

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

This chapter contains a summary of the judgments denounced by Jeremiah against Judah, Babylon, and many other nations. It begins with reproving the Jews for disobeying the calls of God to repentance, Jeremiah 25:1-7; on which account their captivity, with that of her neighboring nations, during seventy years, is foretold, Jeremiah 25:8-11. At the expiration of that period, (computing from the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, to the famous edict of the first year of Cyrus), an end was to be put to the Babylonian empire, Jeremiah 25:12-14. All this is again declared by the emblem of that cup of wrath which the prophet, as it should seem in a vision, tendered to all the nations which he enumerates, Jeremiah 25:15-29. And for farther confirmation, it is a third time repeated in a very beautiful and elevated strain of poetry, Jeremiah 25:30-38. The talent of diversifying the ideas, images, and language, even when the subject is the same, or nearly so, appears no where in such perfection as among the sacred poets.

Verse 1

The word that came to Jeremiah - to the fourth year - This prophecy, we see, was delivered in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, and the chapter that contains it is utterly out of its place. It should be between chapters 35 and 36. The defeat of the Egyptians by Nebuchadnezzar at Carchemish, and the subsequent taking of Jerusalem, occurred in this year, viz., the fourth year of Jehoiakim.

The first year of Nebuchadnezzar - This king was associated with his father two years before the death of the latter. The Jews reckon his reign from this time, and this was the first of those two years; but the Chaldeans date the commencement of his reign two years later, viz., at the death of his father.

Verse 7

That ye might provoke - Ye would not hearken; but chose to provoke me with anger.

Verse 9

Behold, I will send - At this time Nebuchadnezzar had not invaded the land, according to this Version; but the Hebrew may be translated, "Behold I am sending, and have taken all the families;" that is, all the allies of the king of Babylon.

Instead of וְאֶתְכֶם (reel), "and To Nebuchadnezzar," as in the common Hebrew Bible, seven MSS. of Kennicott's and De Rossi's, and one of my own, have וְאֶתְכֶם^a (veeth), "And Nebuchadnezzar," which is undoubtedly the true reading.

Verse 10

I will take from them - See Jeremiah 7:34, and Jeremiah 16:9.

The sound of the mill-stones, and the light of the candle - These two are conjoined, because they generally ground the corn before day, by the light of the candle. Sir J. Chardin has remarked, that every where in the morning may be heard the noise of the mills; for they generally grind every day just as much as is necessary for the day's consumption. Where then the noise of the mill is not heard, nor the light of the candle seen, there must be desolation; because these things are heard and seen in every inhabited country.

Verse 11

Shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years - As this prophecy was delivered in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, and in the first of Nebuchadnezzar, and began to be accomplished in the same year, (for then Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judea, and took Jerusalem), seventy years from this time will reach down to the first year of Cyrus, when he made his proclamation for the restoration of the Jews, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem. See the note on Isaiah 13:19 (note), where the subject is farther considered in relation to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, and the city of Babylon.

Verse 12

And that nation - וְהַמְּלָכִים וְהַמְּלָכִים (haggoi hahu). Dr. Blayney contends that this should be translated his nation, and that וְהַמְּלָכִים (hahu) is the substantive pronoun used in the genitive case. It is certainly more clear and definite to read, "I will punish the king of Babylon, and His nation."

Will make it perpetual desolations - See the note on Isaiah 13:19, where the fulfillment of this prophecy is distinctly marked.

Verse 14

Many nations and great kings - The Medes and the Persians, under Cyrus; and several princes, his vassals or allies.

Verse 16

Take the wine cup of this fury - For an ample illustration of this passage and simile, see the note on Isaiah 51:21.

Verse 17

Then took I the cup - and made all the nations to drink - This cup of God's wrath is merely symbolical, and simply means that the prophet should declare to all these people that they shall fall under the Chaldean yoke, and that this is a punishment inflicted on them by God for their iniquities. "Then I took the cup; I declared publicly the tribulation that God was about to bring on Jerusalem, the cities of Judah, and all the nations.

Verse 19

Pharaoh king of Egypt - This was Pharaoh-necho, who was the principal cause of instigating the neighboring nations to form a league against the Chaldeans.

Verse 20

All the mingled people - The strangers and foreigners; Abyssinians and others who had settled in Egypt.

Land of Uz - A part of Arabia near to Idumea. See on Job 1:1 (note).

Verse 22

Tyrus and - Zidon - The most ancient of all the cities of the Phoenicians.

Kings of the isles which are beyond the sea - As the Mediterranean Sea is most probably meant, and the Phoenicians had numerous colonies on its coasts, I prefer the marginal reading, the kings of the region by the sea side.

Verse 23

Dedan - Was son of Abraham, by Keturah, Genesis 25:3.

Tema - Was one of the sons of Ishmael, in the north of Arabia, Genesis 36:15.

Buz - Brother of Uz, descendants of Nahor, brother of Abraham, settled in Arabia Deserta, Genesis 22:21.

Verse 24

The mingled people - Probably the Scenite Arabians.

Verse 25

Zimri - Descendants of Abraham, by Keturah, Genesis 25:2, Genesis 25:6.

Elam - Called Elymais by the Greeks, was on the south frontier of Media, to the north of Susiana, not far from Babylon.

Verse 26

The kings of the north, far and near - The first may mean Syria; the latter, the Hyrcanians and Bactrians.

And the king of Sheshach shall drink after them - Sheshach was an ancient king of Babylon, who was deified after his death. Here it means either Babylon, or Nebuchadnezzar the king of it. After it has been the occasion of ruin to so many other nations, Babylon itself shall be destroyed by the Medo-Persians.

Verse 27

Be drunken, and spue - Why did we not use the word vomit, less offensive than the other, and yet of the same signification?

Verse 29

The city which is called by my name - Jerusalem, which should be first given up to the destruction.

Verse 32

Evil shall go forth from nation to nation - One nation after another shall fall before the Chaldeans.

Verse 33

From one end of the earth - From one end of the land to the other. All Palestine shall be desolated by it.

Verse 34

Howl, ye shepherds - Ye kings and chiefs of the people.

Ye shall fall like a pleasant tresses - As a fall will break and utterly ruin a precious vessel of crystal, agate, etc., so your overthrow will be to you irreparable ruin.

Verse 38

As the lion - Leaving the banks of Jordan when overflowed, and coming with ravening fierceness to the champaign country.