

Jeremiah 37:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Thus shall ye say to the king of Judah, that sent you unto me to enquire of me; Behold, Pharaoh's army, which is come forth to help you, shall return to Egypt into their own land.

Analysis

Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel—Jeremiah's message begins with Yahweh's covenant name and His relationship to Israel. The double identification (YHWH Elohei Yisrael, יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) emphasizes that despite judgment, God remains Israel's covenant God. He has not abandoned them; rather, His discipline flows from covenant relationship.

Thus shall ye say to the king of Judah, that sent you unto me to enquire of me—Zedekiah had sent messengers to ask Jeremiah for a favorable word (v. 3). The king wanted prophetic endorsement for trusting Egypt and hoped the siege's lifting vindicated this policy. Instead, God's answer devastates such false hope. **Behold, Pharaoh's army, which is come forth to help you, shall return to Egypt into their own land**—the emphatic hinneh (הִנֵּה, behold) demands attention. Egypt's retreat is certain, declared as accomplished fact.

The irony is bitter: the very alliance Judah trusted would prove worthless. The Hebrew shuv (שׁוּב, return/retreat) indicates Egypt turning back without fighting for Judah. This fulfilled earlier prophecies against trusting Egypt (2:18, 36-37; Isaiah 30:1-7). Genuine security comes only through covenant faithfulness to Yahweh, not political maneuvering or military alliances.

Historical Context

Zedekiah's consultation of Jeremiah reveals his conflicted character. Installed as Babylon's puppet king after his nephew Jehoiachin's deportation (2 Kings 24:17), Zedekiah lacked legitimacy and courage. He privately respected Jeremiah yet publicly sided with officials who opposed the prophet. His trust in Egypt betrayed both Babylon (his overlord) and Yahweh (his God). This double-mindedness led to catastrophe: when Jerusalem fell, Zedekiah fled but was captured, forced to watch his sons' execution, then blinded and taken to Babylon in chains (39:4-7; 52:7-11). Had he obeyed Jeremiah's counsel to submit to Babylon, he would have lived (38:17-18).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. Why did Zedekiah consult Jeremiah privately while publicly ignoring his message?
2. How does trusting human alliances and political strategies contradict reliance on God's covenant promises?
3. What 'Egypts' do we consult for security while refusing to fully trust and obey God's revealed will?

Interlinear Text

אֲלֹהָיִם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל תֹּאמֶרְתָּ בָּהּ
Thus saith the LORD the God of Israel, Thus saith the LORD

לְדִרְשׁ נִי אֶל אֶתְכָּמָן הַשְׁלֵל כְּיֵהוָה מֵלֵג
you unto me to enquire of the king of Judah that sent

לְעִזָּה הַלְּכָם בֵּיא אֲלֹהָיִם פְּרָעָה הַבְּיֹתְרָה
to help which is come forth Behold Pharaoh's army of me

מִצְרָיִם לְאָרֶץ וְשָׁבָת
to Egypt into their own land you shall return

Additional Cross-References

Lamentations 4:17 (Parallel theme): As for us, our eyes as yet failed for our vain help: in our watching we have watched for a nation that could not save us.

Jeremiah 37:3 (Kingdom): And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, Pray now unto the LORD our God for us.

Jeremiah 21:2 (Kingdom): Enquire, I pray thee, of the LORD for us; for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon maketh war against us; if so be that the LORD will deal with us according to all his wondrous works, that he may go up from us.

Ezekiel 17:17 (Parallel theme): Neither shall Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company make for him in the war, by casting up mounts, and building forts, to cut off many persons:

2 Kings 22:18 (Kingdom): But to the king of Judah which sent you to enquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, As touching the words which thou hast heard;

