

Jeremiah 38:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus saith the LORD, This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it.

Analysis

This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it (נָתַן תִּנָּתֵן הָעִיר הַזֹּאת בְּיַד־חֵיל מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל)—The emphatic Hebrew construction naton tinnaten (infinitive absolute with finite verb) intensifies the certainty: Jerusalem will surely, certainly, inevitably be given over. This was not defeatism or treason but divine revelation of God's sovereign decree.

Jeremiah consistently proclaimed that Babylonian conquest was God's judgment for Judah's covenant violations—idolatry, social injustice, and false worship (7:1-15, 25:1-14). Submission to Nebuchadnezzar was submission to God's chastening hand; resistance was rebellion against the Almighty. The phrase 'shall take it' uses lakad (לָכַד), meaning to capture or seize by force, confirming that military resistance was futile.

This theology offended nationalistic pride and seemed to contradict God's promises to preserve David's throne. Yet Jeremiah understood that God's promises depended on covenant faithfulness; persistent rebellion voided the blessings while maintaining the covenant relationship through judgment and restoration. His message anticipated Jesus' prophecy of Jerusalem's destruction (Luke 19:41-44, 21:20-24), where Christ wept over the city's refusal to recognize 'the time of thy visitation.'

Historical Context

This prophecy was spoken during the final Babylonian siege (588-586 BC). Jeremiah had proclaimed this message for decades—from Josiah's reign through Zedekiah's (25:1-3). The siege lasted eighteen months, during which Jerusalem suffered horrific famine (Lamentations 4:9-10) before walls were breached in July 586 BC. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the temple, burned the city, and deported most survivors. Jeremiah's prophecy was fulfilled to the letter. Archaeological excavations confirm destruction layers from this period throughout Jerusalem, with arrowheads, burn marks, and collapsed buildings validating the biblical account. Zedekiah's fate particularly fulfilled Jeremiah's warnings (39:4-7).

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How do we distinguish between defeatism and recognizing God's sovereign purposes in difficult circumstances?
2. What does Jeremiah's message teach about the relationship between God's promises and human covenant faithfulness?
3. How should we respond when God's current discipline seems to contradict His ultimate promises?

Interlinear Text

כֹּה	אָמַר	יְהוָה	תִּנָּת	תִּנָּת	הָעִיר	אֵת
H3541	Thus saith	the LORD	be given	be given	This city	H2063
	H559	H3068	H5414	H5414	H5892	
בְּיַד	יְד יָל	מֶלֶךְ	בָּבֶל	ל	וְלִכְדָּה:	
into the hand	army	of the king	of Babylon's	which shall take		
H3027	H2428	H4428	H894	H3920		

Additional Cross-References

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.