

Jeremiah 22:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I will prepare destroyers against thee, every one with his weapons: and they shall cut down thy choice cedars, and cast them into the fire.

Analysis

I will prepare destroyers against thee, every one with his weapons—the Hebrew vekidashti alayich mashchitim (וְקִדַּשְׁתִּי עָלֶיךָ מַשְׁחִיתִים) literally means 'I will consecrate against you destroyers.' The verb qadash (קָדַשׁ) typically means 'sanctify' or 'set apart for holy purpose.' This jarring usage—consecrating instruments of judgment—shows that the Babylonian army is God's ordained tool, sanctified for the work of destruction. Mashchitim (מַשְׁחִיתִים, 'destroyers') comes from the root shachat (שָׁחַת), meaning to ruin or corrupt. These aren't random invaders but divinely appointed agents of covenant curses (Deuteronomy 28:49-52).

And they shall cut down thy choice cedars, and cast them into the fire—mivchar arazim (מִבְּחָר אֲרָזִים, 'choice cedars') refers both literally to the cedar-paneled palace (v. 14) and metaphorically to Judah's nobility and strength. The verb karat (כָּרַת, 'cut down') is used for covenant-breaking and execution. Cedar, symbol of Lebanon's glory (v. 6), becomes fuel for fire—a deliberate reversal. Just as Solomon imported Lebanon's cedars for temple splendor (1 Kings 5:6), so Babylon will reduce that splendor to ashes. Fire (esh, אֵשׁ) represents complete consumption and divine judgment (Deuteronomy 4:24).

Historical Context

The Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem in 586 BC fulfilled this prophecy literally. 2 Kings 25:9 records: 'And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire.' The cedar-paneled palace that Jehoiakim built (v. 14) was reduced to rubble and ash. The Hebrew term 'consecrate' (qadash) for destroyers is theologically significant: it shows God actively orchestrating judgment through pagan armies, as He did with Assyria (Isaiah 10:5-6) and later Babylon. This pattern appears throughout Scripture: God raises up enemies as judgment for covenant unfaithfulness (Judges 2:14-15, Habakkuk 1:6). The NT continues this principle: Romans 13:4 calls governing authorities 'ministers of God' who execute wrath. The 'choice cedars' imagery connects to Ezekiel 17:1-10, where the top of the cedar (Judah's king) is plucked off—both prophecies fulfilled when Jehoiachin was taken captive to Babylon.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What does God's 'consecrating' of pagan destroyers teach about His sovereignty over all nations and ability to use anyone as instruments of His purposes?
2. How does the cutting down of 'choice cedars' symbolize the reversal of royal privilege and the destruction of what was built in disobedience?
3. What does the complete consumption by fire reveal about the finality and thoroughness of covenant judgment?

Interlinear Text

וְקִדְשָׁתִי י	עַל יָב	מַשְׁחֹת יָם	אֶיֶשׁ	וְכָל יוֹ
And I will prepare	H5921	destroyers	against thee every one	with his weapons
H6942		H7843	H376	H3627
וְכָרְתוּ	מִבְּחַר	אַרְזֵי יָב	וְהִפֹּיִלּוּ	עַל הָאֵשׁ:
and they shall cut down	thy choice	cedars	and cast	them into the fire
H3772	H4005	H730	H5307	H784

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 37:24 (Parallel theme): By thy servants hast thou reproached the Lord, and hast said, By the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon; and I will cut down the tall cedars thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the height of his border, and the forest of his Carmel.

Jeremiah 21:14 (Parallel theme): But I will punish you according to the fruit of your doings, saith the LORD: and I will kindle a fire in the forest thereof, and it shall devour all things round about it.