

Jeremiah 52:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now in the fifth month, in the tenth day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, which served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem,

Analysis

And in the fifth month, in the tenth day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, which served the king of Babylon, into Jerusalem,

This verse records the arrival of Babylon's official who would destroy the temple—arguably the most traumatic moment in Old Testament history. The dating (August 14, 586 BCE, approximately one month after the wall's breach) shows the systematic, deliberate nature of Babylon's judgment. Nebuzar-adan's title "captain of the guard" (rav-tabachim, "chief executioner") reveals his grim role overseeing destruction and deportation.

The phrase "served the king of Babylon" (omed lifnei, "stood before") indicates his high rank—a royal courtier executing Nebuchadnezzar's direct orders. Yet from the prophetic perspective, he ultimately serves God's purposes, unknowingly fulfilling divine decree (27:6). This demonstrates the inscrutable sovereignty whereby God accomplishes His will through agents who don't acknowledge Him—a mystery provoking both awe and humility.

Theologically, this verse teaches:

1. God's judgments execute with historical precision at divinely appointed times
2. pagan rulers and their servants unwittingly fulfill God's purposes

3. the most tragic events in redemptive history occur within God's sovereign plan
4. human agents remain responsible for their actions even while fulfilling divine purposes.

The tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility finds clear illustration here.

Historical Context

Nebuzar-adan appears multiple times in Jeremiah (39:9-14; 40:1-5; 52:12-30), consistently portrayed as the Babylonian official managing Jerusalem's destruction and population deportation. The one-month gap between wall breach (verse 7) and temple destruction (verse 12) likely involved securing the city, dealing with resistance, and preparing for systematic demolition.

Archaeological evidence confirms massive destruction of Jerusalem during this period. Excavations show burn layers from the early sixth century BCE across the city. The temple's destruction was so traumatic that Jewish tradition commemorates it annually on Tisha B'Av (ninth of Av). Remarkably, both the First Temple (586 BCE) and Second Temple (70 CE) were destroyed on the same date, demonstrating the providential patterns in redemptive history. The destruction made diaspora Judaism possible, transforming ethnic nationalism into covenantal identity defined by Torah rather than territory.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does understanding that God used Babylon to judge His own people challenge nationalist assumptions about 'Christian nations'?
2. In what ways does the temple's destruction (and rebuilding in Christ—John 2:19-21) demonstrate that God's purposes transcend earthly institutions?
3. How should awareness of God's sovereignty over tragic events affect Christian response to suffering and persecution?

Interlinear Text

לַח דָּשׁ	הַחֲמִישִׁי	בְּעֶשְׂרִי	לַח דָּשׁ	הָ יָא	שָׁנָה	
day of the month	Now in the fifth	in the tenth	day of the month	H1931	year	
H2320	H2549	H6218	H2320		H8141	
תִּשְׁעָ	עֶשְׂרֵה	שָׁנָה	מֶלֶךְ	נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר	מֶלֶךְ	
which was the nineteenth	H6240	year	king	of Nebuchadnezzar	king	
H8672		H8141	H4428	H5019	H4428	
בָּבֶל	בָּ אָ	נְבוּזַרְאֲדָן	רַב	טַבָּחִים	עַמֵּד	לִפְנֵי י'
of Babylon	came	Nebuzaradan	captain	of the guard	which served	H6440
H894	H935	H5018	H7227	H2876	H5975	
מֶלֶךְ	בָּבֶל	בִּירוּשָׁלַם:				
king	of Babylon	into Jerusalem				
H4428	H894	H3389				

Additional Cross-References

2 Kings 25:8 (Kingdom): And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem:

Jeremiah 39:9 (References Babylon): Then Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carried away captive into Babylon the remnant of the people that remained in the

city, and those that fell away, that fell to him, with the rest of the people that remained.

Jeremiah 52:29 (References Jerusalem): In the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar he carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred thirty and two persons:

Zechariah 8:19 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts; therefore love the truth and peace.

2 Kings 24:12 (Kingdom): And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign.