

Jeremiah 49:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against Elam in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, saying,

Analysis

The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against Elam (אֲשֶׁר הָיָה דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא אֶל־עֵילָם, asher hayah d'var-YHWH el-Yirmeyahu hannavi el-Elam)—A new oracle begins. Elam (southwest Iran) was an ancient civilization east of Babylon, periodically allied with or against Mesopotamian powers. The prophetic word specifically against (el) Elam indicates judgment, not blessing.

In the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah (בְּרֵאשִׁית מַלְכוּת צִדְקִיָּהוּ, b're'shit malkhut Tzidqiyahu)—This dates the oracle to 597 BC, shortly after Jehoiachin's exile and Zedekiah's installation by Babylon. Elam had recently participated in Babylonian campaigns, but God's word announces their own coming judgment. The timing is significant: while Judah faces Babylon's wrath, God reveals that even Babylon's allies will eventually fall—no human alliance offers lasting security against divine decrees.

Historical Context

Elam was located in modern Khuzestan (southwestern Iran). They had been conquered by Assyria (645 BC) but remained culturally distinct. Under Neo-Babylonian rule, Elamites served as mercenaries and allies. Cyrus the Persian (an Elamite-related Achaemenid) would eventually conquer Babylon in 539 BC, ironically fulfilling this prophecy's promise of restoration (v. 39).

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. Why does God pronounce judgment on Elam, a nation seemingly peripheral to Israel's story?
2. What does the specific dating of this oracle teach about the historical precision of biblical prophecy?
3. How does God's judgment of Babylon's allies demonstrate that no human coalition can withstand His purposes?

Interlinear Text

אֶשׁ ר	הִנֵּה ה	דְּבַר	יְהוָה ה	אֶל	יְרֵמְיָהּ הוּ	הַנָּבִי יֵא
H834	H1961	The word	of the LORD	H413	that came to Jeremiah	the prophet
		H1697	H3068		H3414	H5030
אֶל	עֵיל מ	בְּרֵאשִׁית	מַלְכֹת וְ	צִדְקִיָּה ה	מֶלֶךְ	יְהוּדָה ה
H413	against Elam	in the beginning	of the reign	of Zedekiah	king	of Judah
	H5867	H7225	H4438	H6667	H4428	H3063
לֵאמֹר:						
saying						
H559						

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 25:25 (Kingdom): And all the kings of Zimri, and all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Medes,

Genesis 10:22 (Parallel theme): The children of Shem; Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram.

Genesis 14:1 (Kingdom): And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations;

Daniel 8:2 (Parallel theme): And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai.

Isaiah 21:2 (Parallel theme): A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease.

Isaiah 11:11 (References Lord): And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

Acts 2:9 (Parallel theme): Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

Ezra 4:9 (Parallel theme): Then wrote Rehum the chancellor, and Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their companions; the Dinaites, the Apharsathchites, the Tarpelites, the Apharsites, the Archevites, the Babylonians, the Susanchites, the Dehavites, and the Elamites,