

Jeremiah 39:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard left of the poor of the people, which had nothing, in the land of Judah, and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time.

Analysis

But Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard left of the poor of the people, which had nothing, in the land of Judah, and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time. This verse reveals divine mercy within judgment. The poorest citizens—those owning no property and most vulnerable—alone escape exile. The reversal is complete: the wealthy, powerful, and propertied are deported while the poor inherit their lands. This fulfills the prophetic principle that God exalts the humble and humbles the exalted (1 Samuel 2:7-8; Luke 1:52-53).

The phrase "gave them vineyards and fields" suggests systematic land redistribution. Properties previously owned by exiled families now transfer to those who worked them as tenants or laborers. From a human perspective, this represents Babylonian pragmatism—maintaining agricultural production by leaving workers behind. From a theological perspective, it demonstrates God's care for the poor and His work through even pagan policies to accomplish His purposes.

Theologically, this verse teaches:

1. God's special concern for the poor and vulnerable persists even in judgment
2. divine reversals characterize God's kingdom—the last become first
3. material prosperity doesn't insulate from judgment; indeed, it can become occasion for pride and complacency

4. God works providentially through pagan policies to care for His people.

This principle anticipates the gospel's proclamation to the poor (Luke 4:18) and the church's composition primarily from lower social classes (1 Corinthians 1:26-29).

Historical Context

Babylonian administrative policy aimed to maintain economic productivity in conquered territories. Removing population while leaving land fallow would waste resources and create power vacuums inviting Egyptian interference. The "poor of the land" would have been agricultural workers, day laborers, and landless peasants—those dependent on wealthy landowners before the conquest.

The governor Gedaliah, appointed by Babylon (40:5), would oversee this remnant population, encouraging agricultural production (40:10). Archaeological surveys show a dramatic population decline in Judah after 586 BCE but continued agricultural activity, confirming the biblical picture of a decimated but not entirely abandoned land. This remnant community preserved Israelite presence in the land, crucial for later return under Cyrus (537 BCE). God ensured His people never entirely ceased to inhabit the promised land, maintaining covenant continuity.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does God's care for the poorest people even in national judgment challenge our assumptions about blessing and faithfulness?
2. In what ways does this great reversal (poor inheriting what the wealthy lose) anticipate the gospel's message and the kingdom's values?
3. How might material prosperity become a spiritual liability rather than a sign of divine favor?

Interlinear Text

וּמִן	הָעָם	הַדֵּלִים	אֲשֶׁר	אֵין	לָהֶם	מָא וְמָה
H4480	of the people	of the poor	H834	H369	H0	which had nothing
	H5971	H1800				H3972
יָרָא	נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן	רֹב	טִבַּחִים	בְּאֶרֶץ	יְהוּדָה	
left	But Nebuzaradan	the captain	of the guard	in the land	of Judah	
H7604	H5018	H7227	H2876	H776	H3063	
וַיֵּן	לָהֶם	כִּרְמֵי	וּגְבֻלֵם	בַּיּוֹם	הַהוּא:	
and gave	H0	them vineyards	and fields	at the same time	H1931	
H5414		H3754	H3010	H3117		

Additional Cross-References

2 Kings 25:12 (Parallel theme): But the captain of the guard left of the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen.

Jeremiah 40:7 (Parallel theme): Now when all the captains of the forces which were in the fields, even they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam governor in the land, and had committed unto him men, and women, and children, and of the poor of the land, of them that were not carried away captive to Babylon;

Jeremiah 52:16 (Parallel theme): But Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard left certain of the poor of the land for vinedressers and for husbandmen.