

Jeremiah 20:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But the LORD is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten.

Analysis

After expressing his anguish (vv. 7-10), Jeremiah pivots to confident trust in God's presence and power. The phrase 'mighty terrible one' (gibbor arits, גִּבְעֹר עָרֵץ) depicts God as a warrior-champion, fearsome and invincible. The prophet declares that his persecutors will stumble and fail because the LORD fights for him. This theological certainty—that God's purposes cannot be thwarted—sustains Jeremiah through his darkest hours.

This verse demonstrates the movement from lament to trust characteristic of biblical faith. Jeremiah does not deny his suffering or suppress his emotions, but he anchors his hope in God's character and promises. The same God who called him will vindicate him. Those who oppose God's prophet oppose God Himself and will ultimately face divine judgment. This confidence is not presumption but theological conviction grounded in God's covenant faithfulness.

The New Testament applies this principle to all believers—'If God be for us, who can be against us?' (Romans 8:31). Christ promised His disciples that the gates of hell would not prevail against His church. Like Jeremiah, we may face overwhelming opposition, but ultimate victory is assured because God Himself champions our cause.

Historical Context

Jeremiah's confidence would be tested but ultimately vindicated. While he suffered imprisonment and nearly died in a cistern (chapter 38), he was rescued by Ebed-melech and survived Jerusalem's fall. His persecutors—Pashhur, Zedekiah's officials, and the false prophets who opposed him—all faced the judgment he prophesied. The Babylonian commanders even showed Jeremiah favor, allowing him to choose whether to go to Babylon or remain in Judah (39:11-12).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How can we cultivate Jeremiah's confidence in God's presence even when circumstances seem overwhelming?
2. What biblical promises sustain believers when facing opposition for proclaiming God's truth?
3. How does understanding God as our 'mighty terrible one' change our perspective on enemies and obstacles?

Interlinear Text

כִּי עַל עַר יְהוָה אָוֹתִי כְּכֹבֶר וְרַכְבָּה
But the LORD is with me as a mighty terrible one

בְּשָׁוֶה בְּשָׁוֶה יְהִי לְאַנְגָּלִים וְאַנְגָּלִים יְהִי לְבָשָׁוֶה
therefore my persecutors shall stumble and they shall not prevail ashamed

כְּלֹעַת הַשְּׁבָקָה יְהִי לְאַנְגָּלִים וְאַנְגָּלִים יְהִי לְכְלֹעַת
they shall be greatly for they shall not prosper confusion

תְּשַׁכְּחָה: לְאַנְגָּלִים עַזְלָם
their everlasting shall never be forgotten

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 1:19 (References Lord): And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee.

Jeremiah 1:8 (References Lord): Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 15:20 (References Lord): 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.

Isaiah 41:10 (Parallel theme): Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

Jeremiah 17:18 (Parallel theme): Let them be confounded that persecute me, but let not me be confounded: let them be dismayed, but let not me be dismayed: bring upon them the day of evil, and destroy them with double destruction.

Psalms 6:10 (Parallel theme): Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return and be ashamed suddenly.

Psalms 40:14 (Parallel theme): Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil.

Psalms 35:26 (Parallel theme): Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify themselves against me.

Jeremiah 23:40 (Eternal Life): And I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten.

Isaiah 45:16 (Parallel theme): They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols.