

Isaiah 13:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the LORD of hosts mustereth the host of the battle.

Analysis

The chapter opens with 'the burden of Babylon' (v.1), then Isaiah describes hearing 'a noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people.' This is no ordinary army but a tumultuous gathering of kingdoms and nations. The phrase 'the LORD of hosts mustereth the host of the battle' reveals this is divine warfare—God assembling His forces for judgment. The Medes and others serve as God's instruments (v.17). This cosmic army gathers not by human command but by divine summons. When God decrees judgment, nations march at His command.

Historical Context

This prophecy against Babylon was delivered when Assyria, not Babylon, dominated the ancient Near East. Babylon's rise to power came later—Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon conquered Assyria (612 BC) and Judah (586 BC). Yet Babylon itself fell to the Medes and Persians in 539 BC, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy delivered 150+ years earlier. This demonstrates prophetic foreknowledge—Isaiah saw Babylon's rise and fall before either occurred. God's sovereignty over empires is absolute: He raises up, and He tears down.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does God's use of pagan nations as His instruments of judgment reveal His absolute sovereignty?
2. What does prophetic fulfillment centuries after prediction teach about trusting God's promises for the future?

Interlinear Text

קול	קוֹמ וִן	בְּהָרִים	דָּמ וֹת	עַם	כְּ ב
The noise	of a multitude	in the mountains	like	people	as of a great
H6963	H1995	H2022	H1823	H5971	H7227
קול	שֹׂא וִן	מַמְלָכֹת	גוֹיִם	נֶאֱסַף יִם	יְהוָה
The noise	a tumultuous	of the kingdoms	of nations	gathered together	the LORD
H6963	H7588	H4467	H1471	H622	H3068
אֶבְרָ	מִפְּקֵי ד	אֶבְרָ	מִלְחָמָה:		
of hosts	mustereth	of hosts	of the battle		
H6635	H6485	H6635	H4421		

Additional Cross-References

Joel 3:14 (References Lord): Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.

Joel 2:25 (Parallel theme): And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.

