

Jeremiah 25:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

Analysis

And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. The specification of *shiv'im shānâ* (שבעים שנה, seventy years) is one of Scripture's most precise and significant time prophecies. The number seventy carries symbolic weight—ten (completion) times seven (perfection/covenant). This period corresponds to the seventy missed Sabbath years (2 Chronicles 36:21; Leviticus 26:34-35). For 490 years, Israel failed to observe the seventh-year land rest; now the land would forcibly rest for seventy years.

This prophecy was precisely fulfilled. From Nebuchadnezzar's first siege of Jerusalem (605 BC) to Cyrus's decree allowing return (538 BC) was approximately 67-70 years, depending on which events mark beginning and end. Daniel understood this prophecy and used it to calculate the time for return (Daniel 9:2). The specificity of this prediction demonstrates prophetic authenticity—this wasn't vague fortune-telling but precise divine revelation. It also reveals God's sovereign control over history, accomplishing His purposes on His exact timetable.

Historical Context

The seventy-year prophecy shaped Jewish hope during exile. Knowing the duration prevented despair ('this will never end') and false optimism ('this will end immediately'). It required faith to believe God's word when circumstances seemed

hopeless. When Cyrus issued his decree in 538 BC (Ezra 1:1-4), Jewish exiles recognized the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy and responded in faith. The precision of fulfillment vindicated Jeremiah against the false prophets who had promised immediate deliverance.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does the specificity of the seventy-year prophecy demonstrate the difference between true biblical prophecy and vague predictions?
2. What does the correlation between seventy years of exile and seventy missed Sabbath years teach about God's justice and the consequences of accumulated disobedience?
3. How should precisely fulfilled prophecies like this strengthen our confidence in unfulfilled biblical prophecies about Christ's return and final judgment?

Interlinear Text

וְהָיְתָה H1961	כָּל H3605	הָאָרֶץ H776	הִזְאת H2063	לְחֵרָבָה H2723
		And this whole land		shall be a desolation
לְשֹׂמָה H8047	וְעָבְדוּ H5647	הַגּוֹיִם H1471	הָאֵלֶּה H428	אֶת־מֶלֶךְ H853 H4428
and an astonishment	shall serve	and these nations		the king
בָּבֶל H894	שִׁבְעִים H7657	שָׁנָה H8141		
of Babylon	seventy	years		

Additional Cross-References

Daniel 9:2 (Kingdom): In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

Zechariah 1:12 (Parallel theme): Then the angel of the LORD answered and said, O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?

Jeremiah 25:12 (Kingdom): And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.

Zechariah 7:5 (Parallel theme): Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?

Jeremiah 4:27 (Parallel theme): For thus hath the LORD said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end.