

Jeremiah 25:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, saith the LORD; that ye might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt.

Analysis

Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, saith the LORD; that ye might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt. The phrase *lěma'an haḵ'îsēnî* (לְמַעַן הִכְעִסְנִי, that you might provoke me to anger) reveals the perverse result of their rebellion. The Hebrew *lěma'an* typically denotes purpose, suggesting their persistent idolatry functioned as if intentionally designed to anger God. The phrase *lěra' lākem* (לְךָ לְךָ, to your own hurt) emphasizes the self-destructive nature of sin. Provoking God's anger doesn't harm God—it destroys the rebel.

This verse encapsulates the tragic irony of sin: people reject God's protective boundaries, thinking independence brings freedom, only to discover they've embraced their own destruction. Sin promises pleasure but delivers death (Romans 6:23). The idols Judah pursued couldn't save them when Babylon arrived; only the God they rejected could have delivered them. This pattern recurs throughout Scripture—the prodigal son pursuing 'freedom' in the far country (Luke 15:11-32), Israel demanding a king to be 'like other nations' only to suffer under tyranny (1 Samuel 8:10-18). We cannot sin with impunity; we reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7).

Historical Context

By 605 BC, Judah had experienced multiple warnings—Assyria's destruction of the northern kingdom (722 BC), near-destruction under Sennacherib (701 BC), and prophetic warnings spanning decades. Yet each generation renewed covenant unfaithfulness. King Jehoiakim exemplified this rebellion: he burned Jeremiah's scroll (36:23), murdered the prophet Urijah (26:20-23), and led the nation in idolatry. The people followed their leaders into apostasy, choosing immediate pleasures over eternal covenant blessings.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does sin function as self-inflicted harm rather than merely breaking divine rules, and what does this reveal about God's laws?
2. In what ways might we persist in behaviors that provoke God while claiming to love Him, and how can we identify such inconsistencies?
3. What does it mean that sin is ultimately 'to your own hurt,' and how should this reality shape our understanding of God's commands?

Interlinear Text

וְלֹא	שְׁמַעְתָּם	אֵלַי	נֹאם	יְהוָה	לִמְעַן
H3808	Yet ye have not hearkened	H413	unto me saith	the LORD	H4616
	H8085		H5002	H3068	
	הִכְעַסְתִּי נִי	בְּמַעֲשֵׂי ה	יְדֵיכֶם		לְבָ ע
	that ye might provoke me to anger	with the works	of your hands		to your own hurt
	H3707	H4639	H3027		H7451
לָכֶם:					
H0					

Additional Cross-References

2 Kings 21:15 (Parallel theme): Because they have done that which was evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day.

Proverbs 8:36 (Parallel theme): But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.

Deuteronomy 32:21 (Parallel theme): They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.

2 Kings 17:17 (References Lord): And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.