

Jeremiah 6:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited.

Analysis

Despite the severe condemnation, God offers a final warning: 'Be thou instructed' (Hebrew 'yasar'—disciplined, corrected). This demonstrates divine patience, giving opportunity for repentance even as judgment approaches. The threat 'lest my soul depart from thee' uses anthropomorphic language to describe God withdrawing His covenant presence. The consequences are stark: desolation and abandonment ('a land not inhabited'). This verse encapsulates the Reformed understanding of God's character: He is both just in judgment and merciful in warning, delighting more in repentance than destruction (Ezekiel 33:11).

Historical Context

Jeremiah's prophetic ministry spanned the final decades before Jerusalem's fall, repeatedly calling for repentance. This warning represents God's persistent efforts to turn Judah from destruction through prophetic witness.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does God's warning 'be thou instructed' demonstrate His mercy even in the midst of threatened judgment?
2. What does it mean for God's presence to depart from a people or place?
3. How should we respond when God's warnings become increasingly urgent and severe?

Interlinear Text

הִסְרֵ	מִתְּנַשֵּׁל	עַל	נֶפֶשׁ	מִתְּנַשֵּׁל	רַקְעַנְתִּי
Be thou instructed	O Jerusalem	H6435	depart	lest my soul	H4480
H3256	H3389	H3363	H5315	H6435	

נִשְׁבַּתְהָ:	לֹא	אַשְׁמִת	הַשְׁמַת	אֵצֶן	אֲשִׁים
not inhabited					
H3427	H3808	H776	H8077	H7760	from thee lest I make

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 23:18 (Parallel theme): So she discovered her whoredoms, and discovered her nakedness: then my mind was alienated from her, like as my mind was alienated from her sister.

Hosea 9:12 (Parallel theme): Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, that there shall not be a man left: yea, woe also to them when I depart from them!

Jeremiah 17:23 (Parallel theme): But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction.

Psalms 50:17 (Parallel theme): Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee.

Jeremiah 32:33 (Parallel theme): And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face: though I taught them, rising up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkened to receive instruction.

Zephaniah 3:7 (Parallel theme): I said, Surely thou wilt fear me, thou wilt receive instruction; so their dwelling should not be cut off, howsoever I punished them: but they rose early, and corrupted all their doings.

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