

Isaiah 13:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

Analysis

Babylon, 'the glory of kingdoms' and 'beauty of the Chaldees' excellency,' will become like Sodom and Gomorrah—utterly destroyed. The comparison to Sodom emphasizes complete, permanent desolation. Babylon's magnificence—hanging gardens, massive walls, architectural wonders—would be reduced to ruins. What humanity considers glorious and excellent, God can reduce to ash. This warns against trusting in human achievement and glory apart from God.

Historical Context

Babylon's gradual decline after 539 BC led to complete abandonment. By medieval period, its location was uncertain. Modern archaeological ruins verify the prophesied desolation. What was once civilization's crown jewel became rubble. This fulfilled the Sodom comparison—permanent, complete destruction. The pattern repeats: human glory apart from God is temporary. Only God's kingdom and glory endure.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Babylon's fate warn against trusting in human achievement and glory?
2. What does the Sodom comparison teach about permanence of divine judgment?
3. How should we invest in eternal kingdom rather than temporary human kingdoms?

Interlinear Text

וְהָיְתָה הַגְּבֻלָּה
H1961 **And Babylon** H894 **the glory** H6643 **of kingdoms** H4467 **the beauty** H8597 **excellency** H1347

כְּשֵׁדֵי יַם־סוּדָּם
of the Chaldees H3778 **overthrew** H4114 **shall be as when God** H430 **Sodom** H853 H853 **and Gomorrah** H5467

וְגֹמֹרָה:
and Gomorrah H6017

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 19:24 (Parallel theme): Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven;

Daniel 4:30 (Kingdom): The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?

Jeremiah 50:40 (References God): As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the LORD; so shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein.

Jeremiah 49:18 (Parallel theme): As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the LORD, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it.

Jeremiah 51:41 (References Babylon): How is Sheshach taken! and how is the praise of the whole earth surprised! how is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations!

Deuteronomy 29:23 (Parallel theme): And that the whole land thereof is brimstone, and salt, and burning, that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom, and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath:

Amos 4:11 (References God): I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

Zephaniah 2:9 (References God): Therefore as I live, saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Surely Moab shall be as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles, and saltpits, and a perpetual desolation: the residue of my people shall spoil them, and the remnant of my people shall possess them.