

# 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

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**Go up against the land of Merathaim, even against it, and against the inhabitants of Pekod**—these names carry symbolic significance beyond geography. Merathaim (מְרָתָהִים) 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 (חָרָב, waste) means devastate, lay waste, make desolate. Charam (חָרָם, 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

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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

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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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?

