

Jeremiah 28:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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 פִּיכָּה אָמַר יְהֹוָה אֲבָאֹת...עַל בָּرֶזֶל גַּתְתִּי עַל-צְוָאָר) ki-khoh amar YHWH tseva'ot...ol barzel natatti al-tsavvar kol-haggoym ha'eleh la'avod et-n'vukhadnetsar melekh-bavel va'avaduhu—God explicitly claims authorship of Babylon's dominance: **I have put** (נָתַתִּי, natatti) the iron yoke. The verb **עבד** (avad, 'serve') appears twice—**that they may serve...and they shall serve**—emphasizing inevitability. Even **beasts of the field** (חַתָּת הַשְׁמַדָּה, chayyat hassadeh) are given to Nebuchadnezzar, echoing Daniel 2:38's vision of Babylonian empire.

This theology is crucial: Babylon isn't merely human empire succeeding through military might; it's divine instrument of judgment. God has actively placed nations under Babylonian rule for specific purposes. Resisting Babylon equals resisting God's appointed judgment. This doesn't make Babylon righteous (God later judges Babylon too, Jer 50-51), but it makes current submission wise. Sometimes God uses wicked instruments to discipline His people; opposing the instrument means opposing the Discipliner.

Historical Context

Nebuchadnezzar's empire (605-539 BC) dominated the ancient Near East comprehensively, from Egypt to Elam. Daniel 2:37-38 explicitly states God gave Nebuchadnezzar this universal dominion. Jeremiah's counsel to submit wasn't political defeatism but theological realism—recognizing God's sovereignty over international affairs. Other prophets (Habakkuk, Ezekiel) similarly acknowledged Babylon as divine instrument.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How do you recognize when opposition to human powers actually opposes God's purposes?
2. What does it mean that God uses wicked instruments to accomplish His righteous purposes?
3. When might submission to unjust authorities reflect wisdom rather than compromise?

Interlinear Text

עַל	יִשְׁרָאֵל	לְאֱלֹהִים	צָבָא	וְתִיְהַנְּה	אֱמֶר	כֹּה	כִּי
H3588	H3541	For thus saith	H559	the LORD	H3068	of hosts	H6635
בְּרִיךְ	לְהָ	גָּגָן	מִ	כָּל	צַו	אַרְנָן	עַל
לְ	בְּ	מִ	כָּל	צַו	אַרְנָן	עַל	נָתַתִּי
of iron	I have put	H5921	upon the neck	H6677		of all these nations	H428
H1270	H5414						
וְעַבְדֵּנִי	הָ	מִלְּמָדָה	לְ	מֶלֶךְ	נֶבֶכְדָּנְאָצָר	אֶת	יְעַבְדֵּנִי
and they shall serve	H853	Nebuchadnezzar	H5019	king	H4428	of Babylon	H894
H5647							
לְ	נָתַתִּי	פְּשָׁدֵךְ	הַ	מִלְּמָדָה	אֶת	וְעַבְדֵּנִי	לְ
H1571	H853	him the beasts	H2416	of the field	H7704	I have put	H0

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 28:48 (References Lord): Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee.

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