

Jeremiah 8:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me.

Analysis

This verse expresses Jeremiah's deepest anguish: 'For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt.' The Hebrew sheber (שְׁבֵרָה, breaking, fracture, ruin) appears twice—Jeremiah is shattered by his people's shattering. 'I am black' (qadarti, קָדַרְתִּי) indicates mourning posture, wearing dark clothes, face blackened with grief. 'Astonishment hath taken hold on me' uses shammah (שָׁמָמָה, desolation, horror) to describe overwhelming grief. Jeremiah identifies completely with his people despite their rejection of his message. He doesn't stand apart to watch judgment with detached satisfaction but weeps with those he warned. This models prophetic compassion—true prophets grieve even necessary judgment.

Historical Context

Jeremiah earned the title 'weeping prophet' from passages like this. His identification with his people resembles Moses (Exodus 32:32) and anticipates Christ weeping over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44). Ancient mourning customs included wearing sackcloth, sitting in ashes, blackening the face with charcoal or ash, and public weeping. Jeremiah's grief was genuine, not merely professional or performed.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does Jeremiah's grief for those under judgment model appropriate response to others' sin and its consequences?
2. What distinguishes godly grief that mourns sin from self-righteous condemnation that rejoices in judgment?

Interlinear Text

עַל שֶׁ בָּר בָּת עַמּוֹ קָדְרָתִי פָּשָׁבְרָתִי

H5921 For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt I am black

H7667

H1323

H5971

H7665

H6937

שְׁפָט הַחֲזֹקָתָנִי:

astonishment hath taken hold

H8047

H2388

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 14:17 (Parallel theme): Therefore thou shalt say this word unto them; Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease: for the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow.

Nahum 2:10 (Parallel theme): She is empty, and void, and waste: and the heart melteth, and the knees smite together, and much pain is in all loins, and the faces of them all gather blackness.

Joel 2:6 (Parallel theme): Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness.

