

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

וְהָיָה H1961	כְּצֹדֵד roe H6643	וְהָיָה And it shall be as the chased H5080	וְכַצֵּלֶה and as a sheep H6629	וְאֵין H369		
וְלֹא יִשָּׁקֶח that no man taketh up H6908	וְאֵין יֶשׁ every one H376	וְאֵין H413	וְעַמּוֹ to his own people H5971	וְיָפִנוּ turn H6437	וְאֵין יֶשׁ every one H376	וְאֵין H413
וְאֵין into his own land H776	וְיָנוּסוּ and flee 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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