

Jeremiah 36:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words.

Analysis

Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words. The emphatic **they were not afraid** (lo pachadu, לֹא פָחַדוּ) and **nor rent their garments** (lo qare'u et-bigdehhem, לֹא קָרְעוּ אֶת־בְּגָדֵיהֶם) presents a damning contrast to Josiah's response when Shaphan read the Book of the Law. Josiah "rent his clothes" and trembled at God's word (2 Kings 22:11-13, using the same Hebrew verb qara, קָרָא). Tearing garments signified grief, repentance, and humility before God—visceral recognition of sin and coming judgment.

The absence of fear (pachad, פָּחַד, meaning dread, terror, or reverent awe) reveals hardened hearts. Proverbs 1:7 declares "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge," but Jehoiakim and his court displayed contemptuous fearlessness. This isn't courage but spiritual numbness—they heard God's word and felt nothing. The collective failure ("neither the king, nor any of his servants") shows systemic apostasy from the top down. Where Josiah's court responded with repentance, Jehoiakim's court met prophetic warning with indifference and hostility. This verse captures the terrifying reality of a hardened heart that hears God's truth and remains unmoved (Hebrews 3:12-13).

Historical Context

The explicit comparison to Josiah is inescapable—Jehoiakim was Josiah's son, had witnessed his father's reforms, and knew the proper response to discovered

Scripture. Josiah's generation saw revival after hearing the Book of Deuteronomy; Jehoiakim's generation heard comprehensive prophetic warning and felt nothing. This reveals the rapid spiritual decline in one generation. The failure to tear garments also indicates the prophetic warnings had become familiar—Jeremiah had been preaching for twenty-three years (25:3), and the people had become inoculated to the message. Familiarity bred contempt. Additionally, the political context matters: accepting Jeremiah's message meant submitting to Babylon, which contradicted Jehoiakim's pro-Egyptian policy. The king had invested in rebellion and couldn't afford to hear God's contrary command without losing face and power.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does the contrast between Josiah's fearful repentance and Jehoiakim's fearless indifference teach about the danger of familiarity with God's word?
2. How can we examine our own hearts for areas where we hear Scripture's warnings but feel no fear or conviction?
3. In what ways might political commitments, pride, or investment in our current path harden us against God's word?

Interlinear Text

וְלֹא	פָּחַד וְ	וְלֹא	קָרַע וְ	אֶת	בְּגָדֵיהֶם
H3808	Yet they were not afraid	H3808	nor rent	H853	their garments
	H6342		H7167		H899
הֵם לֶךְ	וְכָל	עֲבָדָיו	הַשְׁמָעִים	אֵת	כָּל
neither the king	H3605	nor any of his servants	that heard	H853	H3605
H4428		H5650	H8085		
הַדְּבָרִים	הָאֵלֶּה:				
all these words	H428				
H1697					

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 36:16 (Kingdom): Now it came to pass, when they had heard all the words, they were afraid both one and other, and said unto Baruch, We will surely tell the king of all these words.

Psalms 36:1 (Parallel theme): The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.

Psalms 64:5 (Parallel theme): They encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them?

Jonah 3:6 (Kingdom): For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

1 Kings 21:27 (Word): And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.