

# Jeremiah 27:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Hearken not unto them; serve the king of Babylon, and live: wherefore should this city be laid waste?

## Analysis

**Serve the king of Babylon, and live** (עבדו את-מלך בבל וחיו)—God's command to abad (serve, become subject to) Babylon scandalized Jerusalem. Yet submission meant survival; rebellion meant Jerusalem's destruction. This sovereign reversal—pagan empire as God's instrument—demolished Judah's presumption that God must defend Zion regardless of covenant faithfulness.

**Wherefore should this city be laid waste?** (למה תחיה העיר הזאת פָּרָה) —The rhetorical question exposes the tragic irony: resistance to God's revealed will, cloaked in patriotic zeal, would accomplish what submission prevented. The Hebrew chorbah (waste, ruin) anticipates the 586 BC destruction—a preventable catastrophe if Judah had heeded Jeremiah.

## Historical Context

Jeremiah's counsel contradicted everything Judah believed about God's unconditional protection of Jerusalem and the Davidic throne. This 'defeatist' message led to accusations of treason (37:13-14). Yet events proved Jeremiah right —Zedekiah's rebellion brought total destruction.

## Related Passages

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

---

1. What 'surrender' might God be calling you to that your pride interprets as betrayal of principle?
2. How do you distinguish between faithfulness that requires resistance and faithfulness that requires submission?
3. When have you seen catastrophe result from refusing to accept God's counterintuitive direction?

## Interlinear Text

---

בְּ	לְ	מֶלֶךְ	אֶת	עָבֵד	אַתָּה	אַל	מִתְּשַׁמְּעָה	וְ	אֶל	עַל	מִלְּכָה	וְ	אֶל	
H408		H413		H5647		H853		H4428		H2063		H2723		
Hearken				not unto them serve		the king		of Babylon						
H8085		H1961		H5892		H4428		H894						
and live		H4100		wherefore should this city		H2063		be laid waste						
H2421				H5892		H2723								

---

From KJV Study • [kjvstudy.org](http://kjvstudy.org)