

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

וְכָבְדוּ shall lie H7257	שָׁם H8033	בְּצִי יָם But wild beasts of the desert H6728	וּמָלְא וּ shall be full H4390	בְּתֵיבָהּ there and their houses H1004
אֵלֶּה יָם of doleful creatures H255	וְשָׁם יָדוּ shall dwell H7931	שָׁם H8033	בְּנֵי יָם and owls H1323	וְשָׁמַיִם יָם there and satyrs H8163
וְיָדוּ shall dance H7540	שָׁם H8033			

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.