

Jeremiah 27:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him.

Analysis

And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant—This verse contains a shocking declaration: Nebuchadnezzar, the pagan destroyer of Jerusalem, is called **my servant** ('avdi, 'אָבִד). This title typically designates chosen instruments of God's purposes (Moses, David, the prophets, and supremely the Messiah in Isaiah 42-53). God takes full responsibility—I **have given** (natati, נָתַת, perfect tense indicating completed action)—for Babylon's dominion. This was not merely God 'allowing' or 'permitting' Nebuchadnezzar's conquests; God actively ordained them.

The phrase **and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him** establishes Nebuchadnezzar's dominion as comprehensive—extending even to the animal kingdom, echoing the Edenic mandate (Genesis 1:26-28) and anticipating the messianic kingdom where creation submits to God's appointed ruler (Isaiah 11:6-9). This language presents Nebuchadnezzar as a type of Adam-figure with universal dominion, though under God's sovereignty. The theological point is critical: resistance to Babylon was resistance to God's ordained purposes. This doesn't absolve Babylon's brutality—they would later be judged for their pride and cruelty (Jeremiah 50-51)—but for this season, God was using them as His instrument of discipline.

Historical Context

Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562 BC) was the most powerful ruler of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. He defeated Egypt at Carchemish (605 BC), besieged Jerusalem three times (605, 597, 586 BC), destroyed the temple, and deported the Jewish elite. Archaeological excavations at Babylon reveal his massive building projects including the Ishtar Gate and the possible Hanging Gardens. The title 'my servant' applied to this pagan oppressor would have scandalized Jewish nationalism, yet God used him to accomplish divine purposes: purging idolatry from Israel, humbling national pride, and preparing for exile's refining work. Daniel 4 records Nebuchadnezzar's eventual acknowledgment of Yahweh's sovereignty, suggesting God's purposes included even this king's spiritual awakening.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How should we respond when God uses ungodly leaders or difficult circumstances to accomplish His purposes in our lives?
2. What does it mean that God can call someone 'my servant' who doesn't acknowledge Him or serve Him willingly?
3. How do we reconcile God's sovereignty in ordaining difficult circumstances with the reality that He will judge those who carry out evil?

Interlinear Text

הָעֵת הַזֶּה	אָנֹכִי	נָתַתִּי	אַתָּה	כָּל	הַאֲכֹז וְתָהָא	לְהָאָזֶן
H6258	H595	And now have I given	H853	H3605	all these lands	H428
		H5414			H776	
בְּ יָדָךְ	מֶלֶךְ	בְּ יָדָךְ	עֲבָדִיךְ	בְּ יָדָךְ	בְּ יָדָךְ	בְּ יָדָךְ
into the hand	of Nebuchadnezzar	the king	of Babylon	my servant		
H3027	H5019	H4428	H894	H5650	H1571	H853
חַיִת	בְּשָׂדֶה	נָתַתִּי	לְ	לְעַבְדָּוֹן		
and the beasts	of the field	And now have I given	H0	him also to serve		
H2416	H7704	H5414		H5647		

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 28:14 (Kingdom): For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they shall serve him: and I have given him the beasts of the field also.

Jeremiah 25:9 (Kingdom): 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.

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 44:28 (Parallel theme): That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.