

Jeremiah 51:53

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Though Babylon should mount up to heaven (כִּי מֵעֶלֶת בָּבֶל הַשְׁמִימִים) ki-ta'aleh Bavel hashamayim)—Hypothetical: even if Babylon ascended to the sky (echoing Babel's tower, Genesis 11:4), she cannot escape. **And though she should fortify the height of her strength** (וְכִי תִבְצַר מִרְום עַזָּה) v'khi t'vatsar m'rom uzzah)—though she fortifies her elevated stronghold. Babylon's walls were legendary: Herodotus claims 56 miles in circumference, 80 feet thick, 320 feet high (likely exaggerated but indicating massive scale). The Ishtar Gate, Etemenanki ziggurat (possibly inspiring Babel account), and double-wall system seemed impregnable.

Yet from me shall spoilers come unto her, saith the LORD (מִאֶתְּנִי יָבוֹעַ שָׁׂדָּם לְהָ) me'itti yavo'u shodedim lah)—The destroyers come from Me, God emphasizes. No height, no fortification exceeds God's reach. This counters every tower-of-Babel impulse: human attempts to secure autonomy through achievement, technology, or architecture. All such projects are sandcastles before the tide of divine justice. True security exists only in covenantal relationship with the Most High.

Historical Context

Babylon's fortifications were ancient world's finest. Yet Cyrus bypassed them (diverting Euphrates) and internal betrayal opened gates (Belshazzar's feast-night, Daniel 5). No walls withstand treachery—or divine decree. Later, Xerxes and others demolished these vaunted defenses, fulfilling 'spoilers from Me.'

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does this verse deconstruct human confidence in technology, architecture, and defensive systems?
2. What is the spiritual significance of 'mounting up to heaven'—why is verticality associated with pride?
3. In what ways do modern societies build 'Babels' seeking security apart from God?

Interlinear Text

כִּי תַּעַל הַבָּבָל תַּשְׁמַע אֶל
H3588 should mount up Though Babylon to heaven H3588
H5927 H894 H8064

תִּבְאַר מֵרִים עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ יְבָא
and though she should fortify the height of her strength come
H1219 H4791 H5797 H854 H935

לְהַשְׁׂדֵךְ יְמִינָם הָהָה
me shall spoilers unto her saith the LORD
H7703 H5002 H3068

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 49:16 (References Lord): Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the LORD.

Genesis 11:4 (Parallel theme): And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

Jeremiah 51:25 (References Lord): 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.

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