witness spanning generations. God sent not one prophet but many—Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Nahum, Urijah (26:20-23), and others contemporary with Jeremiah. Their unified message called for repentance and warned of judgment. The multiplicity of witnesses fulfilled the legal principle requiring two or three witnesses to establish a matter (Deuteronomy 19:15). No one could claim they hadn't been warned. Similarly, God sent multiple messengers to Israel—prophets, John the Baptist, the apostles, and ultimately His Son (Matthew 21:33-39; Hebrews 1:1-2).

Historical Context

The prophetic ministry to Judah spanned centuries. From the divided kingdom period through the final days before exile, God consistently sent prophets calling

for covenant faithfulness. Isaiah prophesied in the 8th century BC, warning of Assyrian and Babylonian threats. Micah, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk all ministered before or during Jeremiah's time. Their unanimous message—repent or face exile—went unheeded. Archaeological evidence confirms Judah's persistent idolatry during this period, including worship of Asherah, Baal, and even child sacrifice.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does God's sending of multiple prophets with the same message demonstrate both His grace and the seriousness of Judah's rebellion?
2. What does it mean to 'incline your ear' to God's word, and how does this differ from passive hearing?
3. When confronted with consistent biblical teaching on an issue, how should we respond if it challenges our current beliefs or lifestyle?

Interlinear Text

וְשָׁלַחְנָה	וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם	אֵלַיְכֶם	אֶתְכֶם	כָּל	עַבְדֵי יְיָ
and sending	And the LORD	H413	H853	H3605	unto you all his servants
H7971	H3068				H5650
הַנְּבִיאִים	הֶשְׁכָּח	וְשָׁלַחְנָה	וְלֹא		לִשְׁמָעַי:
the prophets	rising early	and sending	H3808		them but ye have not hearkened
H5030	H7925	H7971			H8085
וְלֹא	הִטִּיתָ	אֶתְכֶם	אֲזִנְךָ		לִשְׁמָעַי:
H3808	nor inclined	H853	your ear	them but ye have not hearkened	
	H5186		H241		H8085

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 25:3 (Sin): From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day, that is the three and twentieth year, the word of the LORD hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened.

Jeremiah 26:5 (Prophecy): To hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early, and sending them, but ye have not hearkened;