

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 (מִאֵז פְּזַלְנוּ לְקַרְבָּן) —The people construct a false causality: they attribute the sword and famine (חַרְבָּה וְצַרְבָּה) 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**, מַלְכָת הַשָּׁמַיִם) and blame reform efforts (Josiah's, 622 BC) for subsequent calamity.

We have wanted all things (חַסְרָנוּ כֹּל) —chasar (חַסְרָה) 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

פָּשָׁתִים	אֵם	לְמַלְכַּת	לְמַלְכַּת	כָּתָת	כָּתָת	פָּשָׁתִים	אֵם	לְמַלְכַּת	לְמַלְכַּת	כָּתָת	כָּתָת
H4480	H227	But	since	we	left	off	to	burn	incense	to	the
											queen
											of
											heaven
											H8064
וְבָרַעַת	בְּ	כְּלָבָב	כְּלָבָב	תְּמִימָנוֹת	תְּמִימָנוֹת	וְבָרַעַת	בְּ	כְּלָבָב	כְּלָבָב	תְּמִימָנוֹת	תְּמִימָנוֹת
and	to	pour	out	H0	drink	offerings	unto	her	we	have	wanted
H5258					H5262						H2637
											H3605
											by
											H2719

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.