

Jeremiah 26:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil, which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings.

Analysis

God's willingness to relent from judgment upon repentance reveals His mercy as primary motivation. The phrase 'If so be they will hearken' shows judgment is not God's desire but His response to persistent rebellion. Divine immutability doesn't mean God's actions never change; it means His character and purposes remain constant while His dealings with people respond to their choices. This reflects God's covenantal nature.

Historical Context

This sermon was delivered early in Jehoiakim's reign (609 BC), giving Judah one more opportunity to repent before the irreversible judgment prophesied later.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does God's willingness to relent from judgment display His character?

2. What does this teach about the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility?

Interlinear Text

אָלָּי	וְשָׁמַע וְ	וַיְשַׁב בְּ	אִישׁ בְּ	מְדָרָכָו	בְּרִעַת הָ
H194	If so be they will hearken	and turn	every man	way	from his evil
	H8085	H7725	H376	H1870	H7451
וְנַחֲמַת	אָל	אֲשֶׁר	אֲנֵכִי	חָשַׁב	לְעֹשֶׂת
that I may repent	H413	from his evil	H834	H595	which I purpose
H5162	H7451			H2803	to do
לְפָנָיכֶם	רְעֵ	מִפְגַּ	מְעַלְלִיכֶם:		
H0	unto them because	of the evil	of their doings		
	H6440	H7455	H4611		

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 36:3 (Evil): It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.

Jeremiah 36:7 (Evil): It may be they will present their supplication before the LORD, and will return every one from his evil way: for great is the anger and the fury that the LORD hath pronounced against this people.

Jonah 4:2 (Repentance): And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.

1 Kings 21:29 (Evil): Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.

1 Kings 21:27 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.

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