

Jeremiah 37:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, that when the army of the Chaldeans was broken up from Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh's army,

Analysis

And it came to pass, that when the army of the Chaldeans was broken up from Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh's army—the phrase *he'alah me'al* *Yerushalayim* (הָעַלְה מֵעַל יְרוּשָׁלָם), was broken up/lifted from Jerusalem) indicates the siege's temporary suspension. The Hebrew *mipnei* (מִפְנֵי, because of/for fear of) suggests Babylon's tactical response to Egyptian threat. This military withdrawal created the brief opening for Jeremiah's attempted journey, which would lead to his imprisonment.

The narrative's timing emphasizes irony: the moment Jerusalem seemed delivered became the occasion for imprisoning God's prophet. Jeremiah had declared Egypt's help worthless and Babylon's return certain (vv. 7-8); the authorities who rejected this message would now arrest him on false charges. This pattern repeats in Scripture: those who speak God's truth often face persecution during precisely the moments when their message is most vindicated (John 15:18-20; Acts 7:51-52).

The temporary reprieve tested whether Judah would recognize God's patience as opportunity for repentance or merely relief from consequences. They chose the latter, using the breathing space not for spiritual reformation but for silencing the prophet who called them to repentance.

Historical Context

The siege's temporary lifting occurred in 588 BC when Nebuchadnezzar withdrew forces to deal with Pharaoh Hophra's intervention. This created logistical opportunities—supplies could enter Jerusalem, people could travel. Jeremiah seized this moment to attend to family business in Benjamin (v. 12), demonstrating that prophets maintained normal life responsibilities alongside their ministries. The subsequent arrest shows how Jerusalem's authorities viewed Jeremiah: not as God's messenger but as a political threat whose message undermined morale and encouraged defection to Babylon.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do we tend to interpret temporary relief from consequences—as God's mercy inviting repentance or vindication of our choices?
2. Why do people often attack messengers who speak uncomfortable truth rather than examining the message?
3. What does Jeremiah's attempt to handle family business during the reprieve teach about balancing prophetic ministry with ordinary responsibilities?

Interlinear Text

בָּשָׁלֹות וְכֵן הָ

H1961

was broken up

H5927

וְיָל

And it came to pass that when the army

H2428

בְּכָלְדָּאִים

of the Chaldeans

H3778

מִן יְהוּדָה מִן יְהוּדָה מִן יְהוּדָה

H5921

from Jerusalem

H3389

for fear

H6440

וְיָל

And it came to pass that when the army

H2428

פֶּרֶעָה:

of Pharaoh's

H6547

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