

Jeremiah 34:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But thou shalt die in peace: and with the burnings of thy fathers, the former kings which were before thee, so shall they burn odours for thee; and they will lament thee, saying, Ah lord! for I have pronounced the word, saith the LORD.

Analysis

But thou shalt die in peace: and with the burnings of thy fathers, the former kings which were before thee, so shall they burn odours for thee; and they will lament thee, saying, Ah lord! for I have pronounced the word, saith the LORD. The promise **thou shalt die in peace** (beshalom tamut) means peaceful natural death rather than violent execution, contrasting sharply with the violent deaths of Judah's recent kings: Josiah killed in battle (2 Kings 23:29), Jehoahaz imprisoned in Egypt (23:34), Jehoiakim possibly slain and dishonored (Jeremiah 22:18-19). "Peace" here denotes absence of violence, not subjective tranquility—Zedekiah's captivity and blindness precluded happiness, but he avoided execution.

With the burnings of thy fathers... so shall they burn odours for thee refers to the ancient funerary practice of burning spices/incense at royal burials (2 Chronicles 16:14; 21:19). This honorable burial contrasted with Jehoiakim's prophesied dishonorable interment "with the burial of an ass" (22:19). The phrase "former kings" (hamelakhim harishonim) connects Zedekiah to Judah's legitimate Davidic line despite his failures. The lament **Ah lord!** (hoy adon) was the traditional royal mourning cry, acknowledging kingship.

God's promise of honorable burial and mourning within judgment demonstrates:

1. Divine mercy exceeds strict justice even toward rebels
2. covenant relationship creates obligations God honors even when humans fail
3. dignity remains for those under judgment who receive God's word.

The phrase "I have pronounced the word" emphasizes divine decree's certainty—God's promises are as sure as His judgments.

Historical Context

Zedekiah's ultimate fate fulfilled this prophecy precisely: he died imprisoned in Babylon but received burial (Jeremiah 52:11). The Babylonian practice allowed proper burial for high-status prisoners who died in captivity. The "burnings" referenced the widespread ancient Near Eastern practice of burning spices and aromatic substances at funerals—not cremation (prohibited in Israel) but incense burning to honor the dead. Archaeological discoveries include residue of burned spices in royal tomb contexts. The historical fulfillment demonstrates that God's word governed even details like burial rites and mourning practices in pagan Babylon—His sovereignty extends to all circumstances.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does God's provision of dignity and honor within judgment reflect His character as both just and merciful?
2. What does the fulfillment of prophecies concerning burial and mourning details reveal about Scripture's precision and reliability?
3. How should believers balance realistic assessment of sin's consequences with confidence in God's grace toward the repentant?

Interlinear Text

הַמְלָכִים אַבּוֹתֶיךָ וְכִמְשָׁרֶפֶת בָּשָׁל וּמְ

in peace But thou shalt die and with the burnings of thy fathers kings

H7965

H4191

H4955

H1

H4428

שְׁרָפָה לְפָנֶיךָ כִּי אֲשֶׁר בְּרָאשֵׁנִים

the former which were before thee so shall they burn

H7223

H834

H1961

H6440

H3651

H8313

לְבָנָךְ כִּי אָדָם יְמִינָה וְלֹא כִּי

thee saying Ah lord odours for thee and they will lament

H0

thee saying Ah

H1945

lord

H113

יְמִינָה

לְבָנָךְ

H0

H3588

רְאֵמָר אָמַת דְּבָרַת יְהוָה נָאָמֵן

the word for I have pronounced saith the LORD

H1697

H589

H1696

saith

the LORD

H5002

H3068

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 22:18 (Kingdom): Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah; They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! they shall not lament for him, saying, Ah lord! or, Ah his glory!

2 Chronicles 16:14 (Parallel theme): And they buried him in his own sepulchres, which he had made for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours and divers kinds of spices prepared by the apothecaries' art: and they made a very great burning for him.