

Lamentations 2:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he hath violently taken away his tabernacle, as if it were of a garden: he hath destroyed his places of the assembly: the LORD hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion, and hath despised in the indignation of his anger the king and the priest.

Analysis

God's actions against His own sanctuary appear shocking: "He hath violently taken away his tabernacle" (vayachmos kaggn sukkoh, וַיַּחֲמוֹס כַּגִּגֵּן סֻכּוֹ). The verb *chamas* (חָמַס) means to treat violently, wrong, or do violence—the same root used for the earth being "filled with violence" before the Flood (Genesis 6:11, 13). God Himself acts with violence against His own dwelling place, like a farmer violently clearing a garden booth. The phrase "destroyed his places of assembly" continues the theme. The Hebrew *mo'ado* (מוֹעֲדוֹ) refers to appointed places and times for meeting—the festivals, sabbaths, and sacrificial system that structured Israel's worship. God caused cessation of the very worship He had ordained. The statement "the LORD hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion" indicates how completely judgment disrupted covenant life. Most striking is the final phrase: "hath despised in the indignation of his anger the king and the priest." Both offices that represented God's rule (king) and mediation (priest) come under divine contempt. The Hebrew *na'ats* (נָאַץ, "despised, spurned") shows God rejecting what He Himself established. This demonstrates that institutions and offices have value only as they serve God's purposes. When corrupted by sin, even sacred things become objects of divine wrath.

Historical Context

The temple and its worship system represented the heart of Israel's covenant identity. Solomon's temple (built 966-959 BC) served as the central sanctuary for nearly four centuries. The elaborate festival calendar—Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, and others—structured the year around remembering God's mighty acts and covenant renewal. By Jeremiah's time, this system had become corrupted. Jeremiah 7:1-15 records God's "temple sermon" condemning hypocritical worship—people engaging in immorality and idolatry while trusting the temple's presence to protect them. Ezekiel 8 describes abominations practiced within the temple courts: idol worship, sun worship, women weeping for Tammuz. The priests who should have maintained holiness had themselves become corrupt (Ezekiel 22:26). When Babylonians breached Jerusalem's walls in 586 BC, they systematically desecrated and destroyed the temple. The holy vessels were taken to Babylon (2 Kings 25:13-17, Daniel 1:2). The bronze pillars, sea, and stands were broken up and carried away. Fire consumed the wooden structures. King Zedekiah was captured, blinded, and imprisoned—the Davidic line apparently ended. High priests were executed (2 Kings 25:18-21). The "indignation of his anger" brought total devastation.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. What does God's violent removal of His own tabernacle teach about the insufficiency of religious institutions apart from heart obedience?
2. How should the fact that God 'despised' both king and priest inform our understanding that no human mediator or leader can substitute for genuine relationship with Him?
3. In what ways does Christ fulfill and supersede both the kingly and priestly offices that God 'despised' in Lamentations?

4. How does this verse challenge our tendency to trust in church attendance, sacraments, or religious heritage as guarantees of God's favor?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּהַרְסֵם ס	כִּגְן	שְׁכֵן ו		
And he hath violently taken away	as if it were of a garden	his tabernacle		
H2554	H1588	H7900		
שָׂהָה ת	מוֹעֵד ד	שָׁכַח ח	יְהוָה הוּא	בְּצִיּוֹן
he hath destroyed	hath caused the solemn feasts	to be forgotten	the LORD	in Zion
H7843	H4150	H7911	H3068	H6726
מוֹעֵד ד	וְשַׁבָּת ת	וַיִּזְאָץ	בְּזַעַם	
hath caused the solemn feasts	and sabbaths	and hath despised	in the indignation	
H4150	H7676	H5006	H2195	
אֵפֶן ו	מֶלֶךְ הוּא	וְכֹהֵן:		
of his anger	the king	and the priest		
H639	H4428	H3548		

Additional Cross-References

Lamentations 1:4 (Parallel theme): The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts: all her gates are desolate: her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, and she is in bitterness.

Zephaniah 3:18 (Parallel theme): I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden.

Lamentations 4:16 (References Lord): The anger of the LORD hath divided them; he will no more regard them: they respected not the persons of the priests, they favoured not the elders.