

Jeremiah 8:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue of them that remain of this evil family, which remain in all the places whither I have driven them, saith the LORD of hosts.

Analysis

This verse pronounces a chilling verdict: 'death shall be chosen rather than life.' The Hebrew maveth yibbachar mechayyim (מְתָתֵּה יִבְחַר מְחַיִּים) indicates that surviving exile would be so miserable that death would seem preferable. The phrase 'all the residue of them that remain of this evil family' refers to exiled survivors of judgment. Their scattering 'in all the places whither I have driven them' emphasizes divine agency—God Himself drove them into exile. The phrase 'saith the LORD of hosts' (neum YHWH Tseva'ot) adds prophetic authority. This anticipates Jeremiah's later counsel to the exiles (chapter 29) to build lives in Babylon, acknowledging their long captivity while trusting God's ultimate restoration.

Historical Context

The Babylonian exile (605-538 BC) scattered Judeans across the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Historical records and archaeological evidence confirm Jewish communities in Babylon proper, Egypt (Elephantine papyri), and other locations. The exile's psychological trauma is captured in Psalm 137's lament. Many who survived Jerusalem's destruction wished they had died in the siege rather than face the horrors of exile, starvation, and separation from their homeland and temple.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does this judgment reveal the true cost of persistent rebellion against God?
2. What hope does the phrase 'whither I have driven them' offer, suggesting God's sovereign control even in judgment?

Interlinear Text

פָשָׁאָרִית לְכָל מִתְּבָנָת ר
shall be chosen And death rather than life by all the residue
H977 H4194 H2416 H3605 H7611

בְּכָל הַזֶּאת בְּרָע הַמְשֻׁפֵּט הַמִּן הַגְּשָׁאָרִים
of them that remain family of this evil H3605
H7604 H4480 H4940 H2063

שׁ מִן הַדְּחִית יְמִין אֲשֶׁר הַגְּשָׁאָרִים וְתַּחַת
in all the places of them that remain H8033
H4725 H7604 H834 H5080

צְבָאֹתָה יְהִי הַנָּא מ
them saith the LORD of hosts
H5002 H3068 H6635

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 9:6 (Parallel theme): And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

Jeremiah 29:14 (References Lord): And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.

Jeremiah 23:8 (References Lord): But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.

Jeremiah 23:3 (Parallel theme): And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.

Deuteronomy 30:4 (References Lord): If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee:

Jonah 4:3 (References Lord): Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live.

Deuteronomy 30:1 (References Lord): And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee,

Daniel 9:7 (References Lord): O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee.