

# Jeremiah 15:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Shall iron break the northern iron and the steel?

## Analysis

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A rhetorical question emphasizing impossibility: 'Shall iron break the northern iron and the steel?' The 'northern iron' refers to Babylon—superior in strength like high-quality iron from the north. Regular iron (Judah) cannot break northern iron (Babylon). This illustrates that Judah cannot resist Babylon's invasion through military means. The underlying message: God has ordained this judgment; resistance is futile. This drives home Reformed theology's emphasis on God's absolute sovereignty over nations and historical events. When God decrees judgment through a nation, opposing it is like trying to break superior metal with inferior.

## Historical Context

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Babylon's military superiority was legendary. Their iron weapons and siege technology represented the height of ancient military capability. Judah's attempts at resistance proved futile, as Jeremiah predicted.

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. What does the iron metaphor teach about the futility of resisting God's ordained judgments?
2. How should recognition of God's sovereignty over nations affect political and military strategies?
3. When is submission to divinely-ordained judgment wiser than resistance?

## Interlinear Text

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וְנִחְשַׁתְּנָהּ מֵעֶלְמָה וְנִכְבַּדְתְּנָהּ בְּנֵי-עַמּוֹת  
break Shall iron Shall iron the northern and the steel  
H7489 H1270 H1270 H6828 H5178

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