

Jeremiah 39:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah before his eyes: also the king of Babylon slew all the nobles of Judah.

Analysis

The king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah before his eyes (לְעֵינָיו, le'eynav)—This brutal act fulfilled both Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's prophecies with horrifying precision. Zedekiah 'saw' (רָאָה, ra'ah) his dynasty destroyed before him—the last sight his eyes would register. His sons, the heirs of David's throne, were executed as traitors.

Also the king of Babylon slew all the nobles of Judah (חֶרְבֵּי יְהוּדָה, chorei yehudah)—The ruling class who counseled rebellion against Babylon (and against God's word through Jeremiah) faced capital punishment. These 'nobles' or 'freemen' had rejected freedom under God's covenant for supposed autonomy, and lost both. The covenant curses included seeing your children destroyed (Deuteronomy 28:32, 41)—visual horror as final earthly memory.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern practice often involved executing royal offspring to prevent future rebellions and eliminate dynastic rivals. The nobles' execution served both as punishment for rebellion and as a terror tactic to discourage future resistance. This systematic elimination of Judah's leadership class left the nation politically decapitated, facilitating Babylonian control.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does the death of Zedekiah's sons demonstrate that covenant rebellion has generational consequences?
2. What does this passage teach about the serious responsibility of leaders who influence others toward or away from God?
3. How does Christ's sacrificial death as David's ultimate Son reverse the curse and secure an eternal kingdom (Luke 1:32-33)?

Interlinear Text

בְּרִבְלָה הַצֹּדְקִי הַוְּ בָנֵי אֶת בְּרִלָּה מִלְּגָדְשׁוּ שְׁחַטְתָּם
in Riblah the sons of Zedekiah of Babylon the king slew

slew Then the king of Babylon of Zedekiah in Riblah
H7819 H4428 H894 H853 H1121 H6667 H7247

מִלְּגָדְשׁוּ שְׁחַטְתָּם יְהוָדָה הַכְּנִים וְאֶת כָּל לְעֵינֵי
Then the king slew of Judah the nobles all before his eyes

before his eyes all the nobles of Judah slew Then the king
H5869 H853 H3605 H2715 H3063 H7819 H4428

בְּרִלָּה
of Babylon
H894

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 52:10 (Kingdom): And the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes: he slew also all the princes of Judah in Riblah.

Jeremiah 21:7 (Kingdom): And afterward, saith the LORD, I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, and his servants, and the people, and such as are left in this city from the pestilence, from the sword, and from the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those that seek their life: and he shall smite them with the edge of the sword; he shall not spare them, neither have pity, nor have mercy.

Deuteronomy 28:34 (Parallel theme): So that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

2 Kings 25:7 (References Babylon): And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon.

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