

Isaiah 13:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there.

Analysis

Babylon's ruins will be inhabited only by wild beasts—'wild beasts of the desert,' 'doleful creatures,' 'owls,' and 'satyrs' (wild goats). This complete reversal from human habitation to animal occupation emphasizes desolation's totality. What once echoed with human voices now hosts only animal cries. The listing of specific creatures paints a vivid picture of abandonment. This demonstrates that God's judgment transforms centers of civilization into wilderness, reversing human dominion where it opposed divine purposes.

Historical Context

Ancient travelers' accounts confirm Babylon's ruins became home to jackals, owls, and other desert creatures. Archaeological sites show how once-grand palaces became animal habitats. The imagery of wild animals in human ruins appears throughout prophetic literature as judgment symbol (Isaiah 34:13-14; Zephaniah 2:14). Babylon's transformation from world capital to wildlife refuge validates prophetic accuracy.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does transformation from human civilization to animal habitat illustrate judgment's completeness?
2. What does this reversal teach about the temporary nature of human achievement apart from God?
3. How do abandoned ruins throughout history witness to the certainty of divine judgment?

Interlinear Text

שׁׁמֶן וְבָצָר	צַיִם	וְמַלְאָה	בְּתִים מִ
shall lie	H8033	But wild beasts of the desert	shall be full
H7257		H6728	H4390
			H1004
וְשָׁעֵיר יִם יְאַתָּה בָּבָן וְתַּשְׁמַם וְשָׁעֵן אַחֲרֵי יִם			
of doleful creatures		shall dwell	and owls
H255		H7931	H1323
			H3284
			there and satyrs
			H8163
שָׁמֶן יְבָקָדְלָה			
shall dance	H8033		
H7540			

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 18:2 (Parallel theme): And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.
