

Jeremiah 9:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them; for how shall I do for the daughter of my people?

Analysis

This verse announces coming judgment: 'Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them.' The metallurgical imagery uses *tsaraph* (צָרַף, to smelt, refine) and *bachan* (בָּחַן, to test, assay). God's judgment functions as a refiner's fire, testing metal for purity by melting. 'For how shall I do for the daughter of my people?' This rhetorical question reveals divine pathos—what other option exists for a people so thoroughly corrupt? The question is not about divine capability but divine necessity. Judgment is not arbitrary punishment but the only remedy for systemic sin. God asks how else He could deal with such persistent unfaithfulness.

Historical Context

Metallurgical imagery appears throughout prophetic literature (Ezekiel 22:17-22, Malachi 3:2-3). Ancient Near Eastern smelting technology was well-known in Judah; excavations reveal numerous metal workshops. The refining process separated precious metal from dross (impurities). God's judgment would similarly separate faithful remnant from unfaithful majority. Yet as Jeremiah 6:29-30 suggests, this particular 'smelting' would find no silver—only dross to be discarded.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does understanding judgment as refining rather than merely punishing change our perspective on God's discipline?
2. What does God's rhetorical question reveal about His reluctance to judge despite its necessity?

Interlinear Text

כֹּה לֵךְ	אֲמַר	יְהוָה	צָבָא וְ	הִנֵּנִי	
H3651	H3541	Therefore thus saith	the LORD	of hosts	H2005
	H559		H3068	H6635	
צוֹרֶךְ ׀	וּבְחִנֵּת יִם	כִּי	אֵי יִךְ	אֶעֱשֶׂה	מִפְנֵי י
Behold I will melt	them and try	H3588	H349	them for how shall I do	for
H6884	H974			H6213	H6440
בֵּת	עַמִּי:				
the daughter	of my people				
H1323	H5971				

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 1:25 (Parallel theme): And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin:

Isaiah 48:10 (Parallel theme): Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.

Jeremiah 6:27 (Parallel theme): I have set thee for a tower and a fortress among my people, that thou mayest know and try their way.

Malachi 3:3 (References Lord): And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

Zechariah 13:9 (References Lord): And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.

1 Peter 4:12 (Parallel theme): Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

1 Peter 1:7 (Parallel theme): That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: