

# Jeremiah 40:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the captain of the guard took Jeremiah, and said unto him, The LORD thy God hath pronounced this evil upon this place.

## Analysis

---

Nebuzar-adan's words to Jeremiah demonstrate remarkable theological awareness for a pagan official: 'The LORD thy God hath pronounced this evil upon this place.' This acknowledgment of Yahweh's sovereignty over Judah's fate vindicates Jeremiah's prophetic ministry. The pagan Babylonian understood what Judah's leaders refused to accept—this judgment came from the God of Israel, not merely Babylonian military prowess. The phrase 'thy God' shows Nebuzar-adan distinguished Jeremiah from other Jews who abandoned their covenant loyalty. The verb 'pronounced' (dibber in Hebrew) indicates definitive divine decree, not arbitrary human action. This public acknowledgment by Israel's conqueror that Judah's fall resulted from divine judgment rather than Babylonian superiority provided theological vindication for Jeremiah's unpopular ministry. It also demonstrated to exiles that Babylon wasn't defeating Yahweh—rather, Yahweh was using Babylon as His instrument of covenant judgment, exactly as Jeremiah prophesied. This pattern of God causing even pagan rulers to acknowledge His sovereignty appears throughout Scripture (see Cyrus in Isaiah 44-45, Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4, Darius in Daniel 6). It confirms that God's purposes will be recognized even by those outside the covenant community.

## Historical Context

---

This conversation occurred at Ramah in 586 BC, shortly after Jerusalem's destruction. That a Babylonian military commander could articulate accurate

Israelite theology reflects either direct instruction from Nebuchadnezzar (who had some theological education about Yahweh through Daniel and others at his court) or observation of Jeremiah's prophetic ministry. Babylon's policy toward conquered peoples included understanding their religious structures and claims, allowing them to identify and leverage pro-Babylonian elements within subjugated populations. Nebuzar-adan's speech also served propaganda purposes: attributing Judah's fall to their own God's judgment rather than Babylonian conquest alone could reduce resistance and bitter resentment among the surviving population. However, the theological accuracy suggests genuine understanding, not mere political manipulation. This represents a recurring biblical pattern where God raises up unlikely witnesses—Pharaoh's magicians (Exodus 8:19), Balaam (Numbers 23-24), the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10), and even demons (Mark 1:24) acknowledging spiritual truth that covenant people miss.

## Related Passages

---

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

## Study Questions

---

1. What does it reveal about human spiritual blindness when pagan conquerors perceive God's judgment more clearly than religious leaders?
2. How does this passage challenge assumptions that only covenant people can recognize God's hand in historical events?
3. In what ways might God use unexpected voices today to confirm His word to those who refuse to hear His appointed messengers?

## Interlinear Text

---

וְקָח	רַב	טֹבַחַיִם	לִירֵמְיָהוּ הוּא	וַיֹּאמֶר	אֵל יוֹ	
<b>took</b>	<b>And the captain</b>	<b>of the guard</b>	<b>Jeremiah</b>	<b>and said</b>		H413
H3947	H7227	H2876	H3414	H559		
יְהוָה	אֱלֹהֵי יְיָ	דִּבֶּר	אֶת	הַרָעָה	הַזֹּאת	אֵל
<b>unto him The LORD</b>	<b>thy God</b>	<b>hath pronounced</b>		<b>this evil</b>		
H3068	H430	H1696	H853	H7451	H2063	H413
הַמָּקוֹם	הַזֶּה:					
<b>upon this place</b>						
H4725	H2088					

---

From KJV Study • [kjvstudy.org](http://kjvstudy.org)