

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 ‘abḏî (עֲבָדִי, 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 ḥāram (חָרַם, utterly destroy) is the term for holy war, complete destruction devoted to God. The phrase lēšammâ ûlišrêqâ ûlēḥorēbōt ‘ôlām (לְשַׁמָּה וּלְשַׂרְקָה וּלְחָרְבוֹת עוֹלָם, 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

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|--|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| הֲנִי י | שֶׁלִּי הֵ | אֶת וְלִקְחֹתִי | כָּל | מִשְׁפָּחֹת וְ | צָפֹן וְ | |
| H2005 | Behold I will send H7971 | and take H3947 | H853 | H3605 | all the families H4940 | of the north H6828 |
| נֹאמֶה | יְהוָה הֵ | וְנִבְּכַדְרֵאֲצָר | מֶלֶךְ | בָּבֶל | עַבְדִּי | |
| saith H5002 | the LORD H3068 | H413 and Nebuchadrezzar H5019 | the king H4428 | of Babylon H894 | my servant H5650 | |
| וְהָבִי אֶת יָמָם | עַל | הָאָרֶץ | הַזֹּאת | וְעַל | | |
| and will bring H935 | H5921 | them against this land H776 | H2063 | H5921 | | |
| וְשָׁבִי יָהּ | | כָּל וְעַל | הַגּוֹיִם | | | |
| and against the inhabitants H3427 | | H5921 | H3605 | thereof and against all these nations H1471 | | |
| הָאָ לָהּ | סָבִיב | וְהָ חֲרַמְתָּ יָמָם | וְשִׁמְתִּים | | | |
| H428 | round about H5439 | and will utterly destroy H2763 | them and make H7760 | | | |
| לְשֹׁמֵה | וְלִשְׂרָקָה | וְלִחְרָב וְ | עוֹלָם: | | | |
| them an astonishment H8047 | and an hissing H8322 | desolations H2723 | and perpetual H5769 | | | |

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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