

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 (שָׁבַר, 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 (שָׁמָּה, 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

Psalms 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 בָּרַ	בֵּת	עַמִּי	הֲשֵׁב רָתִי	קָדַר רָתִי
H5921	For the hurt	of the daughter	of my people	am I hurt	I am black
	H7667	H1323	H5971	H7665	H6937
שִׁמָּה	הִחֲזַקְתִּנִּי				
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.

