

Jeremiah 6:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning, as for an only son, most bitter lamentation: for the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us.

Analysis

The call to 'gird thee with sackcloth' and 'wallow thyself in ashes' prescribes extreme mourning practices. The reason: 'the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us.' The description of the expected mourning—'as for an only son, most bitter lamentation'—evokes the deepest grief. Loss of an only son meant the end of family line and inheritance, representing total loss. This intensity of mourning reflects the severity of coming judgment. The command to mourn in advance demonstrates that repentance must include genuine grief over sin and its consequences. Reformed theology emphasizes that true repentance involves godly sorrow (2 Corinthians 7:10).

Historical Context

Sackcloth (coarse goat hair) and ashes were traditional Ancient Near Eastern mourning practices. The comparison to losing an only son would resonate deeply in a culture where sons secured family inheritance and name.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

1 John 4:8 – God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What role does grief and lament play in genuine repentance?
2. How does the loss of an 'only son' as a metaphor help us understand the severity of God's judgment?
3. Why does God call people to mourn before judgment arrives rather than only after?

Interlinear Text

בְּאֵפֶר וְהַתְּפִלָּשֵׁת בְּתַעַמֵּעַ חֶגְרִי שְׁקָעַ וְהַתְּפִלָּשֵׁת בְּתַעַמֵּעַ חֶגְרִי שְׁקָעַ
O daughter of my people gird thee with sackcloth and wallow thyself in ashes
H1323 H5971 H2296 H8242 H6428 H665

א בְּלִי	יְחִידָה	עַשְׂתִּי	לְבָנִים	מִסְפָּדָה	תִּמְרוֹרִים	כִּי
thee mourning	as for an only son	make	HO	lamentation	most bitter	H3588

פָּתָאָם	בְּשִׁידָד	בְּלִינוֹן	בְּאֵב	פָּתָאָה	מְפָתָאָה
shall suddenly	come	for the spoiler			
H6597	H935	H7703			H5921

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 4:8 (Parallel theme): For this gird you with sackcloth, lament and howl: for the fierce anger of the LORD is not turned back from us.

Zechariah 12:10 (Parallel theme): And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as

one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

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