

Jeremiah 44:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Because ye have burned incense, and because ye have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD, nor walked in his law, nor in his statutes, nor in his testimonies; therefore this evil is happened unto you, as at this day.

Analysis

Because ye have burned incense (מִפְּנֵי אֲשֶׁר קִטְרַתֶּם)—Jeremiah establishes clear causation using mippene (מִפְּנֵי, because of, on account of). The verdict directly contradicts the people's claim (v.18): suffering came because they burned incense to idols, not because they stopped. Four charges follow:

1. **burned incense** (idolatry)
2. **sinned against the LORD** (חָטֵאתֶם לַיהוָה)
3. **not obeyed the voice of the LORD** (לֹא־שָׁמַעְתֶּם בְּקוֹל יְהוָה)
4. **nor walked in his law** (בְּתוֹכָתוֹ וּבְחֻקָּתָיו וּבְעֲדוּתָיו לֹא הִלַּכְתֶּם)—comprehensive covenant violation.

The triple legal terminology—torah (תּוֹרָה, instruction), chuqqot (חֻקִּים, statutes), edot (עֲדוּת, testimonies)—covers God's entire revealed will.

The verdict: **therefore this evil is happened unto you** (עַל־כֵּן קָרָאת אֶתְכֶם הַרְעָה) (הִזָּאת)—inevitable consequence meets willful cause.

Historical Context

Jeremiah's prophetic ministry (627-585 BC) witnessed Judah's final decline: from Josiah's reforms through four weak kings to Babylonian destruction. Throughout, he consistently warned that covenant violation brings covenant curse—a message vindicated by events but rejected by survivors who preferred any explanation except their own guilt.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. Why is correctly identifying the cause of suffering essential for responding appropriately?
2. How does comprehensive covenant violation (law, statutes, testimonies) differ from isolated sin?
3. What prevents people from accepting responsibility for consequences of their rebellion?

Interlinear Text

מִפְּנֵי	אֲשֶׁר	רָ	קִטְּרֹתָם	וְאֲשֶׁר	רָ	חָטְאוּתָם
Because	H834		ye have burned incense	H834		and because ye have sinned
H6440			H6999			H2398
יְהוָה	וְלֹא	שָׁמַעְתֶּם	בְּקוֹל	וְלֹא	יְהוָה	
against the LORD	H3808	and have not obeyed	the voice		against the LORD	
H3068		H8085	H6963		H3068	
וּבְתוֹרַת	וּבְחֻקֹּתָיו	וּבְעֵדוּתָיו	לֹא	הֵלְכֹתָם	עַל	
in his law	nor in his statutes	nor in his testimonies	H3808	nor walked		
H8451	H2708	H5715		H1980	H5921	
יָ	קָרָא	אֶתְכֶם	הַרְעָה	הַזֹּאת	כִּי	וְעַתָּה
H3651	is happened	H853	therefore this evil	H2063	unto you as at this day	
	H7122		H7451		H3117	
הַזֹּאת:						
H2088						

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 9:9 (Evil): And they shall answer, Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought upon them all this evil.

Psalms 119:150 (Word): They draw nigh that follow after mischief: they are far from thy law.

Nehemiah 13:18 (Evil): Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.