

Jeremiah 21:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And afterward, saith the LORD, I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, and his servants, and the people, and such as are left in this city from the pestilence, from the sword, and from the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those that seek their life: and he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy.

Analysis

And afterward, saith the LORD, I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, and his servants, and the people, and such as are left in this city from the pestilence, from the sword, and from the famine—the phrase 'and afterward' (ve'acharei-chen, וְאַחֲרָיֶיכֶן) indicates sequential judgment: first pestilence will devastate the population (v. 6), then survivors will face captivity. Those who survive the siege's horrors—sword, famine, pestilence—face an even more specific fate. **Into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those that seek their life**—the triple repetition 'into the hand' (beyad, בְּיָד) emphasizes complete subjugation with no escape. The phrase 'those that seek their life' (mevakshei naphsham, מְבַקְשֵׁי נַפְשָׁם) indicates active pursuit to kill, not merely imprison.

And he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy—the Hebrew piles up negatives: lo yachmol (לֹא יַחְמֹל, no sparing), velo yachus (וְלֹא יַחֹס, no pity), velo yerachem (וְלֹא יִרְחַם, no mercy).

וְיָרָם, no mercy). Three terms for compassion are systematically denied. This reverses God's self-description as compassionate and merciful (Exodus 34:6-7) by declaring His chosen instrument—pagan Nebuchadnezzar—will show none. This was precisely fulfilled: Zedekiah witnessed his sons' execution before his eyes were gouged out, then was taken in chains to Babylon (2 Kings 25:6-7). Judah's leadership who rejected mercy from God received no mercy from Babylon.

Historical Context

The prophecy's fulfillment is documented in 2 Kings 25:6-21. After Jerusalem's walls were breached in 586 BC, Zedekiah fled but was captured near Jericho. Nebuchadnezzar executed Zedekiah's sons at Riblah (a Babylonian military headquarters in Syria), then blinded Zedekiah and took him to Babylon, where he died in prison (Jeremiah 52:11). The nobility and priests were systematically executed—2 Kings 25:18-21 lists specific officials killed at Riblah. Archaeological evidence from Tel Lachish and other Judean sites shows widespread destruction circa 586 BC, with burn layers, arrowheads, and evidence of violent conquest. The Babylonian policy was harsh toward rebels: Zedekiah had sworn loyalty to Nebuchadnezzar but broke his oath, making his punishment exemplary. The brutality served Babylon's imperial strategy—deterring other vassal states from rebellion. Ezekiel 17:16-20 emphasizes that Zedekiah's oath-breaking, not merely political rebellion, triggered God's judgment: covenant fidelity mattered even in international treaties.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does the systematic denial of mercy (no sparing, no pity, no mercy) illustrate the principle that those who reject God's mercy ultimately face judgment without mercy (James 2:13)?

2. What does the specific fulfillment of Zedekiah's fate teach about the certainty of God's prophetic word, even when it pronounces judgment?

Interlinear Text

וְאַחֲרָיִ	כִּי	נֹאֵם	יְהוָה	אֶתְּ	אֶת	צִדְקִיָּהוּ	מֶלֶךְ
And afterward	H3651	saith	the LORD	I will deliver	H853	Zedekiah	king
H310		H5002	H3068	H5414		H6667	H4428
וְהָיָה	וְאֵת	עֲבָדָיו	וְאֵת	הָעָם	וְאֵת	הַנִּשְׁאָרִים	
of Judah	H853	and his servants	H853	and the people	H853	and such as are left	
H3063		H5650		H5971		H7604	
בְּעִיר	הַזֹּאת	מִן	הַדָּבָר	מִן	חֶרֶב	וּמִן	
in this city	H2063	H4480	from the pestilence	H4480	from the sword	H4480	
H5892			H1698		H2719		
וּמִן	הָרָעָב	וּבְיַד	נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר	מֶלֶךְ	בָּבֶל	לְ	
	and from the famine	and into the hand	of Nebuchadrezzar	king	of Babylon		
	H7458	H3027	H5019	H4428	H894		
וּבְיַד	אֹיְבֵיהֶם	וּבְיַד	מְבַקְשֵׁי	נַפְשָׁם			
and into the hand	of their enemies	and into the hand	of those that seek	their life			
H3027	H341	H3027	H1245	H5315			
וְהָכָה	לָפִי	חֶרֶב	לֹא	יִחַס			
and he shall smite	them with the edge	from the sword	H3808	he shall not spare			
H5221	H6310	H2719		H2347			
וְלֹא	יִחַמְּלֻ	וְלֹא	יִרְחַם:				
H5921	H3808	H3808	H7355				
	them neither have pity		nor have mercy				
	H2550						

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 37:17 (Kingdom): Then Zedekiah the king sent, and took him out: and the king asked him secretly in his house, and said, Is there any word from the

LORD? And Jeremiah said, There is: for, said he, thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon.

Ezekiel 7:9 (References Lord): And mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: I will recompense thee according to thy ways and thine abominations that are in the midst of thee; and ye shall know that I am the LORD that smiteth.

Jeremiah 13:14 (Grace): And I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together, saith the LORD: I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them.

Deuteronomy 28:50 (Parallel theme): A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young:

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