

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

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|-----------------|----------------|-------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| קָדַשׁ ו | עַל יְה | מִלְחָמָה ה | ק וּמֹ | וּנְשָׂא ה | בְּצֶהְרִים |
| Prepare | H5921 | ye war | against her arise | and let us go up | at noon |
| H6942 | | H4421 | H6965 | H5927 | H6672 |
| א וְ | ל נֹ | כִי | כָּנָה ה | הִי וְ | וּנְטָ ו |
| Woe | H0 | H3588 | goeth away | unto us! for the day | are stretched out |
| H188 | | H6437 | H3117 | | H5186 |
| צִלֵּי | עֶרֶב: | | | | |
| 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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