

Jeremiah 29:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For therefore he sent unto us in Babylon, saying, This captivity is long: build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them.

Analysis

For therefore he sent unto us in Babylon, saying, This captivity is long— Shemaiah quotes Jeremiah's letter accurately (29:5-7, 28), proving the message reached Babylon and was understood. The Hebrew אָרְכָּה הִיא (orkhah hi, 'it is long') captures both duration and the emotional weight: this exile won't end quickly. Shemaiah cites **build ye houses... plant gardens** (בְּנוּ בָּתִים... נְטַעֻ גַּנּוֹת) as evidence of defeatism requiring suppression.

But what Shemaiah sees as resignation, God intends as realistic faith—accepting current circumstances while trusting future deliverance. Jeremiah's counsel wasn't despair but wisdom: don't waste decades in bitter resistance to God's disciplinary providence. This balance between accepting present hardship and maintaining future hope defines mature spirituality, resisting both presumption ('God must deliver now!') and despair ('God has abandoned us forever').

Historical Context

The '70 years' prophecy (29:10) meant accepting Babylonian rule for two generations. False prophets promised return within 2 years (28:3), making Jeremiah's realism seem like treason. His advice to settle in Babylon was politically and psychologically difficult, yet spiritually necessary.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. When does accepting current difficulties become wise faith rather than passive resignation to evil?
2. How do you maintain hope for future restoration while faithfully engaging present reality, even when that reality involves discipline?
3. What does Shemaiah's outrage at Jeremiah's counsel reveal about preferring comfortable lies to difficult truths?

Interlinear Text

לֹא	מְרֹךְ	בְּ	לְ	אֶל	יָכוֹל	שֶׁל	חָ	כִּי	עַל	כִּי
H3588	H5921	H3651	For	therefore	he sent	H413	unto	us in	Babylon	saying
					H7971				H894	H559
אָרֶךְ	הַ	יָא	בְּנֵ	וּ	בְּתִים	בְּ	בְּ	וְ	יִתְבּוּ	וְ
captivity	is	long	This	build	ye houses	and	dwell	in them	and plant	gardens
H752		H1931		H1129	H1004		H3427		H5193	H1593
וְ	אָתָּה	וְאָכַלְתָּ	פְּרִיּוֹן							
and	eat		the	fruit						
H398				H6529						

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 29:5 (Parallel theme): Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them;