

# Ezekiel 31:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They also went down into hell with him unto them that be slain with the sword; and they that were his arm, that dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the heathen.

## Analysis

**They also went down into hell with him unto them that be slain with the sword**—Assyria's allies and vassals (הֵם, hēm, 'they') descended to שְׁאֹל (shē'ôl, 'Sheol') (הַלְּלֵי-חֶרֶב) (hālālē-hereb, 'slain of the sword') along with her. When empires fall, their dependents fall too.

**And they that were his arm, that dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the heathen**—זֶרֶוֹעַ (zérô'ô, 'his arm')—military allies; צַלְלָה (ṣallô, 'his shadow')—vassal states seeking protection. Both perished with Assyria. This warns nations trusting Egypt: when she falls, you fall with her. Dependence on human power is shared doom. Only those trusting God's shadow (Psalm 91:1) find lasting protection; earthly empires' shadows vanish when they fall.

## Historical Context

When Assyria fell (612 BC), vassal states were conquered by Babylon: Elam, parts of Media, Syrian states, etc. 'His arm' (military allies) and 'his shadow' (protected vassals) indeed descended with Assyria. Similarly, when Egypt fell to Babylon (568/567 BC), allied states suffered. The pattern holds throughout history: when superpowers collapse, dependent nations collapse with them.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

## Study Questions

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1. What does allies descending to Sheol with empires teach about misplaced trust?
2. How does 'dwelling under his shadow' contrast with dwelling under God's shadow (Psalm 91)?
3. What modern alliances might prove similarly fatal when 'shadows' vanish?

## Interlinear Text

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גָּמָּן אַתָּה יָרַד וְשָׁאַלְתָּה אַל

H1571 H1992 H854 They also went down into hell H413

H3381 H7585

מַלְלֵי וְרָב וְזָרָע וְ

with him unto them that be slain with the sword and they that were his arm

H2491 H2719 H2220

יָשַׁב וְבָצֵל וְבָת וְגַם:

that dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the heathen

H3427 H6738 H8432 H1471

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 9:17** (Parallel theme): The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.

**Ezekiel 31:6** (Parallel theme): All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations.

**Ezekiel 31:3** (Parallel theme): Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs.

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