

Jeremiah 18:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it;

Analysis

God establishes His sovereign prerogative: "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it." The phrase "at what instant" (rega, עַתָּה, moment) emphasizes God's freedom to pronounce judgment whenever He determines. The triple verbs—"pluck up," "pull down," and "destroy"—intensify the totality of threatened judgment, recalling Jeremiah's commission (Jer 1:10).

The phrase "a nation, and concerning a kingdom" universalizes the principle—this applies not only to Judah but to all nations. God's sovereignty extends over every political entity, not merely His covenant people. This establishes the Reformed doctrine that God rules all nations providentially, raising up and deposing rulers according to His purposes (Dan 2:21, 4:17, 35). No nation stands outside divine jurisdiction.

The ominous language describes comprehensive judgment—complete removal and destruction. Yet verse 8 will introduce a crucial qualification: such pronouncements are conditionally threatened, not unconditionally decreed. God's prophetic warnings function as urgent calls to repentance. His desire is not destruction but restoration when people turn from wickedness. This reveals God's heart—He takes no pleasure in judgment but desires repentance (Ezek 18:23, 32, 33:11).

Historical Context

Prophets regularly announced judgment against foreign nations (Isa 13-23, Jer 46-51, Ezek 25-32, Amos 1-2, Nahum, Obadiah). These oracles demonstrated Yahweh's universal sovereignty—He controls not only Israel but all nations. Historical fulfillments validated prophetic authority: Nineveh fell (Nahum), Babylon fell (Isa 13, Jer 50-51), Egypt declined (Ezek 29-32). God's pronouncements always accomplish their purpose, whether judgment or restoration.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does understanding God's sovereignty over all nations shape your view of current events and politics?
2. What does it mean that God speaks words of judgment 'at what instant' He chooses?
3. How should the principle that God judges nations inform Christian citizenship and political engagement?

Interlinear Text

בָּזְעָם	אָמַרְתִּי	עַל	אֶלְכָּה	בְּגָעָה	וְעַל
At what instant	I shall speak	H5921	concerning a nation	H5921	
H7281	H1696		H1471		
וְעַל	לְמִלְחָמָה	לְמִלְחָמָה	לְמִלְחָמָה	לְמִלְחָמָה	לְמִלְחָמָה
and concerning a kingdom	to pluck up	and to pull down	and to destroy		
H4467	H5428	H5422	H6		

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 1:10 (Kingdom): 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.

Jeremiah 45:4 (Parallel theme): Thus shalt thou say unto him, The LORD saith thus; Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land.

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