

Jeremiah 34:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When the king of Babylon's army fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities of Judah that were left, against Lachish, and against Azekah: for these defenced cities remained of the cities of Judah.

Analysis

When the king of Babylon's army fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities of Judah that were left, against Lachish, and against Azekah: for these defenced cities remained of the cities of Judah. This verse provides the critical historical context: Jeremiah's prophecy came during active siege warfare when hope seemed plausible. The phrase "all the cities of Judah that were left" (kol-'arei Yehudah hanish'arot) indicates most of Judah had already fallen—only the strongest fortifications remained. The specific mention of **Lachish** and **Azekah** as the last "defenced cities" ('arei mivtzar—fortified cities) has extraordinary archaeological confirmation.

The Lachish Letters, discovered in 1930s excavations, include one stating: "We are watching for the signals of Lachish... for we cannot see Azekah." This poignant message likely indicates Azekah had just fallen, exactly matching Jeremiah's description that these two fortresses were the last before Jerusalem itself. The systematic reduction of outlying defenses before assaulting the capital was standard Babylonian siege strategy, demonstrating Nebuchadnezzar's methodical military competence.

Theologically, the verse teaches:

1. God's word addresses real historical crises, not abstract spiritual truths disconnected from circumstances
2. prophecy comes precisely when human hope remains, testing whether hearers will trust God's word or visible circumstances
3. military strength and fortifications provide no security when God decrees judgment
4. archaeological evidence confirms Scripture's historical reliability, strengthening confidence in its spiritual authority.

Historical Context

Lachish and Azekah were Judah's two strongest fortresses after Jerusalem. Lachish, southwest of Jerusalem, guarded the approaches from Philistia and Egypt. Azekah, in the Shephelah, controlled the valley routes. Both cities had massive walls and strategic importance. Archaeological excavations at Lachish reveal dramatic destruction layers from 586 BCE, including arrowheads, evidence of fire, and mass burial sites from the siege. The Lachish Letters—ostraca (inscribed pottery shards) containing military correspondence—provide rare firsthand documentation confirming biblical narrative details. This historical specificity demonstrates Scripture's accuracy and roots biblical theology in real events, validating the doctrine of God's active involvement in history.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does archaeological confirmation of biblical details strengthen confidence in Scripture's spiritual teachings?

2. What does the systematic fall of fortified cities teach about the futility of trusting human strength rather than God?
3. How should believers respond when God's word contradicts apparently favorable circumstances or human calculations of probability?

Interlinear Text

וְהָיָה army H2428	מֶלֶךְ When the king H4428	בְּבָבֶל of Babylon's H894	נִלְחָמִים fought H3898	עַל H5921	יְרוּשָׁלַם against Jerusalem H3389	וְעַל H5921
כָּל H3605	עָרֵי and against all the cities H5892	יְהוּדָה of Judah H3063	הַנּוֹתָר וְ that were left H3498	אֶל H413	לְכִישׁ against Lachish H3923	וְאֶל H413
עֶזְקָה and against Azekah H5825	כִּי H3588	וְהָיָה H2007	נִשְׁאַר remained H7604	עָרֵי and against all the cities H5892	יְהוּדָה of Judah H3063	
עָרֵי and against all the cities H5892	מִבְּצָרֵי for these defenced H4013					

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 10:3 (Kingdom): Wherefore Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem sent unto Hoham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of Lachish, and unto Debir king of Eglon, saying,

Jeremiah 4:5 (References Jerusalem): Declare ye in Judah, and publish in Jerusalem; and say, Blow ye the trumpet in the land: cry, gather together, and say, Assemble yourselves, and let us go into the defenced cities.

Joshua 15:35 (Parallel theme): Jarmuth, and Adullam, Socoh, and Azekah,