

Isaiah 13:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it shall be as the chased roe, and as a sheep that no man taketh up: they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land.

Analysis

The image shifts to panicked flight: 'it shall be as the chased roe, and as a sheep that no man taketh up: they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one into his own land.' The gazelle (roe) flees from hunters; the sheep without a shepherd scatters before predators. Babylon's cosmopolitan population—gathered from many nations through conquest and trade—will fragment and flee homeward. No one will gather them; no one will defend them. Each seeks individual survival, abandoning collective defense. This is total social breakdown: every man for himself. Unity dissolves under judgment.

Historical Context

Babylon's population included peoples from across the ancient Near East—deportees, slaves, merchants, mercenaries. Multi-ethnic empires hold together through power; when that power breaks, they fragment along ethnic/national lines. When Babylon fell to Cyrus in 539 BC, the new regime allowed peoples to return to homelands (see Ezra 1:1-4 regarding Jewish return). What conquest had gathered, judgment scattered. This pattern repeats throughout history: empires unite by force, but crumble into constituent parts when central power fails.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What holds your community or nation together—divine purpose or merely human power and self-interest?
2. How does this verse warn against trusting in human systems and institutions that can quickly dissolve?

Interlinear Text

וְיָהִי	כִּי	מְלֵךְ	אֵל	וְיָהִי
H1961	roe	And it shall be as the chased	and as a sheep	H369
H6642		H5090		H6620

אֵל	וְאֵל	עַמּוֹ	וְעַמּוֹ	וְאֵל	וְאֵל
that no man taketh up	every one	H413	to his own people	turn	every one

יבניאן וארץ וinto his own land and flee
הנני וארץ ו H776 H5127

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 22:17 (Parallel theme): And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master; let them return every man to his house in peace.

Jeremiah 50:16 (Parallel theme): Cut off the sower from Babylon, and him that handleth the sickle in the time of harvest: for fear of the oppressing sword they shall turn every one to his people, and they shall flee every one to his own land.

1 Kings 22:36 (Parallel theme): And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country.

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