

# Jeremiah 36:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month: and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him.

## Analysis

**Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month: and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him.** The **winterhouse** (bet hachoref, בֵּית הַחֹרֶף) was a separate palace structure designed for cold weather, featuring thick walls and small windows to retain heat. The **ninth month** (Kislev, כִּסְלֵו, November-December) was indeed winter in Judah's hill country, requiring fires for comfort. The **fire on the hearth** (ha'ach lifanav, הַאָח לִפְנֵי, literally "the brazier before him") becomes a weapon in the next verses.

This domestic detail is theologically loaded. The king sits in warmth, comfort, and security—physically and politically insulated—while Jeremiah's scroll warns of fire coming to consume Jerusalem. The irony is devastating: Jehoiakim uses fire for comfort and soon will use it to destroy God's word, but God's word declares that fire will destroy Jehoiakim's kingdom (21:14, 34:22). The scene evokes Amos's condemnation of those "who lie on beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches" (Amos 6:4) while ignoring coming judgment. The king's luxury contrasts with the urgent warning in the scroll.

## Historical Context

The winterhouse indicates Jehoiakim's wealth and building projects. According to Jeremiah 22:13-14, Jehoiakim built "a wide house and large chambers" with "windows, ceiled with cedar, and painted with vermilion," using forced labor and refusing to pay wages. While his people suffered under heavy taxation and

Babylonian threats, the king enjoyed palatial comfort. This ninth month (Kislev) of his fifth year would have been late 604 BC, after Nebuchadnezzar's victory at Carchemish but before Babylon's full siege of Jerusalem. The political situation was precarious—Jehoiakim had shifted allegiance from Egypt to Babylon and would soon rebel again (2 Kings 24:1), bringing catastrophe. The winter setting emphasizes the king's false sense of security, warming himself while judgment approached.

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does the contrast between Jehoiakim's comfort and the scroll's warning illustrate the danger of physical security blinding us to spiritual peril?
2. What does the detail of the winterhouse and fire reveal about the king's priorities and self-perception?
3. In what ways might material comfort and security hinder our ability to hear and respond to God's warnings?

## Interlinear Text

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וְאַתָּה	הַקְרִישָׁעַ	י	בְּ	דֶּשֶׁב	בְּחַ	נְנִ	בְּ	יְמִינְךָ	וְיָמִינְךָ
Now the king	sat	in the winterhouse		month	in the ninth				
H4428	H3427	H1004		H2779	H2320				H853

מִבְּעָרָת:	לִפְנֵי	י	בְּ	אַ	בָּ
and there was a fire on the hearth	before				burning
H254	H6440				H1197

## Additional Cross-References

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**Amos 3:15** (Parallel theme): And I will smite the winter house with the summer house; and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end, saith the LORD.

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