

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 (חרב רעב ובדר, 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 שְׁקָעִים (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

אַתָּה בָּאָמַר כִּי הַנּוּן צָבָא וְתִּהְנֵּה מַשְׁלֵּחַ מִנְחָה
H3541 Thus saith the LORD of hosts H2005 Behold I will send H0 H853

בְּנֵי נָבָל אַתָּה בְּרִעָב וְאַתָּה בְּקָרְבָּן וְאַתָּה בְּרִרָה וְאַתָּה בְּנֵי נָבָל
upon them the sword H853 the famine H853 and the pestilence and will make H1698 H5414

אַוְתָּה כְּפָתָאָנִים כְּפָתָאָנִים כְּפָתָאָנִים כְּפָתָאָנִים כְּפָתָאָנִים
H853 them like vile H8182 figs H8384 H834 H3808 that cannot be eaten H398

מְרֻעָה:
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:

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