

Jeremiah 52:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And burned the house of the LORD, and the king's house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the great men, burned he with fire:

Analysis

And burned the house of the LORD, and the king's house; and all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the great men, burned he with fire: This verse records the systematic burning of Jerusalem's most significant structures. The order is theologically significant: first "the house of the LORD" (Solomon's temple, built 960 BCE), then the royal palace, then common dwellings. The temple's priority emphasizes the judgment's theological nature—this isn't merely political conquest but divine discipline of covenant unfaithfulness.

The temple's destruction seemed to contradict God's promise to dwell there forever (1 Kings 9:3). Yet the building was never the true dwelling place—God's glory could depart when the people's sin made the structure a hollow shell (Ezekiel 10:18-19). The physical destruction exposed spiritual reality: God doesn't dwell where holiness is systematically violated. This foreshadows Jesus' teaching that God seeks worshipers in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24), not mere architectural sites.

Theologically, this verse teaches:

1. No religious institution, however venerable, escapes judgment when serving sin rather than God
2. God destroys what humans idolize when the symbol replaces the reality

3. visible manifestations of God's presence (temple, ark) aren't necessary for relationship with Him
4. judgment begins at God's house (1 Peter 4:17).

The temple's destruction prepared Israel to worship without temple—anticipating the church's global, non-localized worship.

Historical Context

Solomon's temple had stood approximately 374 years (960-586 BCE), functioning as Israel's central worship site where sacrifices occurred and God's presence dwelt (the Holy of Holies housing the ark of the covenant). Archaeological evidence from the Temple Mount is limited due to modern religious sensitivities, but excavations around the platform show Babylonian destruction layers from this period.

The temple's destruction wasn't permanent loss but stage-setting for restoration. Zerubbabel rebuilt the temple (516 BCE, Ezra 6:15), later expanded by Herod (20 BCE onward), and finally replaced by Christ Himself as the true temple (John 2:19-21). The church as Christ's body becomes the temple where God dwells by His Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 2:21-22). The historical destruction enabled theological development: from localized presence to omnipresence, from stone temple to living temple, from ethnic Israel to multinational church.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the temple's destruction warn against idolizing religious buildings, traditions, or institutions?

2. In what ways does Christ as the true temple transform your understanding of worship and God's presence?
3. How should the principle 'judgment begins at God's house' affect how Christians evaluate the church and themselves?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּשְׂרֹף	אֶת	בְּיַת	יְהוָה	וְאֶת	בְּיַת
And burned	H853	and all the houses	of the LORD	H853	and all the houses
H8313		H1004	H3068		H1004
וְהַמֶּלֶךְ	וְאֶת	כָּל	בְּיַת	יְרוּשָׁלַם	כָּל
and the king's	H853	H3605	and all the houses	of Jerusalem	H853 H3605
H4428		H1004	H3389		
בְּיַת	הַגָּדוֹל	וַיִּשְׂרֹף	בָּאֵשׁ:		
and all the houses	of the great	And burned	he with fire		
H1004	H1419	H8313	H784		

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 79:1 (References Jerusalem): O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps.

2 Chronicles 36:19 (References Jerusalem): And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof.

Micah 3:12 (References Jerusalem): Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.

Amos 6:11 (References Lord): For, behold, the LORD commandeth, and he will smite the great house with breaches, and the little house with clefts.

Amos 2:5 (References Jerusalem): But I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem.

Lamentations 2:7 (References Lord): The Lord hath cast off his altar, he hath abhorred his sanctuary, he hath given up into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces; they have made a noise in the house of the LORD, as in the day of a solemn feast.

2 Kings 25:9 (Kingdom): And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire.

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