

Jeremiah 25:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. The phrase *bimlōʾt shivʿîm shānâ* (בְּהִלָּאֵת שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה, when seventy years are fulfilled) indicates precise divine timing. The verb *pāqad* (פָּקַד, punish/visit in judgment) applies to Babylon just as it applied to Judah. Though God used Babylon as His instrument, their brutal excesses and proud arrogance warranted judgment (Isaiah 47; Jeremiah 50-51).

This reveals a crucial theological principle: God holds accountable those He uses to judge others. Assyria faced judgment for pride despite being God's 'rod of anger' (Isaiah 10:5-19). Rome would be destroyed despite executing God's judgment on Jerusalem in AD 70. Being God's instrument doesn't excuse moral responsibility for how that role is executed. Babylon's sin wasn't conquering Judah (God commanded this) but their cruelty, pride, and idolatry in doing so. The phrase *lēḥorēbōt ʾôlām* (לְחֻרְבוֹת עוֹלָם, perpetual desolations) pronounced on Babylon would be even more complete than Judah's—Babylon would never be restored as Judah was.

Historical Context

Babylon fell to Cyrus the Persian in 539 BC, just 66 years after Nebuchadnezzar's first conquest of Jerusalem. The prophecy's fulfillment was dramatic—Daniel 5 records the fall of Babylon the very night of Belshazzar's feast. Though the city survived initially, it gradually declined until by the Christian era it was deserted ruins. Isaiah 13-14 and Jeremiah 50-51 prophesied Babylon's perpetual desolation, fulfilled more completely than Judah's temporary exile. Archaeological excavations reveal a magnificent ancient city now uninhabited desert—a testimony to fulfilled prophecy.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does God's judgment on Babylon demonstrate that being used by God doesn't exempt one from moral accountability?
2. What does the greater severity of Babylon's judgment (perpetual versus temporary) teach about degrees of accountability based on knowledge and privilege?
3. How should this principle—that God judges those who execute His judgments—shape our understanding of national and political powers today?

Interlinear Text

שָׁנָה ה	שִׁבְעִים יָמִים	כָּמֹל אוֹת	וְהָיָה ה
H8141	H7657	H4390	H1961
years	And it shall come to pass when seventy	are accomplished	
הָיָה וְאֵל	הַגּוֹי וְעַל	בָּבֶל מֶלֶךְ	עַל
H1931	H1471	H5921	H5921
and that nation	of Babylon	the king	that I will punish
	H894	H4428	H6485
כִּשְׂדֵי יָמִים	אֶרֶץ וְעַל	עוֹנֵם	אֶת יְהוָה ה
H3778	H776	H5771	H3068
of the Chaldeans	and the land	for their iniquity	saith the LORD
	H5921	H853	H5002
עוֹלָם:	לְשִׁמְמֹת וְאֵת	וְיַשְׁמִתִּי	
H5769	H8077	H853	H7760
it perpetual	desolations	and will make	

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 13:19 (Kingdom): And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

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.

Jeremiah 29:10 (Sin): For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

Isaiah 14:23 (References Lord): I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the LORD of hosts.