

Jeremiah 36:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I am shut up; I cannot go into the house of the LORD:

Analysis

And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I am shut up; I cannot go into the house of the LORD. The phrase I am shut up translates 'atsur (אֶצוּר), meaning detained, restrained, or confined. Scholars debate whether this indicates literal imprisonment, house arrest, or ritual impurity barring temple access. More likely, Jeremiah faced official prohibition from public ministry—authorities had banned him from the temple precincts because his prophecies threatened the political establishment and contradicted false prophets promising peace.

This restriction created a crisis: how could God's word reach the people if the prophet couldn't access the primary place of assembly? God's solution demonstrates His sovereignty over circumstances—when one door closes, He opens another. Baruch becomes the voice, reading the scroll publicly where Jeremiah cannot go. This illustrates that God's word is not bound (2 Timothy 2:9), and opposition cannot ultimately silence divine revelation.

The temple setting was crucial—on a fast day, large crowds would gather, providing maximum opportunity for the scroll's message to reach influential leaders and the broader populace. Jeremiah's restriction forced creativity that actually expanded the message's reach beyond what his personal preaching might have accomplished.

Historical Context

Jehoiakim's reign (609-598 BC) was marked by religious syncretism and political opportunism. He reversed his father Josiah's reforms, reintroducing idolatry and oppressing the righteous (Jeremiah 22:13-17, 26:20-23). Jeremiah's temple sermon (Jeremiah 7, 26) had nearly cost him his life, and authorities subsequently barred him from temple access. The 'house of the LORD' refers to Solomon's temple, the central worship site and gathering place for major festivals and fast days. Fast days were called during national crises—likely this fast related to Babylon's rising threat after Carchemish (605 BC). The large assembly provided the ideal audience for Jeremiah's urgent warning of coming judgment. Despite official censorship, God's word reached those who needed to hear through Baruch's public reading.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does Jeremiah's restriction from the temple demonstrate that human opposition cannot ultimately silence God's word?
2. What does this passage teach about trusting God's sovereignty when circumstances seem to hinder ministry or obedience?
3. In what ways might limitations or restrictions actually serve to expand the reach and impact of God's truth?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּצַו ה'	יְרֵמְיָהּ הו'	אֶת	בָּר וְנָ	לְאמֹר	אֲנִי	עָצ וֹר	לֹא
commanded	And Jeremiah	H853	Baruch	saying	H589	I am shut up	H3808
H6680	H3414		H1263	H559		H6113	
לֹא	אֶת	בָּר וְנָ	יְהוָה:				
I cannot	go	into the house	of the LORD				
H3201	H935	H1004	H3068				

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 33:1 (References Lord): Moreover the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah the second time, while he was yet shut up in the court of the prison, saying,

Jeremiah 32:2 (Parallel theme): For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem: and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which was in the king of Judah's house.

2 Corinthians 11:23 (Parallel theme): Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.