

Jeremiah 1:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land.

Analysis

God promises to fortify Jeremiah against opposition: 'For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against the whole land.' This threefold metaphor emphasizes comprehensive protection and strength. 'A defenced city' (le'ir mivtsar, מִבְצָר עִיר) refers to a fortified city with strong walls—able to withstand siege. 'An iron pillar' (amud barzel, בָּرֶזֶל עַמּוֹד) suggests unshakeable stability—a supporting column made of iron cannot be knocked down. 'Brasen walls' (chomot nechoshet, נְחֹשֶׁת חֹמֹת, bronze/brass walls) indicates impenetrable defense—bronze walls cannot be breached by ancient weapons. These images promise that though Jeremiah will be attacked, he will not be destroyed. The phrase 'against the whole land' (al-kol-ha'arets, עַל-כָּל-הָאָרֶץ) indicates that opposition will be comprehensive, yet God's protection will be sufficient. The verse then specifies his opponents: 'against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land.' This list covers every level of society—political leaders (kings), government officials (princes), religious authorities (priests), and common people. Jeremiah would face universal opposition, yet divine protection would sustain him.

Historical Context

This promise sustained Jeremiah through extraordinary persecution from every quarter mentioned. Kings opposed him: Jehoiakim burned his prophecy scroll and sought his arrest (Jeremiah 36:26), Zedekiah imprisoned him though consulting him secretly (Jeremiah 37-38). Princes threw him into a cistern to die (Jeremiah 38:4-6). Priests beat him, put him in stocks (Jeremiah 20:1-2), and accused him of treason (Jeremiah 26:11). The people of Anathoth (his hometown) plotted to kill him (Jeremiah 11:21), Jerusalem's inhabitants mocked him (Jeremiah 20:10), and the remnant rejected his counsel (Jeremiah 43:2). Yet despite all this, Jeremiah survived—vindicated when his prophecies were fulfilled exactly. God's promise 'I have made thee' (netatikha, נְתַתְּךָ, 'I have appointed/established you') emphasizes divine agency—God equipped him for the opposition he would face. The same God promises believers that gates of hell shall not prevail against Christ's church (Matthew 16:18) and that nothing can separate us from His love (Romans 8:38-39).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How do the metaphors of fortified city, iron pillar, and bronze walls shape our understanding of the spiritual strength God provides when we face opposition for truth?
2. What does universal opposition from all levels of society teach about the cost of faithful prophetic ministry and the sufficiency of divine protection?

Interlinear Text

וְלֹעֵם וְדָמֶבֶץ רַכְבָּן מִבְּצָרָה					
For behold I	H2009	have made	thee this day	city	a defenced
H589		H5414	H3117	H5892	H4013
and an iron	walls	and brasen		against the whole land	
H1270	H2346	H5178	H5921	H3605	H776
against the kings	of Judah	against the princes	thereof against the priests		
H4428	H3063	H8269	H3548		
וְלֹעֵם וְ		בְּאָרֶץ:			
thereof and against the people	against the whole land				
H5971	H776				

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 50:7 (Parallel theme): For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.

Jeremiah 15:20 (Parallel theme): And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brasen wall: and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

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.

Jeremiah 37:7 (Kingdom): Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Thus shall ye say to the king of Judah, that sent you unto me to enquire of me; Behold, Pharaoh's army, which is come forth to help you, shall return to Egypt into their own land.

Jeremiah 38:2 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD, He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live.

Jeremiah 34:3 (Kingdom): And thou shalt not escape out of his hand, but shalt surely be taken, and delivered into his hand; and thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, and he shall speak with thee mouth to mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon.

Jeremiah 42:22 (Parallel theme): Now therefore know certainly that ye shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, in the place whither ye desire to go and to sojourn.

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