

Jeremiah 29:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will send upon them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them like vile figs, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.

Analysis

I will send upon them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence—This covenantal curse triad (חֶרֶב רָעָב וּדְבַר, cherev ra'av vadever) appears repeatedly in Jeremiah (14:12, 21:7, 24:10, 27:8, 29:18, 32:24, 38:2, 42:17, 44:13), echoing Leviticus 26:25-26 and Deuteronomy 28:21-22. God doesn't improvise judgment—He executes the covenant curses Israel agreed to at Sinai.

And will make them like vile figs, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil—The fig metaphor from chapter 24 returns. The Hebrew שֶׁקֶמִים (shequim) means rotten, abhorrent figs—inedible and worthless. Those who seemed blessed by remaining in Jerusalem were spiritually putrid, beyond remedy. Christ's cursing of the barren fig tree (Mark 11:12-14) echoes this imagery: religious appearance without fruit merits judgment.

Historical Context

Jerusalem would endure a horrific eighteen-month siege (588-586 BC) fulfilling this prophecy literally. Lamentations describes the sword, famine, and pestilence in graphic detail. Ezekiel also used the fig metaphor (Ezek 17:1-10) to describe Jerusalem's leadership. This was fulfilled history, not mere prediction.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does covenant faithfulness to God's revealed word determine blessing, not geographical or religious proximity?
2. What 'vile figs' might exist in modern Christianity—outwardly religious but spiritually rotten?
3. When Jesus cursed the fig tree, was He illustrating the same principle as Jeremiah? How?

Interlinear Text

כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָא וְת הִנְנִי מְשַׁלֵּחַ אֶת בְּנֵי
H3541 **Thus saith** **the LORD** **of hosts** H2005 **Behold I will send** H0 H853
H559 H3068 H6635 H7971

הֵם רַב הָחֶרֶב אֶת הָרָעָב וְאֶת הַדָּבָר וְנָתַתִּי
upon them the sword H853 **the famine** H853 **and the pestilence** **and will make**
H2719 H7458 H1698 H5414

אֹתָם כַּתְּאִנִּים הֵם עֵץ הַתְּאֵנָה לֹא תֹאכֶל לָנָה
H853 **them like vile** **figs** H834 H3808 **that cannot be eaten**
H8182 H8384 H398

מְרָעִים:
they are so evil
H7455

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 29:18 (Word): And I will persecute them with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence, and will deliver them to be removed to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse, and an astonishment, and an hissing, and a reproach, among all the nations whither I have driven them:

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org