

# Jeremiah 44:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine.

## Analysis

**Since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven** (מֵאָז חָדַלְנוּ לִקְטֹרֶת) (לְהִלָּחֵת הַשָּׁמִימִים)—The people construct a false causality: they attribute the sword and famine (חֶרֶב וָרָעָב) not to their idolatry but to its cessation. This inverts reality through confirmation bias: they remember pre-exilic prosperity while worshiping Ishtar/Astarte (**queen of heaven**, הַמַּלְכָּה הַשָּׁמִימִים) and blame reform efforts (Josiah's, 622 BC) for subsequent calamity.

**We have wanted all things** (חָסַרְנוּ כָּל) (חָסַר)—chasar (חָסַר) means to lack or be in want. Their theology: idolatry = blessing, faithfulness = curse. This represents total spiritual blindness where judgment itself is interpreted as evidence for idolatry's efficacy. They cannot perceive that their suffering resulted from centuries of covenant violation, not from Josiah's brief reforms.

## Historical Context

Josiah's reforms (2 Kings 23) attempted to purge Judah of Baal, Asherah, and astral deity worship around 622 BC. The subsequent deaths of Josiah (609 BC), deportations (605, 597 BC), and Jerusalem's destruction (586 BC) occurred after this purge, creating a temporal sequence the people misinterpreted as causal. They forgot 300+ years of prior unfaithfulness.

## Related Passages

---

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

---

1. How do modern believers misattribute blessing or suffering to wrong causes?
2. What makes confirmation bias particularly dangerous in spiritual matters?
3. How can temporal sequence (A then B) be distinguished from true causation (A caused B) in interpreting life events?

## Interlinear Text

---

וּמִן H4480	אֶזְזָנוּ H227	בְּיָדֵינוּ H2308	לִקְטֹרֶךְ H6999	לְמַלְכֶּת H4446	הַשָּׁמַיִם H8064
		<b>But since we left off</b>	<b>to burn incense</b>	<b>to the queen</b>	<b>of heaven</b>
וְהִסָּךְ H5258	לָהּ H0	נִסְכֵּי יָם H5262	חָסֵם רָנוּ H2637	כָּל H3605	וּבֶחַרְבַּת H2719
<b>and to pour out</b>		<b>drink offerings</b>	<b>unto her we have wanted</b>		<b>by the sword</b>
וּבִרְעָב H7458		תִּמְנוּ: H8552			
<b>and by the famine</b>		<b>all things and have been consumed</b>			

## Additional Cross-References

---

**Jeremiah 40:12** (Parallel theme): Even all the Jews returned out of all places whither they were driven, and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah, unto Mizpah, and gathered wine and summer fruits very much.