

Jeremiah 26:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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;

Analysis

To hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you—God identifies the prophets as *avadai* (עֲבָדַי, my servants), emphasizing their divine commission. They speak not their own messages but God's word. The phrase **whom I sent** (asher shalakhti, אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְתִּי) underscores divine initiative—God actively dispatched these messengers with His authority.

Both rising up early, and sending them—this anthropomorphic expression appears frequently in Jeremiah (7:13, 25; 25:3-4; 29:19; 35:14-15; 44:4). *Hashkem* (הִשְׁכֵּם, rising early) suggests eager persistence and diligent effort. God wasn't negligent or passive but actively, repeatedly sent prophetic warning. The phrase evokes a concerned father rising early to pursue a wayward child.

But ye have not hearkened—the devastating indictment. Despite God's persistent prophetic ministry spanning generations (from Moses through Jeremiah), the people refused to listen. This repetition of *shama'* (שָׁמָעַ) from verse 4 creates rhetorical emphasis: God repeatedly called, they repeatedly refused. This pattern of divine pursuit and human rebellion establishes moral justification for coming judgment. God exhausted His patience; they exhausted His mercy.

Historical Context

From Samuel through Jeremiah, God sent prophets warning Judah of covenant violations. Isaiah confronted Ahaz and Hezekiah. Micah denounced social injustice. Zephaniah warned of coming judgment. Habakkuk questioned God's justice. Jeremiah himself had prophesied for approximately twenty years by this point (beginning in Josiah's thirteenth year, 627 BC). Despite this continuous prophetic witness, the nation persisted in idolatry, injustice, and false confidence in ritual observance. The phrase "rising up early" emphasizes divine initiative—God didn't wait for people to seek Him but actively pursued them with warning and invitation to repent. Yet they murdered some prophets (Zechariah son of Jehoiada, 2 Chronicles 24:20-22), imprisoned others (Jeremiah 37:15-16), and ignored most. Jesus later indicted Jerusalem for this same pattern: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets" (Matthew 23:37). The principle remains: God's patience, though long, isn't infinite; persistent rejection of prophetic warning leads to judgment.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What does God's "rising up early" to send prophets reveal about His character and His attitude toward rebellious people?
2. How does persistent rejection of God's messengers throughout history demonstrate hardness of heart rather than mere ignorance?
3. In what ways might people today refuse to "hearken" to God's word while maintaining outward religious practice?

Interlinear Text

אֲנֹכִי אֲשֶׁר הִנָּבֵא יָם עֲבָדַי דְּבַר י' עַל שְׁמַעְתֶּם:

To hearken

H5921

to the words

H1697

of my servants

H5650

the prophets

H5030

H834

H595

וְשָׁלַח אֲלֵיכֶם וְהִשְׁכֵּחַ וְשָׁלַח

and sending

H7971

H413

unto you both rising up early

H7925

and sending

H7971

H3808

שְׁמַעְתֶּם:

To hearken

H8085

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 11:7 (Sin): For I earnestly protested unto your fathers in the day that I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, even unto this day, rising early and protesting, saying, Obey my voice.

Jeremiah 7:13 (Sin): And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not;

Jeremiah 7:25 (Prophecy): Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them:

2 Kings 9:7 (Prophecy): And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel.

Ezra 9:11 (Prophecy): Which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness.

Revelation 11:18 (Prophecy): And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give

reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

Revelation 10:7 (Prophecy): But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

Zechariah 1:6 (Word): But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned and said, Like as the LORD of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us.

Amos 3:7 (Prophecy): Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

Ezekiel 38:17 (Prophecy): Thus saith the Lord GOD; Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I would bring thee against them?