

Isaiah 13:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles.

Analysis

God commands raising a banner on a high mountain, summoning armies for judgment. The 'exalted voice' and beckoning hand mobilize forces to enter 'gates of the nobles'—Babylon's palaces. This depicts God sovereignly orchestrating military campaigns. He commands armies (though they don't know Him) to execute His purposes. The imagery shows God's absolute control over international politics and warfare. Even pagan armies unwittingly serve His judicial purposes.

Historical Context

Fulfilled when Medo-Persian armies conquered Babylon (539 BC). Cyrus's forces entered through Euphrates riverbed, breaching gates, exactly as prophesied. These armies didn't worship Yahweh, yet executed His judgment on Babylon. Similarly, God used Babylon against Judah, Assyria against Israel—all demonstrating sovereign control. The pattern continues: God governs all nations and their conflicts to accomplish His purposes.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does God use unbelieving armies and nations to accomplish His judicial purposes?
2. What does divine orchestration of international conflicts teach about God's sovereignty?
3. How should we view current geopolitical events through lens of God's sovereign control?

Interlinear Text

לְלִבְנֵי	בְּרֵרֶת	נִשְׁפָה	שָׁאוֹل	בְּסִירָה	קְרָנָה
H5921	mountain	upon the high	Lift ye up	a banner	exalt
H2022		H8192	H5375	H5251	H7311
לְבָם	בְּשָׁמֶן	בְּשָׁמֶן	בְּשָׁמֶן	בְּשָׁמֶן	בְּשָׁמֶן
H0	unto them shake	the hand	that they may go	into the gates	of the nobles
	H5130	H3027	H935	H6607	H5081

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 5:26 (Parallel theme): And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly:

Jeremiah 51:58 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire; and the people shall labour in vain, and the folk in the fire, and they shall be weary.

Jeremiah 50:2 (Parallel theme): Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces.

Jeremiah 51:25 (Parallel theme): Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the LORD, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out

mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain.

Isaiah 10:32 (Parallel theme): As yet shall he remain at Nob that day: he shall shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.

Isaiah 18:3 (Parallel theme): All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye.

Isaiah 11:12 (Parallel theme): And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

Isaiah 11:15 (Parallel theme): And the LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod.