

Isaiah 13:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children.

Analysis

The brutality continues: 'Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eye shall not spare children.' Medo-Persian archers were legendary. The image of bows dashing young men suggests both arrows killing soldiers and perhaps brutal treatment after conquest. The specific mention of no pity on unborn children ('fruit of the womb') or children emphasizes judgment's comprehensiveness—no future generation survives. This is dynastic termination, not just military defeat. The repetition of judgment-on-children language (see v.16) stresses totality: Babylon's line ends.

Historical Context

The Medes and Persians were indeed known for archery—their composite bows were military technology superior to most contemporaries. However, the historical conquest of Babylon (539 BC) was less violent than Isaiah's language suggests—possibly because the language is partially symbolic, emphasizing spiritual/eschatological judgment, or because God's mercy moderated the judgment, or because elements remain unfulfilled until ultimate judgment. The emphasis on children likely relates to dynasty—Belshazzar was the last Babylonian king; the royal line ended. No sons inherited the throne.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How do we understand prophetic language that seems more violent than historical fulfillment—symbolic, spiritual, or awaiting final fulfillment?
2. What does the termination of Babylon's dynasty teach about the end of all human kingdoms before God's eternal kingdom?

Interlinear Text

ל	א	בְּ	בָּ	וְ	זֶ	קְ	שֶׁת	וְתָ
Their bows	the young men	also shall dash	on the fruit	of the womb				H3808
H7198	H5288	H7376	H6529	H990				
וְבָ	בְּ	בָּ	לְ	לֹא	לְ	לְ	לְ	
and they shall have no pity	H5921	children	H3808	shall not spare	H2347	their eye		
H7355		H1121				H5869		
עִינָם:								

Additional Cross-References

2 Kings 8:12 (Parallel theme): And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child.

2 Chronicles 36:17 (Parallel theme): Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand.

Isaiah 13:16 (Parallel theme): Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished.

Ezekiel 9:10 (Parallel theme): And as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head.

Hosea 13:16 (Parallel theme): 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.

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