

Jeremiah 39:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the Chaldeans burned the king's house, and the houses of the people, with fire, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem.

Analysis

The Chaldeans burned the king's house, and the houses of the people, with fire (בָּעֵשׂ שָׂרָפוּ, ba'esh sarafu)—The verb saraph (שָׂרַף) means to burn completely, consume with fire. This was not mere conquest but systematic destruction, fulfilling prophecies that Jerusalem would burn (21:10, 32:29, 34:2, 38:18). Solomon's palace complex, built over 13 years (1 Kings 7:1), became ash in hours. The common houses burned alongside the royal—judgment touches all when covenant is broken.

And brake down the walls of Jerusalem (נָתַץ, natatz)—The verb means to tear down, demolish, raze. Jerusalem's fortifications, strengthened by Hezekiah and subsequent kings, were systematically dismantled. The city that would not be a protective wall for God's glory (Zechariah 2:5) lost its walls entirely. Nehemiah would later weep over these ruins (Nehemiah 1:3) before leading their reconstruction.

Historical Context

The burning occurred one month after the city's breach (52:12-13), allowing time for systematic looting before destruction. The captain of the guard, Nebuzar-adan, oversaw the demolition. Archaeological excavations have found extensive burn layers from 586 BC throughout Jerusalem. The wall destruction was thorough, leaving the city defenseless and uninhabitable for the exile period.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the burning of both palace and common houses show that covenant judgment affects all levels of society?
2. What 'walls' of false security might God need to demolish in your life to rebuild on proper foundation?
3. How does the burning of Jerusalem's temple anticipate its ultimate replacement in Christ (John 2:19-21; Revelation 21:22)?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵת	בֵּית	הַמֶּלֶךְ	וְאֵת	בֵּית	הָעָם	וְשָׂרְפֻהוּ
H853	and the houses	the king's	H853	and the houses	of the people	burned
	H1004	H4428		H1004	H5971	H8313
וְהַכַּשְׂדִּים	בְּאֵשׁ	וְאֵת	חֲמֹת	יְרוּשָׁלַם	נִתְצָו:	
And the Chaldeans	with fire	H853	the walls	of Jerusalem	and brake down	
H3778	H784		H2346	H3389	H5422	

Additional Cross-References

Nehemiah 1:3 (References Jerusalem): And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

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 38:18 (Kingdom): But if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand.

Micah 3:12 (References Jerusalem): Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.

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