

# Jeremiah 32:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they came in, and possessed it; but they obeyed not thy voice, neither walked in thy law; they have done nothing of all that thou commandedst them to do: therefore thou hast caused all this evil to come upon them:

## Analysis

**And they came in, and possessed it; but they obeyed not thy voice, neither walked in thy law**—Jeremiah acknowledges the tragic irony: God fulfilled His promise by giving Israel the land, but Israel failed to fulfill their covenant obligation. Shama be-qolekha (שָׁמַע בְּקוֹלְךָ, obeyed Your voice) means to hear with the intent to obey—covenant faithfulness required listening to God's commands and acting accordingly. Halak be-toratekha (הָלַךְ בְּתוֹרַתְךָ, walked in Your law) pictures lifestyle obedience—not isolated acts but a consistent pattern of life shaped by God's Torah. Israel's failure was comprehensive: **they have done nothing of all that thou commandedst them to do**. The hyperbolic **nothing** emphasizes the totality of their disobedience. While individual Israelites remained faithful, corporately the nation persistently violated the covenant.

**Therefore thou hast caused all this evil to come upon them**—The Hebrew bo et kol-hara'ah hazot (בָּא אֶת-כָּל-הַרָעָה הַזֹּאת, brought all this calamity) attributes the Babylonian destruction directly to divine judgment, not merely political misfortune. The 'evil' (ra'ah) is not moral evil but calamity, disaster, judgment—the covenant curses of Deuteronomy 28:15-68 coming to fulfillment. Jeremiah doesn't accuse God of injustice; he confesses that Israel's rebellion necessitated judgment. This sets up the tension his prayer addresses: God is perfectly just in judging Israel, yet He also promised future blessing. How can both be true? God's answer

(vv. 26-44) reveals that judgment is not God's final word—restoration will follow the purifying discipline of exile.

## Historical Context

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Jeremiah summarizes eight centuries of covenant unfaithfulness. From the golden calf incident at Sinai (Exodus 32) through the judges' cycles of apostasy and deliverance (Judges 2:11-23), the divided kingdom's pervasive idolatry (1 Kings 11-2 Kings 17), and Judah's final descent into religious syncretism and social injustice (2 Kings 21-25), Israel repeatedly violated the covenant. God sent prophets to call for repentance (2 Kings 17:13-14), but the people refused to listen. Jeremiah himself ministered for over forty years, warning that continued rebellion would bring Babylonian conquest (Jeremiah 25:1-14), yet the nation rejected his message. The 'evil' that came upon them included Jerusalem's destruction, the temple's burning, mass deportation, and loss of land and sovereignty—precisely the curses Moses had warned of (Deuteronomy 28:47-68). Yet even in pronouncing this judgment, God had promised eventual restoration (Deuteronomy 30:1-10, Jeremiah 29:10-14), demonstrating that His covenant faithfulness transcends even necessary discipline. This pattern of judgment followed by grace is fulfilled ultimately in Christ, who bore judgment for sin so believers could receive eternal restoration.

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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1. How does Israel's comprehensive disobedience ('done nothing of all that thou commandedst') illustrate humanity's total inability to achieve righteousness apart from grace?
2. What does it mean that God 'caused all this evil to come upon them,' and how does this relate to divine sovereignty over historical events?

3. How should the certainty that God judges persistent rebellion shape both personal holiness and evangelistic urgency?

## Interlinear Text

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וַיָּבֹאוּ And they came in H935	וַיִּרְשׁוּ and possessed H3423	אֶתְּ הַ	וְלֹא H3808	שָׁמְעוּ it but they obeyed H8085	בְּקוֹלְךָ not thy voice H6963
וּבְתוֹרֹתֶיךָ in thy law H8451	לֹא H3808	הָלְכוּ neither walked H1980	אֶתְּ H853	כָּל H3605	אֲשֶׁר H834
צִוִּיתָה nothing of all that thou commandedst H6680	לָהֶם H0	עָשׂוּ them to do H6213	לֹא H3808	עָשׂוּ them to do H6213	
וַיָּקֹרֶם to come H7122	אֶתְּ H853	אֵת H853	כָּל H3605	הַרְעָה therefore thou hast caused all this evil H7451	הַזֹּאת H2063

## Additional Cross-References

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**Ezra 9:7** (Word): Since the days of our fathers have we been in a great trespass unto this day; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil, and to confusion of face, as it is this day.

**Lamentations 1:18** (Word): The LORD is righteous; for I have rebelled against his commandment: hear, I pray you, all people, and behold my sorrow: my virgins and my young men are gone into captivity.