

Jeremiah 51:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the LORD, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain.

Analysis

Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the LORD, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain—The metaphor shifts dramatically: Babylon, situated on Mesopotamian plains, is called a "mountain" (har, הַר). In biblical symbolism, mountains represent kingdoms and powers (Isaiah 2:2; Daniel 2:35, 44-45; Revelation 17:9). Babylon is a "destroying mountain"—an imperial power devastating other nations.

The phrase "I am against thee" (hineni elekha, הִנֵּנִי אֶלָּךְ) is a prophetic declaration of divine opposition appearing throughout Jeremiah (21:13; 50:31; 51:25) and Ezekiel (13:8; 26:3). When the Almighty stands against a nation, its doom is sealed. The imagery of God "stretching out mine hand" echoes the Exodus plagues (Exodus 7:5), showing God's power to judge empires.

The transformation from "destroying mountain" to "burnt mountain" (har serefah, הַר-שְׁרֶפֶת) is ironic reversal: Babylon, which burned others, becomes burned itself. "Burnt mountain" likely refers to a volcano—once mighty but now dead, permanently desolate. This connects to Revelation 8:8, "a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea," symbolizing catastrophic judgment.

Historical Context

Babylon's flat geography makes the "mountain" metaphor purely symbolic—emphasizing Babylon's perceived permanence and dominance rather than topography. Babylon's ziggurat Etemenanki ("Temple of the Foundation of Heaven and Earth"), likely the historical Tower of Babel, stood about 300 feet tall—a man-made mountain symbolizing human pride reaching heaven.

Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon was indeed a "destroying mountain"—conquering Assyria (612 BCE), Egypt (605 BCE), Judah (586 BCE), and Tyre (after a 13-year siege). Yet within decades of Nebuchadnezzar's death (562 BCE), internal instability weakened Babylon. Cyrus conquered it in 539 BCE, and subsequent revolts led to its destruction by Xerxes (482 BCE). By Alexander's era (331 BCE), Babylon was a shadow of former glory. By the first century CE, it was largely abandoned—a burnt, dead mountain.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the 'mountain' metaphor expose the illusion of permanent human power and kingdoms?
2. What does God's declaration 'I am against thee' teach about opposing the Almighty?
3. How does Babylon's transformation from 'destroying mountain' to 'burnt mountain' illustrate divine justice?

Interlinear Text

לֹהַ רָאֵל יְבָה הַבָּבָן	לֹהַ רָאֵל יְבָה הַבָּבָן	הַמְּשִׁחִית	הַמְּשִׁחִית	נָאֵם	נָאֵם
H2005	H413	mountain	Behold I am against thee O destroying	saith	the LORD
	H2022		H4889	H5002	H3068
which destroyest	H853	H3605	all the earth	and I will stretch out	mine hand
H7843			H776	H5186	H3027
עַל יְבָה	upon thee	וְרַגְלָתֶךָ יְבָה	and roll thee down	מִן הַסָּלָעִים	and will make
H5921		H1556	H4480	H5553	H5414
שְׁרָפָה:	mountain	לֹהַ רָאֵל	thee a burnt		
	H2022		H8316		

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 8:8 (Parallel theme): And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;

Zechariah 4:7 (Parallel theme): Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.

Jeremiah 50:31 (References Lord): Behold, I am against thee, O thou most proud, saith the Lord GOD of hosts: for thy day is come, the time that I will visit thee.

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 51:53 (References Lord): Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, yet from me shall spoilers come unto her, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 51:58 (References Lord): Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire; and the people shall labour in vain, and the folk in the fire, and they shall be weary.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org