

Jeremiah 21:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, I am against thee, O inhabitant of the valley, and rock of the plain, saith the LORD; which say, Who shall come down against us? or who shall enter into our habitations?

Analysis

Behold, I am against thee, O inhabitant of the valley, and rock of the plain, saith the LORD—God declares Himself Jerusalem's enemy using the confrontational formula *hineni elayikh* (הִנְנִי אֵלֶיךָ, 'Behold, I am against you'). This phrase appears repeatedly in prophetic literature announcing divine judgment (Jeremiah 50:31, 51:25, Ezekiel 5:8). The address 'O inhabitant of the valley, and rock of the plain' (*yoshevet ha'emeq tsur hamishor*, יוֹשֶׁבֶת הָעֵמֶק צוּר הַמִּישׁוֹר) describes Jerusalem's geography: built on rocky elevation surrounded by valleys (Kidron, Hinnom, Tyropoeon), creating natural defensive advantages.

Which say, Who shall come down against us? or who shall enter into our habitations?—this captures Jerusalem's false confidence (*mi yered alenu*, מִי יֵרֵד אֵלֵינוּ, 'Who can descend upon us?'). The rhetorical questions express presumptuous security based on geography and theology—they believed their fortifications and God's presence in the temple made them invincible. This echoes the false security Jeremiah condemned: 'The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD' (Jeremiah 7:4). But God's declaration 'I am against you' overturns all human security. No fortress, geographic advantage, or religious heritage protects those who rebel against God. This fulfills Leviticus 26:19: 'I will break the pride of your power.' True security comes not from walls or location but from covenant faithfulness (Psalm 127:1).

Historical Context

Jerusalem's geography did provide significant defensive advantages. Built on Mount Zion with steep valleys on three sides, it was naturally fortified and had withstood numerous sieges. When Sennacherib's Assyrian army threatened in 701 BC, God miraculously delivered Jerusalem (2 Kings 19:35), reinforcing belief in the city's inviolability. By Jeremiah's day, this historical deliverance combined with theology of God's dwelling in the temple created false confidence—the belief that God would always protect Jerusalem regardless of the people's behavior. But Jeremiah had declared from the beginning of his ministry that the temple's presence provided no automatic protection (Jeremiah 7:1-15, citing Shiloh's destruction as precedent). When Babylon besieged Jerusalem in 588-586 BC, the city's defenses eventually failed despite natural advantages. Archaeological evidence shows Babylon constructed massive siege works—earthen ramps and towers—to overcome Jerusalem's walls. The fulfillment of Jeremiah 21:13 vindicated his unpopular message: God Himself fought against Jerusalem, making all defensive advantages meaningless.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does Jerusalem's false confidence in geography and religious heritage warn against presuming upon external securities while neglecting heart obedience?
2. What does God's declaration 'I am against you' teach about the futility of any defense—military, geographic, or religious—when we live in rebellion against God?

Interlinear Text

הִנֵּנִי י	אֶל יְיָ	יֵשׁ בֵּית	הַעֵמֶק מֶקֶד	צוּר
H2005	H413	H3427	H6010	H6697
	Behold I am against thee O inhabitant	of the valley	and rock	
הַמִּישֹׁר	נֹאֵם	יְהוָה	הָאֹמְרִים	מִי
H4334	H5002	H3068	H559	H4310
of the plain	saith	the LORD	which say	Who shall come down
				H5181
וְיָ	יָבֹא	בְּמַעֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ:		
H4310	H935	H4585		
	against us or who shall enter	into our habitations		

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 13:8 (References Lord): Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I am against you, saith the Lord GOD.

Lamentations 4:12 (Parallel theme): The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem.

Psalms 125:2 (References Lord): As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about his people from henceforth even for ever.

Jeremiah 50:31 (References Lord): Behold, I am against thee, O thou most proud, saith the Lord GOD of hosts: for thy day is come, the time that I will visit thee.

Micah 3:11 (References Lord): The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us.

Isaiah 22:1 (Parallel theme): The burden of the valley of vision. What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the housetops?

Jeremiah 21:5 (Parallel theme): And I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger, and in fury, and in great wrath.

Jeremiah 49:16 (References Lord): Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the LORD.

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