

Isaiah 14:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;

Analysis

'They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms?' Those who view the fallen king's corpse look intently ('narrowly look'—stare, gaze closely) and ponder in astonishment: 'Is THIS the one?' The question expresses shocked disbelief. This wretched corpse—this is the tyrant who terrorized nations? This insignificant remains—this is the conqueror who shook kingdoms? The verb 'consider' (bin) means to understand, discern, recognize—they're trying to reconcile past terror with present insignificance. Death and defeat reveal the emptiness behind all earthly pretensions. What seemed great proves small; what seemed terrible proves pitiable.

Historical Context

Throughout history, the deaths of tyrants have produced such reactions—Hitler's body, Mussolini's corpse, Ceausescu's execution. Those who wielded terrifying power appear pathetically human in death. The contrast between living terror and dead insignificance prompts observers to question how such limited humans exercised such devastating power. The answer is always the same: pride, violence, and spiritual darkness empower human tyranny, but death strips away pretense, revealing mere mortality. Revelation 18:9-19 describes similar reaction to Babylon's (symbolic) fall: those who profited from her stand in stunned disbelief.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does the smallness of the dead tyrant warn against fearing earthly powers more than God?
2. What does the shocked question 'Is this the man?' teach about death revealing truth that life's power conceals?

Interlinear Text

רָא יְיָ They that see H7200	אֶל יְיָ H413	יִשְׁגּוּ יָחוּ thee shall narrowly look H7688	אֶל יְיָ H413	יִתְבּוֹן נוֹ upon thee and consider H995
הֵן הִיא H2088	הָאִישׁ thee saying Is this the man H376	מִרְגָּז יִזְעוּ to tremble H7264	הָאֵץ רָץ that made the earth H776	מִרְעָ יִשׁ that did shake H7493
מַמְלָכוֹת: kingdoms H4467				

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 50:23 (Parallel theme): How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken! how is Babylon become a desolation among the nations!

Psalms 64:9 (Parallel theme): And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing.

Psalms 52:7 (Creation): Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.

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