

Jeremiah 6:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Prepare ye war against her; arise, and let us go up at noon.
Woe unto us! for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out.

Analysis

The invaders' words reveal their eagerness for battle. The phrase 'prepare ye war' (Hebrew 'qadash'—literally 'sanctify' or 'consecrate') shows pagan nations viewed warfare as having religious dimensions. Their complaint 'Woe unto us!' at the fading daylight exposes bloodthirsty impatience for plunder. The 'shadows of the evening' create urgency—they fear missing their opportunity. This portrays the relentless nature of God's judgment once set in motion. The irony: what they 'sanctify' for war, God has ordained for judgment.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern warfare typically avoided night battles due to tactical disadvantages. The invaders' frustration at approaching nightfall shows their eagerness to attack Jerusalem.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does this verse illustrate that God can use even the evil intentions of people to accomplish His righteous purposes?
2. What does the invaders' impatience teach about human nature when pursuing destructive goals?
3. How should we understand God's sovereignty over evil without making Him the author of sin?

Interlinear Text

בְּצִבְעָךְ	עַמְּ	וְנַעַל	הַ	בְּצִבְעָךְ	עַמְּ	וְנַעַל	הַ		
Prepare	H5921	ye war	H4421	against her arise	H6965	and let us go up	H5927	at noon	H6672
H6942			H3588		H3117				
וְנַעַל	הַ	בְּצִבְעָךְ	עַמְּ	וְנַעַל	הַ	בְּצִבְעָךְ	עַמְּ		
Woe	H0	goeth away	H6437	unto us! for the day	H3588	are stretched out	H5186		
H188									
אַלְלֵי		שְׁרֵבָבָן							
for the shadows		of the evening							
H6752		H6153							

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 15:8 (Parallel theme): Their widows are increased to me above the sand of the seas: I have brought upon them against the mother of the young men a spoiler at noonday: I have caused him to fall upon it suddenly, and terrors upon the city.

Joel 3:9 (Parallel theme): Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up:

Zephaniah 2:4 (Parallel theme): For Gaza shall be forsaken, and Ashkelon a desolation: they shall drive out Ashdod at the noon day, and Ekron shall be rooted up.

Jeremiah 8:20 (Parallel theme): The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

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