

Jeremiah 1:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.

Analysis

This verse defines Jeremiah's prophetic commission with comprehensive scope: 'See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms.' The verb 'set' (paqad, פָּקַד) means appointed, installed, or given authority over—Jeremiah receives divine authorization to speak to nations and kingdoms, not merely religious matters. God's authority over all nations (not just Israel) is exercised through His prophet. The sixfold description of his ministry follows: 'to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.' Four verbs describe judgment (rooting out, pulling down, destroying, throwing down); two describe restoration (building, planting). This ratio reflects Jeremiah's ministry reality—primarily announcing judgment before eventual restoration. The Hebrew verbs are vivid: 'root out' (natash, שָׁנַת) means uproot or tear out; 'pull down' (nathats, שָׁנַת) means break down or demolish; 'destroy' (abad, אָבֹד) means annihilate or cause to perish; 'throw down' (haras, חָרַשׁ) means tear down or ruin. The constructive verbs 'build' (banah, בָּנַה) and 'plant' (nata, עַנְתָּ) promise future restoration after judgment. This commission establishes Jeremiah as agent of divine sovereignty in history—through prophetic word, God executes judgment and promises renewal.

Historical Context

Jeremiah's ministry fulfilled this commission precisely. His prophecies pronounced judgment on Judah (destruction, exile), surrounding nations (Egypt, Babylon,

Moab, Ammon, Edom, Philistines—Jeremiah 46-51), and even his oppressors (Babylon's eventual fall, Jeremiah 50-51). Yet his message also promised restoration after seventy years (Jeremiah 29:10-14), a new covenant written on hearts (Jeremiah 31:31-34), and Israel's regathering (Jeremiah 32-33). The four-to-two ratio of destructive to constructive verbs reflects the exile period's nature—seventy years of judgment followed by return and rebuilding under Cyrus's decree (Ezra 1). Church fathers saw this commission as pattern for gospel ministry: God's word convicts of sin (uprooting false beliefs) before building faith in Christ. The Reformers applied it to church reformation—false doctrine must be pulled down before truth is built up. Modern application recognizes that genuine spiritual renewal requires confronting sin and error before constructing righteousness.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does Jeremiah's commission to both 'root out' and 'build' challenge tendencies toward either harsh negativity or shallow positivity in proclaiming God's word?
2. In what ways might authentic spiritual growth require painful 'uprooting' of cherished beliefs or practices before the building and planting of truth?

Interlinear Text

וְעַל	הָגּוּם	עַל	בְּזַה	בַּיּוֹם	הַפְּקִדָּת	יְבָא	רָא	ה
See	set	I have this day	H2088	H5921	thee over the nations	H5921		
H7200	H6485	H3117				H1471		
and over the kingdoms	to root out	and to pull down	and to destroy					
H4467	H5428	H5422	H6					
and to throw down	to build	and to plant						
H2040	H1129	H5193						
וְלֹא	בָּאָבֶד	וְלֹא	לְנַתְּזָה	וְלֹא	מִפְּמַלְכָּה	וְלֹא	וְלֹא	וְלֹא

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 31:28 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 24:6 (Parallel theme): For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up.

Amos 9:11 (Parallel theme): In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old:

Ezekiel 36:36 (Parallel theme): Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it.

Amos 3:7 (Parallel theme): Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

Ezekiel 32:18 (Parallel theme): Son of man, wail for the multitude of Egypt, and cast them down, even her, and the daughters of the famous nations, unto the nether parts of the earth, with them that go down into the pit.

Zechariah 1:6 (Parallel theme): But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned and said, Like as the LORD of hosts thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our doings, so hath he dealt with us.

Ezekiel 43:3 (Parallel theme): And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city: and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face.

1 Kings 19:17 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.

1 Kings 17:1 (Parallel theme): And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

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