

Jeremiah 34:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and all his army, and all the kingdoms of the earth of his dominion, and all the people, fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities thereof, saying,

Analysis

The word which came unto Jeremiah from the LORD, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and all his army, and all the kingdoms of the earth of his dominion, and all the people, fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities thereof, saying, This introductory verse sets the historical crisis context: Jerusalem under siege by the full might of Babylon's empire. The comprehensive description—"all his army," "all the kingdoms of the earth of his dominion," "all the people"—emphasizes overwhelming force. Yet even in this desperate moment, "the word... came unto Jeremiah from the LORD," demonstrating that God speaks precisely when human hope seems extinguished.

The phrase "kingdoms of the earth of his dominion" reveals Babylon's vassals participated in Jerusalem's siege—nations Judah once allied with now joined their conquest. This fulfilled the covenant curse that enemies would consume what Israel built (Deuteronomy 28:30-33). The irony is profound: political alliances Judah trusted, violating God's commands to trust Him alone, now turned against them.

Theologically, this verse teaches:

1. God's word comes in crisis, not just comfort

2. prophetic ministry continues even when situations appear hopeless
3. political and military circumstances don't silence God's voice
4. human alliances fail, but God's word endures.

The Reformed emphasis on Scripture's sufficiency finds support here—God's word addresses real historical crises with divine authority transcending human power.

Historical Context

This occurred during the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem (588-586 BCE), when Nebuchadnezzar mobilized his entire empire against the rebel vassal Zedekiah. Archaeological evidence from the Lachish Letters documents this period's desperation as Judean cities fell one by one. The phrase "all the kingdoms... of his dominion" reflects historical reality: Babylon controlled the ancient Near East from Egypt's border to Persia, commanding tributaries to provide troops.

The systematic reduction of Judean cities (verse 7 mentions Lachish and Azekeh) preceded Jerusalem's final assault. This fulfills the prophetic pattern: judgment begins at the periphery, moving inexorably toward the center. Jerusalem's false confidence in inviolability ("the temple of the LORD," 7:4) proved hollow when covenant violations removed divine protection. History demonstrates that religious institutions without genuine covenant faithfulness provide no security.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does God's continued speaking through crisis encourage faith when circumstances seem desperate?

2. In what ways do failed political or personal alliances reveal the futility of trusting created things rather than the Creator?
3. How should awareness that God's word addresses real historical situations affect our approach to Scripture?

Interlinear Text

וְהָיָה The word H1697	אֲשֶׁר H834	הָיָה H1961	אֵל H413	וַיָּרֶם H3414	מֵאֵת H853	יְהוָה H3068
וּנְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר when Nebuchadnezzar H5019	מֶלֶךְ king H4428	בָּבֶל of Babylon H894	וְכָל H3605	חֵיל וְ and all his army H2428	וְכָל H3605	
מַמְלָכֹת and all the kingdoms H4467	אֶרֶץ of the earth H776	מִמֶּשֶׁלֶת H4475	וְ H3027	יָד וְ of his dominion H3605	וְכָל H3605	
וְכָל and all the people H5971	הָעַם יָם fought H3898	עַל H5921	יְרוּשָׁלַם against Jerusalem H3389	וְעַל H5921	כָּל H3605	
וְעַל יְהוָה and against all the cities H5892	וְעַל יְהוָה thereof saying H559					

Additional Cross-References

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 32:2 (Kingdom): For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem: and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which was in the king of Judah's house.

