

Jeremiah 7:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers.

Analysis

The response to prophetic ministry: 'Yet they hearkened not unto me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers.' The metaphor 'hardened their neck' comes from stubborn oxen refusing the yoke. Not only did they resist God's word, but 'they did worse than their fathers'—each generation descended deeper into rebellion. This demonstrates the progressive nature of generational sin when not addressed. The comparison to previous generations shows that familiarity with truth without obedience leads to greater hardness. Reformed theology sees here the principle that resisted light increases darkness.

Historical Context

Each successive generation in Israel's history tended toward greater apostasy, from the judges period through the monarchy to the exile. Resisted grace hardens hearts further.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does resistance to God's word progressively harden the heart?
2. What is the responsibility of one generation to prevent the next from descending further into rebellion?
3. How do we avoid the pattern of doing 'worse than our fathers' spiritually?

Interlinear Text

וְלֹא שָׁמַע וְלֹא אָלָּה הַתְּנִזְנֵן אֶת־
H3808 Yet they hearkened H413 H3808 not unto me nor inclined H853
H8085 H5186

אֶذְנָה תָּקַשֵּׂר אֶת־עָרֵף מִאָבֹתֶם:
H241 H7185 H853 H6203 H7489 H1
their ear but hardened their neck they did worse than their fathers

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 16:12 (Parallel theme): And ye have done worse than your fathers; for, behold, ye walk every one after the imagination of his evil heart, that they may not hearken unto me:

2 Chronicles 30:8 (Parallel theme): Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the LORD, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever: and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you.

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.

Jeremiah 19:15 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon this city and upon all her towns all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words.

Jeremiah 7:24 (Parallel theme): But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward.

Matthew 23:32 (Parallel theme): Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.