

Jeremiah 51:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion.

Analysis

Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion—This verse specifies the Medes as the primary agents of Babylon's destruction, along with their administrative structure: kings (malakhim), captains (pachot, governors), and rulers (seganim, prefects). The comprehensive listing—"all the land of his dominion"—emphasizes the totality of forces arrayed against Babylon.

The prominence of "the Medes" is significant. Isaiah 13:17 and 21:2 also identify the Medes as Babylon's destroyers. Historically, Media and Persia unified under Cyrus (a Persian king who inherited the Median throne), so "Medes" functions as shorthand for the Medo-Persian coalition. Daniel's prophecy describes this empire as the "breast and arms of silver" (Daniel 2:32, 39) and the "bear" (Daniel 7:5).

The command "Prepare" (qadesh, קָדֵשׁ) literally means "consecrate" or "sanctify"—the same word used for holy war (Joel 3:9). Though pagan, these nations are consecrated for God's purposes, demonstrating that God's sovereignty extends over all nations, using even unbelievers to accomplish His righteous judgments.

Historical Context

The Medes had been Babylon's allies in destroying Assyria (612 BCE), but relationships soured. By Nabonidus's reign (556-539 BCE), the Median Empire had

been absorbed by Cyrus of Persia through inheritance and conquest (550 BCE). Cyrus united the Medes and Persians into a single empire that conquered Lydia (547 BCE) before turning against Babylon.

The political structure described—kings, governors, prefects—accurately reflects Medo-Persian administration. The "kings of the Medes" (plural) likely refers to vassal kings under Cyrus's supreme authority. Ancient sources (Herodotus, Xenophon, Babylonian Chronicle) describe the 539 BCE conquest led by Cyrus's general Gobryas (Ugbaru), with Cyrus entering Babylon later. The multinational army included troops from all territories under Medo-Persian dominion, precisely fulfilling this prophecy.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What does God's use of the Medes—former Babylonian allies—teach about the instability of political alliances?
2. How does the concept of 'consecrating' pagan nations for God's purposes challenge our understanding of His sovereignty?
3. What parallels exist between ancient empires' rise and fall and modern geopolitical shifts?

Interlinear Text

עֲלֵיכֶם נָגִים אֶת מֶלֶךְ מַדִּים אֶת

Prepare H5921 against her the nations H854 with the kings H4428 of the Medes H853

H6942

H1471

H854

H4428

H853

H4074

כָּל אֶת פְּחוֹת יְהֹוָה

the captains H853 thereof and all the rulers H3605

H6346

H5461

H853

H3605

מְחַלְתָּה אֶת

thereof and all the land of his dominion

H776

H4475

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 51:11 (Kingdom): 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.

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