

Jeremiah 49:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Arise, get you up unto the wealthy nation, that dwelleth without care, saith the LORD, which have neither gates nor bars, which dwell alone.

Analysis

Arise, get you up unto the wealthy nation, that dwelleth without care (קומו עלו אֶל-גּוֹי שְׁלִוּ יוֹשֵׁב לְבָטֵח)—God commands Babylon to attack a shalev (at ease, tranquil) people living lavetach (securely). This is biting irony: Kedar's security becomes the reason for attack. Prosperity without vigilance invites predation. Their 'dwelling in security' stems from isolation, not covenant protection—a false security exposed by judgment.

Which have neither gates nor bars, which dwell alone (לא-צְלָתִים וְלֹא-בָּרִים לֹא בָּדָד)—No fortifications, and dwelling badad (alone, isolated). This describes nomadic lifestyle as tactical weakness. The very independence and mobility Kedar prized becomes vulnerability. Numbers 23:9's description of Israel ('the people shall dwell alone') is inverted—Israel's separation was holy distinction under God's protection; Kedar's isolation is merely geographic, offering no shelter from Babylon's reach or God's justice.

Historical Context

Bedouin tribes' lack of fixed fortifications was strategic—they relied on desert's vastness and mobility. But this also meant vulnerability to concerted military campaigns. Their 'dwelling alone' reflected political independence, not covenant relationship. Geographic isolation cannot substitute for divine protection.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does this verse distinguish between false security (isolation, wealth) and true security (God's covenant protection)?
2. What modern forms of 'dwelling alone' (self-sufficiency, isolationism) offer illusory safety?
3. Why is complacency ('dwelling without care') spiritually dangerous even when circumstances seem secure?

Interlinear Text

לֹכֶד וְשָׁבֵן עַל אֶל גָּזֶה שְׁלֵי בְּנֵי מִתְּנוֹן
Arise get you up nation unto the wealthy that dwelleth without care
H6965 H5927 H413 H1471 H7961 H3427 H983

בְּנֵי דָּלָן בְּנֵי יִמְמָר לֹא יְהִי הַגָּם
saith the LORD which have neither gates nor bars alone
H5002 H3068 H3808 H1817 H3808 H1280 H0 H910

וְשָׁבֵן:
which dwell
H7931

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 38:11 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates,

Isaiah 47:8 (Parallel theme): Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children:

Deuteronomy 33:28 (Parallel theme): Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew.

Numbers 23:9 (Parallel theme): For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.

Micah 7:14 (Parallel theme): Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old.