

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 (מִפְנֵי אֲשֶׁר קָטְרָתֶם)—Jeremiah establishes clear causation using mippene (מִפְנֵי, 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** (קָטָאתֶם לֵיהֶה)
3. **not obeyed the voice of the LORD** (לֹא-שָׁמַעְתֶּם בְּקוֹל יְהָה)
4. **nor walked in his law** (בְּתוֹרַתְךָ וּבְחֻקָּתְךָ וּבְעֻדּוֹתְךָ לֹא בָּלַכְתֶּם)—comprehensive covenant violation.

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

The verdict: **therefore this evil is happened unto you** (כִּי-כִאֵת אַתֶּם בָּרָעָה)—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

מִפְנִי	רַא	אַשְׁר	מִפְנִי	אַשְׁר	רַא	מִפְנִי
Because	H834	ye have burned incense	H834	and because	ye have sinned	
	H6440				H2398	
הָרָא	לֹא	יְהִי	הָרָא	לֹא	יְהִי	הָרָא
against the LORD	H3068	and have not obeyed	H8085	the voice	against the LORD	H3068
				H6963		
בְּתָרְבָּת	וְ	בְּתָרְבָּת	וְ	בְּתָרְבָּת	וְ	בְּתָרְבָּת
in his law	H8451	nor in his statutes	H2708	nor in his testimonies	H5715	nor in his testimonies
					H3808	
עַל	בָּלְכָת	מִן	לֹא	וְ	עַל	בָּלְכָת
					H1980	
וְ	בָּלְכָת	מִן	אַתָּה	בְּ	וְ	בָּלְכָת
H3651	is happened	H853	therefore this evil	H7451	H2063	unto you as at this day
	H7122					H3117
בָּהָרָא						
	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.