

Jeremiah 8:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

At that time, saith the LORD, they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of his princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves:

Analysis

This verse opens a stark oracle of judgment describing the desecration of Judah's dead. 'At that time' (baet hahi, בַּעֵת הַהִיא) connects to the preceding judgment oracle, indicating the Babylonian conquest. The bones of kings, princes, priests, prophets, and inhabitants of Jerusalem would be exhumed from their graves. In ancient Near Eastern culture, proper burial and undisturbed rest for the dead held supreme importance. Disturbing graves was considered the ultimate dishonor, severing connection with ancestors and exposing the deceased to shame. This judgment reverses the honor these leaders sought during life, stripping away their dignity in death as they stripped God of the honor due Him through idolatry.

Historical Context

This prophecy found literal fulfillment when Babylonian armies conquered Jerusalem in 586 BC. Ancient conquerors regularly desecrated graves of defeated enemies to demonstrate complete domination and to search for buried treasures. Archaeological evidence from this period confirms widespread tomb disturbance throughout Judah. The specific mention of kings, princes, priests, and prophets indicts every level of leadership that led the nation into idolatry.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does the judgment of posthumous dishonor reflect the principle that we reap what we sow, even beyond death?
2. What does this passage teach about the eternal consequences of our spiritual choices and allegiances?

Interlinear Text

בְּעֵת	הָיָא	נֹאֵם	יְהוָה	וַיָּבִיאוּ	אֶת	עַצְמוֹת
At that time	H1931	saith	the LORD	they shall bring out	H853	and the bones
H6256		H5002	H3068	H3318		H6106
מַלְכֵי	יְהוּדָה	וְאֵת	עַצְמוֹת	שָׂרָיו	וְאֵת	עַצְמוֹת
of the kings	of Judah	H853	and the bones	of his princes	H853	and the bones
H4428	H3063		H6106	H8269		H6106
הַכֹּהֲנִים	וְאֵת	עַצְמוֹת	הַנְּבִיאִים	וְאֵת	עַצְמוֹת	
of the priests	H853	and the bones	of the prophets	H853	and the bones	
H3548		H6106	H5030		H6106	
יֹשְׁבֵי	יְרוּשָׁלַם	מִקְבְּרֵיהֶם:				
of the inhabitants	of Jerusalem	out of their graves				
H3427	H3389	H6913				

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 6:5 (Parallel theme): And I will lay the dead carcasses of the children of Israel before their idols; and I will scatter your bones round about your altars.

