

Jeremiah 52:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled, and went forth out of the city by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king's garden; (now the Chaldeans were by the city round about:) and they went by the way of the plain.

Analysis

Then the city was broken up (תִּתְבַּקֵּעַ הַעִיר, *vatibbaqa ha'ir*)—the Hebrew *baqa* means to split, breach, or burst open, describing the catastrophic moment when Babylon's siege engines finally penetrated Jerusalem's walls after 30 months (52:4-6). **All the men of war fled** reveals the collapse of Judah's last military resistance. King Zedekiah and his warriors escaped **by night by the way of the gate between the two walls**, likely a secret passage near the Kidron Valley, **which was by the king's garden**—a desperate nighttime flight from the doomed city.

The parenthetical note **(now the Chaldeans were by the city round about)** emphasizes the impossibility of escape—Babylon's army encircled Jerusalem completely, yet Zedekiah attempted to flee anyway. **They went by the way of the plain** (הַעֲרָבָה, *ha'aravah*) toward the Jordan valley, heading east toward Jericho. This cowardly flight fulfilled Jeremiah's repeated warnings that resistance was futile and that surrender to Babylon was God's will (Jeremiah 21:8-10, 38:17-23). Zedekiah's refusal to heed God's prophet led to Jerusalem's destruction and his own capture. This verse illustrates that human schemes cannot circumvent divine judgment—fleeing God's appointed discipline only compounds the tragedy.

Historical Context

This event occurred in July 586 BC (the fourth month, ninth day—52:6-7), marking the end of the Davidic monarchy's rule in Jerusalem and the destruction of Solomon's temple. Nebuchadnezzar's forces had besieged Jerusalem since January 588 BC, creating horrific famine conditions described in Lamentations 4:3-10. Zedekiah was Judah's last king, a weak ruler who vacillated between trusting Egypt and submitting to Babylon, ultimately rebelling against Nebuchadnezzar despite sworn allegiance (Ezekiel 17:11-21). Archaeological evidence from the City of David shows massive destruction layers from this period, with arrowheads and burn marks confirming the violence. The 'gate between the two walls' likely exploited a vulnerable point in Jerusalem's eastern defenses. Zedekiah's attempted escape toward the wilderness of Judah shows he hoped to reach territory beyond Babylon's immediate control, possibly to regroup or flee to Egypt—a futile plan that ended in disaster within hours.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does Zedekiah's attempted escape demonstrate the futility of fleeing from God's ordained judgment?
2. What does this verse teach about the consequences of rejecting prophetic warnings and trusting in human schemes?
3. In what ways might we today attempt to 'flee' from God's corrective discipline rather than submit to His purposes?

Interlinear Text

יבָּרַחַת בְּמִלְחָמָה אֲנָשִׁים וְכֹל בָּעֵיר וַתִּפְתַּח עָ
was broken up Then the city H3605 H376 of war fled
H1234 H5892 H4421 H1272

בֵּין שֵׁעָרֶת לְבַתְּרָה בָּעֵיר וְכֹל בָּתְרָה בְּיַצְאָה
and went forth Then the city by night by the way of the gate H996
H3318 H5892 H3915 H1870 H8179

בֵּין לְבָתְרָה בְּחַמְמַת יְמִין עַל אֲשֶׁר עַל | גָּד garden which was by the king's
between the two walls H834 H5921 H1588 H4428

דְּכָרָה תַּלְכֵד סְבִיבָה עַל בָּעֵיר וְכֹשְׁדִים
now the Chaldeans H5921 Then the city round about H1980 by the way
H3778 H5892 H5439 H1870

הַעֲרָבָה:
of the plain
H6160

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 51:32 (Parallel theme): And that the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are affrighted.

2 Kings 25:4 (Kingdom): And the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees were against the city round about:) and the king went the way toward the plain.