

Jeremiah 36:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, in the ninth month, that they proclaimed a fast before the LORD to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people that came from the cities of Judah unto Jerusalem.

Analysis

In the fifth year of Jehoiakim...in the ninth month—This dates the event to December 604 BC, approximately nine months after the initial dictation (v.1, fourth year). **They proclaimed a fast before the LORD** (קָרְאוּ-צוֹם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה, qar'u-tzom lifnei YHWH)—A national fast suggested crisis, likely fear of Babylonian invasion after Nebuchadnezzar's recent victories. Fasting without repentance, however, is religious theater.

The irony is profound: the people gather for a solemn assembly seeking God's favor while actively rejecting His word through Jeremiah. The ninth month (Kislev) was winter, when travel was difficult—suggesting genuine alarm. Yet outward religiosity divorced from covenant faithfulness is the essence of hypocrisy that prophets consistently condemned.

Historical Context

This fast occurred just months after Nebuchadnezzar defeated Egypt at Carchemish (605 BC), establishing Babylon as the dominant power. Jehoiakim had become Babylon's vassal but would foolishly rebel three years later. Fasts in Israel

were called during national emergencies, military threats, or seeking divine guidance in crisis.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. When have you engaged in religious activities while refusing to obey God's clear commands?
2. How does this passage expose the danger of substituting ritual observance for genuine repentance?
3. What modern equivalents exist to Judah's "fasting without listening" to God's prophetic word?

Interlinear Text

יְהוָה י	בְּשָׁנָה הַ	הַ חֲמִשִּׁית	לְיְהוֹאִקִּים	בֶּן	יְאִשָּׁי הוּ
H1961	year	And it came to pass in the fifth	of Jehoiakim	the son	of Josiah
	H8141	H2549	H3079	H1121	H2977
מֶלֶךְ הַ	יְהוּדָה הַ	בַּחֹדֶשׁ	הַתְּשַׁעִי	קָרְאוּ	צוֹם
king	of Judah	month	in the ninth	that they proclaimed	a fast
H4428	H3063	H2320	H8671	H7121	H6685
					H6440
יְהוָה הַ	כָּל	הָעָם	בְּיְרוּשָׁלַם:	וְכָל	הָעָם
the LORD	H3605	and to all the people	in Jerusalem	H3605	and to all the people
H3068		H5971	H3389		H5971
הַבָּאִים	מֵעָרֵי	יְהוּדָה הַ	בְּיְרוּשָׁלַם:		
that came	from the cities	of Judah	in Jerusalem		
H935	H5892	H3063	H3389		

Additional Cross-References

2 Chronicles 20:3 (References Lord): And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

Jeremiah 36:22 (Kingdom): Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month: and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him.

Jonah 3:5 (Parallel theme): So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

Esther 4:16 (Kingdom): Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

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