

Jeremiah 50:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel;
Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I
have punished the king of Assyria.

Analysis

Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel—the covenant formula establishes divine authority. 'LORD of hosts' (Yahweh tseba'oth, יהוה צבאות) emphasizes God's command over all heavenly and earthly armies. Though speaking judgment on pagan Babylon, He identifies as 'God of Israel,' reminding that this judgment serves His covenant purposes for His people.

Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria—paqad (פָּקַד, punish) means to visit in judgment, to reckon with. The comparison to Assyria is deliberate: Assyria conquered the Northern Kingdom (722 BC) but was itself destroyed by Babylon (612 BC). Now Babylon, which destroyed Assyria, will herself be destroyed by Persia. This reveals a pattern in God's providence: He uses one wicked empire to judge another, then judges that empire in turn. None escape accountability. The sequence demonstrates God's sovereignty over history—He orchestrates the rise and fall of empires according to His eternal purposes. Romans 13:1 affirms governing authorities are established by God, but this doesn't grant them unlimited power or exemption from judgment.

Historical Context

Assyria fell to Babylon in 612 BC when Nineveh was destroyed by a coalition of Babylonians and Medes. Nahum prophesied this judgment. Less than a century later (539 BC), Babylon fell to Persia. The parallels are striking: both empires were

arrogant, brutal, and seemed invincible. Both thought their gods had granted them permanent dominion. Both were shocked by sudden collapse. The pattern continues throughout history—Persian, Greek, Roman, and subsequent empires all rise and fall according to God's sovereign timeline.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the pattern of empires judging each other, then being judged in turn, demonstrate God's sovereignty over human history?
2. What does the comparison to Assyria teach about the inevitability of judgment on oppressive powers, regardless of their apparent strength?
3. How should this verse shape Christian attitudes toward contemporary political powers—neither idolizing them nor assuming they're permanent?

Interlinear Text

יְהוָה	לֵךְ	אֵלֵינוּ	אֵלֵינוּ	אֵלֵינוּ	אֵלֵינוּ	אֵלֵינוּ
H3651	H3541	H559	H3068	H6635	H430	H3478
Therefore thus saith	the LORD	of hosts	the God	of Israel		
אֵלֵינוּ	אֵלֵינוּ	אֵלֵינוּ	אֵלֵינוּ	אֵלֵינוּ	אֵלֵינוּ	אֵלֵינוּ
H2005	H413	H4428	H894	H413	H776	
Behold I will punish	the king	of Babylon	and his land			
אֵלֵינוּ	אֵלֵינוּ	אֵלֵינוּ	אֵלֵינוּ	אֵלֵינוּ	אֵלֵינוּ	אֵלֵינוּ
H834	H413	H4428	H804			
Behold I will punish	the king	of Assyria				

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 10:12 (Kingdom): Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.