

Hosea 11:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the sword shall abide on his cities, and shall consume his branches, and devour them, because of their own counsels.

Analysis

Sword in cities: 'And the sword shall abide on his cities, and shall consume his branches, and devour them, because of their own counsels.' The חֶרֶב (cherev, sword) will חָלָה (chalah, abide/whirl) on cities, consume בָּדָדָב (baddav, branches/bars), and devour—because of מִמְּצוֹתֵיהֶם (mimmo'atsoteihem, their counsels). This demonstrates that human wisdom apart from God leads to destruction. Their schemes—political alliances, false worship, social injustice—produce sword that devours. Only Christ's counsel brings life (John 6:68).

Historical Context

The 'sword abiding on cities' describes prolonged warfare characterizing Israel's final decades: Assyrian campaigns systematically conquering cities. 'Branches' may reference leadership or fortified towns—systematically destroyed. Archaeological evidence shows destruction layers at numerous northern sites from Assyrian conquests: Megiddo, Hazor, Samaria. The phrase 'because of their own counsels' attributes destruction to their strategies: alliance-shifting, covenant-breaking, God-ignoring plans. This demonstrates that ignoring divine wisdom in favor of human scheming ensures disaster. Proverbs extensively teaches this principle: wisdom brings life, folly brings death.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How do 'their own counsels' (human wisdom apart from God) lead to the 'sword' (destructive consequences)?
2. What does systematic destruction ('sword abiding on cities') teach about comprehensive judgment on persistent rebellion?

Interlinear Text

וְהָאֵל	וְהַיָּד	בְּעָרָיו	וְכָלָהּ	בְּדָיו
shall abide	And the sword	on his cities	and shall consume	his branches
H2342	H2719	H5892	H3615	H905
וְאָכַלָּהּ	מִמַּעַצ וְתִיהָם:			
and devour	them because of their own counsels			
H398	H4156			

Additional Cross-References

Hosea 13:16 (Word): Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up.

Hosea 10:6 (Parallel theme): It shall be also carried unto Assyria for a present to king Jareb: Ephraim shall receive shame, and Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel.

Hosea 10:14 (Parallel theme): Therefore shall a tumult arise among thy people, and all thy fortresses shall be spoiled, as Shalman spoiled Beth-arbel in the day of battle: the mother was dashed in pieces upon her children.