

Jeremiah 36:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And thou shalt say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, Thus saith the LORD; Thou hast burned this roll, saying, Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast?

Analysis

And thou shalt say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, Thus saith the LORD; Thou hast burned this roll, saying, Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast? God's message through Jeremiah addresses Jehoiakim directly with devastating precision. The accusation **Thou hast burned this roll** (et-hammegillah hazzot sarafta, אַתְּ הַמְגַלֶּה הַזֹּאת שְׁרַף) uses saraph (שְׁרַף), meaning to burn completely, consume with fire—the same word used for burning sacrifices, suggesting sacrilegious destruction of what belongs to God.

The king's quoted objection—**Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come**—reveals what specifically offended him. The Hebrew emphasizes certainty: bo yavo (בָּא יָבוֹא, "coming he shall come") is an emphatic construction meaning absolutely, inevitably, certainly. Jehoiakim rejected not peripheral details but the core prophetic message: Babylon would conquer, and resistance was futile. The prophecy that the land would be depopulated ("cease from thence man and beast") echoes covenant curses in Leviticus 26:22 and Jeremiah 7:20. The king burned the scroll because it contradicted his political strategy and threatened his power. He couldn't tolerate a message that declared his policies doomed and his reign ending in disgrace.

Historical Context

Jehoiakim's burning of the scroll occurred in 604 BC, his fifth year. At this point, he had already submitted to Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24:1) but was planning rebellion, likely encouraged by Egyptian promises of support. Jeremiah's message that Babylon would certainly conquer and the land would be devastated directly contradicted the king's pro-Egyptian, anti-Babylonian strategy. False prophets were promising victory and quick resolution (28:2-4), while Jeremiah declared surrender was God's will. For a king who had invested his political capital in resisting Babylon, accepting Jeremiah's message meant admitting his entire policy was wrong and defying God. The prophecy's specificity about man and beast being removed proved accurate: the Babylonian invasions of 597 and 586 BC devastated the land, leaving it desolate for seventy years as Jeremiah predicted (25:11).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What does Jehoiakim's specific rejection of the prophecy about Babylon reveal about how political commitments can blind us to God's truth?
2. How do we sometimes reject or ignore parts of Scripture that contradict our plans, preferences, or pride?
3. What is the danger of silencing or dismissing God's word when it conflicts with our desired outcomes?

Interlinear Text

כִּי לְאָמֵן רְאָמֵן יְהוָיָה מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה וְעַל
H5921 to Jehoiakim The king of Judah And thou shalt say H3541
H3079 H4428 H3063 H559

בְּמַעַל הַאֲתָה שְׁבָרְתָּ אֶת פֶּתַח יְהוָה לְאָמֵן רְאָמֵן
And thou shalt say the LORD Thou hast burned this roll H853 H4039
H559 H3068 H8313 H4039

עַל יְהֹוָה לְאָמֵן רְאָמֵן מִדּוֹעַ קָתַב בְּתַךְ שְׁבָרְתָּ
H2063 And thou shalt say H559 H4069 Why hast thou written H3789 H5921

אֶת וְהַשְׁחִית בָּבֶל מֶלֶךְ יְבָבָב וְאֶת לְאָמֵן רְאָמֵן
And thou shalt say come come The king of Babylon and destroy H853
H559 H935 H935 H4428 H894 H7843

אֶל מִמְּפָתָה וְהַשְׁבֵּת בְּאֶרֶץ בְּזַעַם אֶת בְּזַעַם
this land and shall cause to cease from thence man H120
H776 H2063 H7673 H4480

וְבָהָמָה:
and beast
H929

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 30:10 (Parallel theme): Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits:

Jeremiah 26:9 (References Lord): Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.

Isaiah 45:9 (Parallel theme): Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?

Isaiah 29:21 (Parallel theme): That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.

Job 15:24 (Kingdom): Trouble and anguish shall make him afraid; they shall prevail against him, as a king ready to the battle.

Jeremiah 32:3 (Kingdom): For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, Wherefore dost thou prophesy, and say, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it;

Deuteronomy 29:19 (Parallel theme): And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: