

Jeremiah 43:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I will kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt; and he shall burn them, and carry them away captives: and he shall array himself with the land of Egypt, as a shepherd putteth on his garment; and he shall go forth from thence in peace.

Analysis

And I will kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt (וְהִצְתִּיל אֵשׁ בְּבָתִים אֱלֹהִים)—God takes credit for Babylon's action ('I will kindle'), asserting sovereignty over pagan empire's military campaigns. Egyptian temples, centers of political and economic power, will burn. **He shall burn them, and carry them away captives**—Nebuchadnezzar becomes God's instrument (cf. 25:9, 27:6, 'My servant'), burning shrines and looting divine statues, the ultimate humiliation in ancient Near Eastern warfare.

And he shall array himself with the land of Egypt, as a shepherd putteth on his garment (וְעָטָה אֶת-אֶרְץ מִצְרַיִם כַּאֲשֶׁר יַעֲטָה בָּרֶשֶׁת אֶת-בְּגָדָו)—vivid metaphor: Egypt's wealth wraps around Nebuchadnezzar like a shepherd casually donning his cloak. 'Atah (עָטָה, wrap/clothe) suggests effortless acquisition. **And he shall go forth from thence in peace** (וְיָלֹם מִצְמָה בְּשָׁלוֹם)—successful withdrawal, unscathed, mission accomplished. Pharaoh's impotence contrasts God's omnipotence.

Historical Context

Egyptian religion centered on temple complexes at Thebes, Memphis, Heliopolis. Babylonian desecration of these shrines would shatter Egyptian confidence in their

gods' protective power. Herodotus (Histories 2.161-169) records turmoil in Egypt during this period. The phrase 'carry away captive' refers to exiling deity statues, standard ancient practice declaring victor's god superior to vanquished god.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does God's use of pagan empires (Babylon) to judge other pagan empires (Egypt) demonstrate His universal sovereignty?
2. What does the shepherd metaphor teach about how easily God can 'clothe' His agents with victory over seemingly powerful opponents?
3. Why does Scripture emphasize that Nebuchadnezzar will withdraw 'in peace'—what would this signal to observers?

Interlinear Text

וְשָׁבַע מִן־מִצְבֵּה אֱלֹהִים בְּבָתִים אֲשֶׁר וְהַצֵּת
And I will kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt and he shall burn

וְשָׁבַע מִן־מִצְבֵּה אֱלֹהִים בְּבָתִים אֲשֶׁר וְהַצֵּת
them and carry them away captives and he shall array himself with the land

וְשָׁבַע מִן־מִצְבֵּה אֱלֹהִים בְּבָתִים אֲשֶׁר וְהַצֵּת
of Egypt and he shall array as a shepherd his garment

וְשָׁבַע מִן־מִצְבֵּה אֱלֹהִים בְּבָתִים אֲשֶׁר וְהַצֵּת
and he shall go forth from thence in peace

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 30:13 (References God): Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph; and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt: and I will put a fear in the land of Egypt.

Isaiah 49:18 (Parallel theme): Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith the LORD, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth.

Isaiah 19:1 (References Egypt): The burden of Egypt. Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.

Jeremiah 48:7 (Parallel theme): For because thou hast trusted in thy works and in thy treasures, thou shalt also be taken: and Chemosh shall go forth into captivity with his priests and his princes together.

Jeremiah 46:25 (References God): The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saith; Behold, I will punish the multitude of No, and Pharaoh, and Egypt, with their gods, and their kings; even Pharaoh, and all them that trust in him:

Psalms 104:2 (Parallel theme): Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:

Job 40:10 (Parallel theme): Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty.

Exodus 12:12 (References God): For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.

2 Samuel 5:21 (Parallel theme): And there they left their images, and David and his men burned them.

Esther 6:9 (Parallel theme): And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

