

Jeremiah 51:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; The daughter of Babylon is like a threshingfloor, it is time to thresh her: yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come.

Analysis

For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; The daughter of Babylon is like a threshingfloor, it is time to thresh her: yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come. This agricultural metaphor depicts divine judgment with pastoral imagery familiar to Jeremiah's audience. **The daughter of Babylon** (Hebrew bat-Bavel, בַּת-בָּבֶל) personifies the city and empire, highlighting vulnerability despite apparent strength.

Like a threshingfloor uses goren (גֶּרֶן), the hard-packed surface where grain was trampled to separate kernels from chaff. The phrase **it is time to thresh her** employs et hadrikah (עַת הַדְרִיקָה), denoting the appointed moment for trampling—suggesting divinely ordained timing. The threshing metaphor implies violent separation, crushing, and judgment (Isaiah 21:10, 41:15, Micah 4:12-13).

Yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come introduces temporal tension: preparation (thresh) versus consummation (harvest). The Hebrew qatsir (קָצִיר, harvest) often symbolizes judgment (Joel 3:13, Revelation 14:15-16). The promise of imminent fulfillment—yet a little while—assured exiles that Babylon's apparent invincibility was temporary. This echoes Jesus's parable of the wheat and tares, where harvest represents final judgment (Matthew 13:30, 39). God's patience delays but does not cancel His righteous reckoning.

Historical Context

Written during Babylon's zenith of power (likely 594-570 BC), this prophecy seemed improbable. Babylon dominated the ancient Near East, had defeated Assyria, Egypt, and Judah, and appeared unconquerable. Yet Jeremiah declared that Babylon's 'threshing' was prepared and her 'harvest' imminent. Within decades, Cyrus the Persian conquered Babylon (539 BC) without significant battle—a bloodless transfer of power that nevertheless ended Babylonian dominance. The agricultural imagery resonated with Israelite farmers who understood that threshing required specific preparation (hard surface, proper timing) and that harvest meant reaping what was sown. Babylon had sown violence, oppression, and idolatry; her harvest would be judgment. This principle extends to all human empires that exalt themselves against God.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the threshing/harvest metaphor help us understand divine judgment as both violent and purposeful?
2. What does God's precise timing ('yet a little while') teach about His sovereignty over human history?
3. In what ways does this prophecy about historical Babylon inform our understanding of eschatological judgment in Revelation?

Interlinear Text

יְשַׁרְאֵל ל	אֱלֹהֵי י	צְבָאוֹת	יְהוָה	אָמַר	כֹּה	כִּי
of Israel	the God	of hosts	the LORD	For thus saith		
H3478	H430	H6635	H3068	H559	H3541	H3588
עֹד	הַדְרִיכָה	עַתָּה	כָּגֶן	בֶּן	ל	בֵּית
H5750	to thresh	and the time	is like a threshingfloor	of Babylon	The daughter	
	H1869	H6256	H1637	H894	H1323	
לָהּ:	הַקָּצִיר	עַתָּה	וּבָאָה	מְעַט	ט	
H0	of her harvest	and the time	shall come	her yet a little while		
	H7105	H6256	H935	H4592		

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 21:10 (References God): O my threshing, and the corn of my floor: that which I have heard of the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you.

Joel 3:13 (Parallel theme): Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great.

Hosea 6:11 (Parallel theme): Also, O Judah, he hath set an harvest for thee, when I returned the captivity of my people.

Micah 4:13 (References Lord): Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thine horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass: and thou shalt beat in pieces many people: and I will consecrate their gain unto the LORD, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.