

Jeremiah 51:56

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Because the spoiler is come upon her, even upon Babylon, and her mighty men are taken, every one of their bows is broken: for the LORD God of recompences shall surely requite.

Analysis

Because the spoiler is come upon her, even upon Babylon (כִּי בָּא עַלְיָה עַל-בָּבֶל)–The Spoiler (Cyrus, but ultimately God) has arrived. **And her mighty men are taken** (וְנִלְקַדְוּ גְּבֹרִים)–Babylon's gibborim (warriors) are captured. **Every one of their bows is broken** (חִטְתָּה קָשְׁתֹתָם, chittah qashtotam)–Their bows (primary weapon) are shattered, echoing the breaking of Elam's bow (49:35). Military impotence follows moral bankruptcy.

For the LORD God of recompences shall surely requite (כִּי אֶל גָּמֻלוֹת יְהוָה שָׁלֵם)–El gemulot (God of recompenses/retributions) will surely repay. The doubled verb shalem y'shalem (repay, repay) intensifies: God will absolutely, thoroughly recompense. This is lex talionis on cosmic scale: Babylon broke others' bows; theirs are broken. They captured nations; they're captured. This isn't vindictiveness but justice—the moral order requires proportional response to evil.

Historical Context

Babylon's military establishment was neutralized—captured, disbanded, or absorbed into Persian forces. The 'God of recompenses' operated through Cyrus but was the true Agent. Daniel 5:25-28's 'MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN'

announced this divine accounting: weighed, found wanting, divided—divine recompense executed.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does 'God of recompenses' reveal about divine justice and moral order in the universe?
2. How does the breaking of bows symbolize the futility of trusting in military strength apart from God?
3. In what ways should the certainty of divine recompense ('surely requisite') affect how Christians respond to injustice?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	אָבֶן	עַל	עַל	בְּבָבָל	שׁוֹזֵד
H3588	is come	H5921	H5921	upon her even upon Babylon	Because the spoiler
	H935			H894	H7703
וְנַלְכָּדוּ	בָּבָרֶךְ	גָּבוֹךְ	יְהִי	חִתְתַּמְתּוּ	מִקְשָׁתֹתָם
are taken	and her mighty men	is broken	every one of their bows	H3588	God
H3920	H1368	H2865	H7198		H410
וְנִשְׁלַמְתָּם	וְנִשְׁלַמְתָּם	וְנִשְׁלַמְתָּם			
of recompences	for the LORD	require	require		
H1578	H3068	H7999	H7999		

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 46:9 (Parallel theme): He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

Jeremiah 51:48 (References Lord): Then the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, shall sing for Babylon: for the spoilers shall come unto her from the north, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 51:6 (References Lord): Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of the LORD'S vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence.

Habakkuk 2:8 (Parallel theme): Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant of the people shall spoil thee; because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein.

Isaiah 59:18 (Parallel theme): According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence.

Psalms 76:3 (Parallel theme): There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Selah.

Jeremiah 51:24 (References Lord): And I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith the LORD.

Deuteronomy 32:35 (Parallel theme): To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.