

Jeremiah 35:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any: but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers.

Analysis

Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard—The mitzvah (command) of Jonadab ben Rechab prescribed radical non-settlement, rejecting agriculture (זֶרַע zera', seed) and viticulture (כֶּרֶם kerem, vineyard) as symbols of permanent settlement. **Dwell in tents** (אֹהֳלִים ohalim) echoes Israel's wilderness pilgrimage, maintaining stranger-consciousness (גֵּרִים gerim).

This ascetic vow wasn't arbitrary primitivism but theological protest: permanent settlement breeds spiritual complacency. The Rechabites embodied Hebrews 11:13—"strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Their obedience over 250+ years becomes God's indictment of Judah's covenant-breaking (v. 16). Where Judah possessed vineyards yet served idols, the Rechabites renounced vineyards to serve Yahweh.

Historical Context

Jonadab ben Rechab (2 Kings 10:15-23) allied with Jehu circa 841 BC, supporting the purge of Baal worship. His descendants maintained his separatist vows for over 250 years—from Jehu's era to Jeremiah's ministry (607-586 BC), an unprecedented faithfulness spanning ten generations through Israel's worst apostasy.

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 35:10 (Parallel theme): But we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed, and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us.

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org