

Jeremiah 50:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The children of Israel and the children of Judah were oppressed together: and all that took them captives held them fast; they refused to let them go.

Analysis

Their Redeemer is strong; the LORD of hosts is his name: he shall thoroughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon. The title Go'alam chazaq ("their Redeemer is strong") employs kinsman-redeemer language (go'el), presenting God as family protector who avenges wrongs and redeems enslaved relatives (Leviticus 25:47-49; Ruth 3:12-13). This title anticipates Christ as Redeemer who purchases His people's freedom through His blood (Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19).

"The LORD of hosts" (YHWH Tseva'ot) emphasizes God's sovereign command over heavenly and earthly armies. The same divine power that commissioned Babylon to judge Judah now turns against Babylon itself. The phrase "thoroughly plead their cause" uses legal imagery—God as divine advocate prosecuting His people's case against their oppressors. This demonstrates that though God used Babylon instrumentally, He never approved their cruelty or pride.

The contrast between rest for God's land and disquiet for Babylon reveals redemption's dual nature: salvation for God's people necessitates judgment on their enemies. This pattern culminates in Christ's work, bringing rest to believers (Matthew 11:28-30; Hebrews 4:1-11) but storing up wrath for unbelievers (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10). The theological principle: redemption always involves victory over oppressive powers.

Historical Context

The title "Redeemer" carried powerful resonance for exiled Jews. Under ancient Near Eastern law, *go'el* responsibilities included buying back sold family property and freeing enslaved relatives—precisely what God promised to do, restoring land and liberating captives. The historical fulfillment came through Cyrus, whom God explicitly calls "his anointed" (45:1), demonstrating how God works through pagan rulers to accomplish redemptive purposes.

Babylon's "disquiet" began immediately after conquering Babylon's last king Nabonidus and his son Belshazzar (Daniel 5). Though Cyrus allowed Babylon to stand physically (unlike Assyria's total destruction), the empire's power ended permanently. Archaeological evidence shows Babylon declined steadily after Persian conquest, eventually becoming ruins, fulfilling prophecies of perpetual desolation (50:39-40; 51:37). God kept His word precisely, vindicating both His people's hope and His prophets' oracles.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does understanding God as your Redeemer (*go'el*) affect your confidence in His commitment to your well-being?
2. In what ways does Christ fulfill the kinsman-redeemer role, and how does that inform your relationship with Him?
3. How should the reality that redemption involves judgment on oppressive powers shape Christian hope and prayer regarding injustice?

Interlinear Text

כֹּה	אָמַר	יְהוָה	צָבָא	וְ	עָשׂוּקִים	וּבְנֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל
H3541	Thus saith	the LORD	of hosts		were oppressed	The children	of Israel
	H559	H3068	H6635		H6231	H1121	H3478
וּבְנֵי	יְהוּדָה	יַחְדָּו	וְ	כָל	שְׂבִיֵּיהֶם		
The children	of Judah	together		and all that took them captives			
H1121	H3063	H3162		H3605	H7617		
הִחֲזִי יָקוֹ	בָּ	מֵאֲנִי	וְ	שְׁלָחָם:			
held them fast		they refused		to let them go			
H2388	H0	H3985		H7971			

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 14:17 (Parallel theme): That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?

Isaiah 58:6 (Parallel theme): Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

Isaiah 47:6 (Parallel theme): I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst shew them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke.

Isaiah 51:23 (Parallel theme): But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over: and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over.

Exodus 8:2 (Parallel theme): And if thou refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs:

Exodus 5:2 (References Lord): And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go.