

# Jeremiah 34:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Go and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah, and tell him, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire:

## Analysis

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**Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Go and speak to Zedekiah king of Judah, and tell him, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire:** God commands Jeremiah to deliver an unambiguous message of doom directly to King Zedekiah. The double formula "Thus saith the LORD" emphasizes divine authority —this is not Jeremiah's opinion but God's certain decree. The phrase "the God of Israel" (Elohei Yisrael) is laden with covenant irony: Israel's covenant God now decrees Israel's capital's destruction. The Hebrew construction "I will give" (natati) uses the prophetic perfect tense, indicating certainty as though already accomplished.

**He shall burn it with fire** fulfills the covenant curse of Deuteronomy 28:52: God warned that disobedience would bring enemy destruction of fortified cities. Archaeological excavation of Jerusalem's destruction layers confirms widespread burning from Babylon's 586 BCE assault. The fire represents not merely military strategy but divine judgment—God's holiness consuming what covenant violation defiled.

Theologically, this verse demonstrates:

1. Prophetic messages often contradict human hope but fulfill divine justice

2. God's covenant relationship intensifies judgment when violated—"the God of Israel" destroys Israel's city
3. divine sovereignty governs historical outcomes—Nebuchadnezzar acts as God's instrument
4. prophets must speak unwelcome truth despite personal cost or royal opposition.

The Reformed understanding that God ordains all events, including judgment, finds clear biblical warrant here.

## Historical Context

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This prophecy came during the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem (588-586 BCE), when Zedekiah desperately sought deliverance. Jeremiah's consistent message contradicted the false prophets who promised peace (Jeremiah 28). Zedekiah, installed as Babylon's puppet king after Jehoiachin's exile (597 BCE), rebelled by making alliances with Egypt, violating his oath to Nebuchadnezzar (Ezekiel 17:13-19). This rebellion combined political treachery with covenant violation—trusting Egypt rather than God (Isaiah 31:1). The prophecy's literal fulfillment (2 Kings 25:8-10) validated Jeremiah's ministry and demonstrated God's word's absolute reliability.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. How should Christians respond when God's clear word contradicts cultural optimism or personal preference?
2. What does Zedekiah's response to unwelcome prophecy reveal about our hearts when confronted with biblical truth we'd rather not hear?
3. In what ways does God's use of foreign nations as judgment instruments challenge simplistic 'God and country' nationalism?

## Interlinear Text

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כִּי אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
H3541 Thus saith the LORD of Israel Go  
H559 H3068 H430 H3478 H1980 H559 H413

יְהוָה אָמַר כְּלָגֵל צָדְקָתְךָ הַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוּדָה  
to Zedekiah king of Judah Thus saith the LORD  
H6667 H4428 H3063 H559 H413 H3541 H559 H3068

וְנִתְּנֶה בְּעָרָת בְּיַד הַמֶּלֶךְ  
Behold I will give this city into the hand king  
H2005 H5414 H853 H5892 H2063 H3027 H4428

בְּאָשָׁה וְשִׁרְפָּה בְּבָבִל  
of Babylon and he shall burn it with fire  
H894 H8313 H784

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 21:10** (Kingdom): For I have set my face against this city for evil, and not for good, saith the LORD: it shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire.

**Jeremiah 34:22** (References Lord): Behold, I will command, saith the LORD, and cause them to return to this city; and they shall fight against it, and take it, and burn it with fire: and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without an inhabitant.

**Jeremiah 32:3** (Kingdom): For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, Wherefore dost thou prophesy, and say, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it;