

# Jeremiah 51:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Set up the standard upon the walls of Babylon, make the watch strong, set up the watchmen, prepare the ambushes: for the LORD hath both devised and done that which he spake against the inhabitants of Babylon.

## Analysis

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**Set up the standard upon the walls of Babylon**—the military banner (וְ, nes) signals attack. Ironically, Babylon's own walls become the staging point for siege preparations against her. **Make the watch strong, set up the watchmen, prepare the ambushes**—the threefold military command (strengthen guard, station sentries, position ambushers) emphasizes thorough preparation. Yet all preparations prove futile against God's decree.

**For the LORD hath both devised and done that which he spake**—the verb pair "devised" (זָמַן, zamam, plan, purpose) and "done" (אָשַׁף, asah, accomplish, perform) emphasizes God's word's efficacy. What God speaks, He accomplishes (Isaiah 55:11). The phrase "against the inhabitants of Babylon" (בְּבָבֶל, el-yoshevei Bavel) personalizes judgment—not abstract empire but actual people face consequences for corporate sin. This teaches divine word's reliability: prophecy given 70 years before Babylon's fall was precisely fulfilled.

## Historical Context

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Babylon's defensive walls were among the ancient world's wonders—double walls with watchtowers, the outer wall wide enough for chariot races. Yet these formidable defenses failed when Cyrus diverted the Euphrates and entered

through the riverbed gates. The irony is profound: despite extensive defensive preparations, the city fell with minimal resistance. Archaeology confirms the walls' massive scale, making their ineffectiveness against God's decree more remarkable. No human defense withstands divine judgment.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does the futility of Babylon's defensive preparations illustrate that no human security withstands God's judgment?
2. What does the phrase 'the LORD hath both devised and done' teach about the certainty of God's prophetic word?
3. In what ways do people today rely on 'walls' and 'watchmen' that cannot ultimately protect against divine accountability?

## Interlinear Text

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בְּחִזְקַתְּךָ	יְלִינָה	אֵל	חַוָּמָתְךָ	בְּבָבָלָה:	שָׁאוֹן	גַּס	גַּס	כְּבָבָלָה:	כְּבָבָלָה:
H413	upon the walls		of Babylon		Set up	the standard		strong	
	H2346		H894		H5375		H5251		H2388
make the watch		רְמַשְׁמָתְךָ	שְׁמַרְתָּם	יְמָנָה	בְּקָרְבָּנָה	יְמָנָה	בְּקָרְבָּנָה	יְמָנָה	גַּם
H4929		H6965		H8104		H3559		H693	H3588 H1571
hath both devised		לְמַעַן	לְמַעַן	לְמַעַן	לְמַעַן	לְמַעַן	לְמַעַן	לְמַעַן	
	H2161		H3068		H1571		H853		H834
that which he spoke		דְּבָרָךְ	אֵל	שְׁבָבָן	בְּבָבָלָה:				
	H1696		H413		H3427				H894

## Additional Cross-References

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**Isaiah 13:2** (Parallel theme): Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles.

**Jeremiah 51:11** (References Lord): Make bright the arrows; gather the shields: the LORD hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for his device is against Babylon, to destroy it; because it is the vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance of his temple.

**Jeremiah 51:29** (References Lord): And the land shall tremble and sorrow: for every purpose of the LORD shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant.

**Nahum 2:1** (Parallel theme): He that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face: keep the munition, watch the way, make thy loins strong, fortify thy power mightily.