

Jeremiah 25:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them also: and I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the works of their own hands.

Analysis

For many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them also: and I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the works of their own hands. This verse predicts Babylon's eventual subjugation—the empire that enslaved others would itself be enslaved. The phrase 'ābēdū bām (עבדו בם, shall serve themselves of them) employs the same verb used for Judah serving Babylon, emphasizing poetic justice. The oppressor becomes the oppressed. The principle gāmal (גמל, recompense/repay) appears throughout Scripture: 'whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap' (Galatians 6:7).

The phrase kēmip'ālām ûkēma'āsē yēdēhem (כמפיקם וכמעשה ידיהם, according to their deeds and according to the works of their hands) emphasizes proportional justice—God's judgment corresponds precisely to the sin committed. This isn't arbitrary wrath but measured response to specific evil. The Medo-Persian Empire would conquer Babylon (539 BC), followed by Greece and Rome. The mighty empire that seemed invincible would be reduced to perpetual ruins, demonstrating no human power stands permanently apart from God's sovereign will.

Historical Context

Babylon's fall to Cyrus the Persian (539 BC) fulfilled this prophecy within Jeremiah's predicted timeframe. The Medes and Persians ('many nations and great kings') conquered the empire. Later, Alexander the Great's Greek armies and

finally Rome controlled the territory. Babylon's gradual decline into uninhabited ruins fulfilled the prophecy of perpetual desolation. The principle of divine recompense—that nations reap what they sow—appears throughout history. Powers that build empires on violence and oppression eventually collapse.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 – Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does the principle that oppressors eventually face oppression demonstrate God's justice in history?
2. What does 'recompense according to their deeds' teach about the precision and fairness of divine judgment?
3. How should the certainty that God judges powerful nations and empires shape Christian engagement with political power and national pride?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	עָבֹדוּ	בְּמָ	גַּם	הַמָּה	גַּוְעַם	רַבְּ יִם	וְמֶלֶךְ יִם
H3588	shall serve	H0	H1571	H1992	nations	For many	kings
	H5647			H1471	H7227		H4428

לְהָם יְמִינֵיכֶם וְשִׁלְמָתֵיכֶם וְגָדוֹלֵיכֶם
and great themselves of them also and I will recompense

אֶל-מְנֻעָל הַמְּנֻעָשֶׁן וְאֶל-יָדָם:

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 51:6 (Parallel theme): Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD'S vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence.

Jeremiah 50:9 (Parallel theme): For, lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country: and they shall set themselves in array against her; from thence she shall be taken: their arrows shall be as of a mighty expert man; none shall return in vain.

Jeremiah 27:7 (Kingdom): And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him.

Jeremiah 50:41 (Kingdom): Behold, a people shall come from the north, and a great nation, and many kings shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth.
