

Jeremiah 50:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Go up against the land of Merathaim, even against it, and against the inhabitants of Pekod: waste and utterly destroy after them, saith the LORD, and do according to all that I have commanded thee.

Analysis

Go up against the land of Merathaim, even against it, and against the inhabitants of Pekod—these names carry symbolic significance beyond geography. Merathaim (מֶרַתַּיִם) is a dual form meaning 'double rebellion' or 'double bitterness,' possibly punning on the region Marrattu in southern Babylonia. Pekod (פְּקוֹד) means 'punishment' or 'visitation,' punning on the Aramean tribe Puqudu east of Babylon. The wordplay is intentional: God commands attack on 'Double-Rebellion' and 'Punishment'—Babylon's double rebellion brings double punishment. This echoes Revelation 18:6: 'Reward her double according to her works.'

Waste and utterly destroy after them, saith the LORD, and do according to all that I have commanded thee—charav (חָרַב, waste) means devastate, lay waste, make desolate. Charam (חָרַם, utterly destroy) is the term for herem, complete devotion to destruction—applied to Canaanite cities in the conquest (Joshua 6:17-21). Applying herem to Babylon shows she has become as morally reprehensible as the Canaanites, deserving total judgment. The phrase 'do according to all that I have commanded' emphasizes this is divine decree, not mere human warfare.

Historical Context

The geographical references are debated, but most scholars identify them with regions in Babylonia. The use of symbolic names emphasizes that this is theological judgment, not merely political conquest. The Medo-Persian conquest of Babylon fulfilled this prophecy, though the city wasn't immediately and totally destroyed. However, over subsequent centuries Babylon was gradually and completely abandoned, fulfilling the total desolation prophesied. By the medieval period, it was uninhabited ruins—complete herem executed over time.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What does the use of symbolic names ('Double Rebellion,' 'Punishment') teach about God's perspective on Babylon's guilt?
2. How does applying the language of *herem* (holy war/complete devotion to destruction) to Babylon reveal the seriousness of her sins?
3. In what ways does Babylon's 'double rebellion' illustrate that privilege and knowledge increase accountability?

Interlinear Text

עַל	הָאָרֶץ	מִמֶּתַיִם	עֲלֵה	עַל יְהוָה	וְאֵל
H5921	against the land	of Merathaim	Go up	H5921	H413
	H776	H4850	H5927		
	וְנִשְׁבּוּ יְיָ		וְדָבַר	בְּפֶקֶד וְדָבַר	וְהָרַס מְאֹד
	even against it and against the inhabitants	of Pekod	waste	and utterly destroy	
	H3427	H6489	H2717	H2763	
אַחֲרֵיהֶם	נֹאמַר	יְהוָה הֵוא	וַעֲשֵׂה	כָּכָל	אֲשֶׁר
after	them saith	the LORD	and do	H3605	H834
H310	H5002	H3068	H6213		
	צִוִּיתִי:				
	according to all that I have commanded				
	H6680				

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 23:23 (References Lord): The Babylonians, and all the Chaldeans, Pekod, and Shoa, and Koa, and all the Assyrians with them: all of them desirable young men, captains and rulers, great lords and renowned, all of them riding upon horses.