

Jeremiah 39:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carried away captive into Babylon the remnant of the people that remained in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to him, with the rest of the people that remained.

Analysis

Then Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carried away captive into Babylon the remnant of the people that remained in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to him, with the rest of the people that remained. Nebuzar-adan appears as God's appointed instrument for executing judgment and exile. The Hebrew title rav-tabachim ("captain of the guard," literally "chief of the executioners") suggests his role overseeing royal security and, in this context, implementing deportation policy. His appearance fulfills Jeremiah's prophecies of exile (20:4-6; 29:1-14).

The verse distinguishes three groups:

1. "remnant... that remained in the city"—survivors of siege and battle
2. "those that fell away, that fell to him"—defectors who surrendered during the siege (as Jeremiah advocated)
3. "the rest of the people that remained"—perhaps those in surrounding territories.

All groups face exile, demonstrating that judgment falls comprehensively, though those who surrendered earlier (verse 10) survived while resisters often died in battle or famine.

Theologically, this verse teaches: (1) Exile fulfills covenant curses for disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:36, 64); (2) God's judgments are comprehensive and thorough; (3) even in judgment, God preserves a remnant for future restoration; (4) the consequences of national sin affect populations broadly, not merely leaders. The exile becomes foundational for later theological reflection (Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel) and shapes Jewish and Christian identity as a pilgrim people awaiting final restoration.

Historical Context

Babylonian deportation policy aimed to eliminate nationalistic resistance by removing leadership, skilled workers, and potential rebels while leaving only the poorest to tend fields (verse 10). This social engineering had been practiced effectively against other conquered nations. Archaeological evidence from Mesopotamia shows Judean exiles living in Babylonian communities, including settlements at Tel-abib (Ezekiel 3:15) and Nippur.

The exile lasted approximately seventy years (586-537 BCE), as Jeremiah prophesied (25:11-12; 29:10). During this period, Judaism underwent profound transformation: synagogue worship developed, Scripture assumed new centrality, and messianic expectations intensified. The exile's historical reality profoundly shaped both Jewish and Christian theology—the people of God became a diaspora community defined more by covenant faithfulness than geographical location, foreshadowing the church's global, dispersed nature (1 Peter 1:1; James 1:1).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the exile's historical reality inform Christian identity as 'exiles and strangers' in the world (1 Peter 2:11)?

2. In what ways does God's preservation of a remnant even in comprehensive judgment demonstrate His covenant faithfulness?
3. How might the exile's profound theological impact encourage you to see God's purposes even in discipline or suffering?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵת	בְּעֵיר	הַנִּשְׁאָרִים	בְּעֵמָה	תַּרְ	וְאֵת
H227	the remnant	of the people	that remained	in the city	H853
	H3499	H5971	H7604	H5892	
וְאֵת	בְּעֵילָה	נִפְלָה	אֲשֶׁר	נִפְלָה	וְאֵת
and those that fell away	H834	and those that fell away	H5307	H5921	H853
	H5307		H5307		
וְאֵת	בְּגִלָּה	הַגִּלָּה	הַגִּלָּה	וְאֵת	נְבָזָרָדָן
the remnant	of the people	that remained	carried away captive	Then Nebuzaradan	
H3499	H5971	H7604	H1540	H5018	
וְאֵת	בְּבָבִלָּה	בְּבָבִלָּה:	בְּבָבִלָּה:	וְאֵת	
the captain	of the guard	into Babylon			
H7227	H2876	H894			

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 40:1 (References Babylon): The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, after that Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he had taken him being bound in chains among all that were carried away captive of Jerusalem and Judah, which were carried away captive unto Babylon.

Genesis 37:36 (Parallel theme): And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard.

Jeremiah 52:26 (References Babylon): So Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard took them, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah.

Jeremiah 10:18 (Parallel theme): For thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will sling out the inhabitants of the land at this once, and will distress them, that they may find it so.

2 Kings 25:11 (References Babylon): Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carry away.

2 Kings 25:20 (References Babylon): And Nebuzar-adan captain of the guard took these, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah:

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