

Jeremiah 25:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations.

Analysis

Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant—The designation of pagan Nebuchadnezzar as ‘abdî (עבדִי, my servant) is theologically stunning. This term typically refers to faithful servants like Moses, David, and the prophets. Here it identifies the brutal Babylonian king as God's instrument for executing judgment. God sovereignly uses even pagan rulers to accomplish His purposes (Isaiah 10:5-19, 45:1-7). Nebuchadnezzar doesn't serve God consciously or willingly, yet he fulfills divine purposes nonetheless.

And will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations. The Hebrew *hāram* (הָרָם, utterly destroy) is the term for holy war, complete destruction devoted to God. The phrase *lēshammâ ūlišrēqâ ūlēhorēbōt 'olām* (לְשָׁמָם וּלְשָׁרְבָּם עַלְּמָם) for astonishment, hissing, and perpetual desolations) describes total devastation that becomes a proverbial warning to others. This wasn't merely political defeat but divine judgment making Judah an object lesson.

Historical Context

Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562 BC) built the Neo-Babylonian Empire into the ancient world's dominant power. His campaigns devastated the Levant—conquering Jerusalem in 597 BC, destroying it in 586 BC, and deporting the population. Archaeological evidence confirms widespread destruction of Judean cities during this period. The 'nations round about' also fell—Egypt, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Tyre—fulfilling this prophecy precisely. Babylon became God's rod of anger against covenant-breaking peoples.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What does God's use of a pagan king as 'my servant' teach about divine sovereignty over human history?
2. How should we understand God's judgment making Judah 'an astonishment and hissing'—was this merely punitive or also redemptive in purpose?
3. In what ways might God use secular authorities and even hostile powers to accomplish His purposes today?

Interlinear Text

צָפֵן וְלֹא	מִשְׁפָּחָה וְתִּבְנָה	שֶׁלְכָה	אֶת וְלִקְחָתִי	כָּל	אֶת וְלִקְחָתִי	שֶׁלְכָה	הַבְּנָה וְ
H2005 Behold I will send	H853 and take	H3605 all the families	H4940 of the north				
H7971	H3947	H4940	H6828				
עֲבָדִי בְּבָבִל מֶלֶךְ נָאָמָן	נְבֻכָּדְרָאָצָר וְאֶל יְהָוָה נָאָמָן	מֶלֶךְ בְּבָבִל	עֲבָדִי בְּבָבִל מֶלֶךְ נָאָמָן				
H5002 saith the LORD	H413 and Nebuchadrezzar	H4428 the king	H894 of Babylon	H5650 my servant			
H3068	H5019	H4428	H894	H5650			
וְעַל הַזָּאת יָבֹב אֶת יָם	בְּאֵין יָם וְעַל הַזָּאת יָבֹב אֶת יָם						
and will bring	H5921 them against this land	H776	H2063	H5921			
H935							
וְשַׁבְּ יְהָוָה כָּל וְעַל			הַגּוֹן מִ				
and against the inhabitants	H5921	H3605	thereof and against all these nations				
H3427			H1471				
וְשִׁמְתִּים יְמִינָה יְמִינָה כָּל יְבָשָׂה וְאֶלְעָם							
H428	round about	and will utterly destroy	them and make				
H5439		H2763	H7760				
עוֹלָם: וְלִשְׁמַעַת וְלִשְׁמַעַת וְלִשְׁמַעַת וְלִשְׁמַעַת							
them an astonishment	H8322 and an hissing	H2723 desolations	H5769 and perpetual				
H8047							

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 18:16 (Sin): To make their land desolate, and a perpetual hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished, and wag his head.

Isaiah 13:3 (Parallel theme): I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness.

Jeremiah 1:15 (Kingdom): For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith the LORD; and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah.

Jeremiah 43:10 (Kingdom): And say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid; and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them.

Isaiah 39:7 (Kingdom): And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

Jeremiah 24:9 (Kingdom): And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them.

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