

Isaiah 14:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities.

Analysis

'Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities.' This is corporate judgment—children pay for fathers' sins. The command to 'prepare slaughter' (literally 'establish a slaughtering place') for the king's children is to prevent dynastic continuation. Three purposes:

1. that they not 'rise' (attain power)
2. not possess the land (inherit)
3. not fill the world with cities (expand empire).

This is dynasty termination: the line must end to prevent evil's perpetuation. Modern readers struggle with children suffering for fathers' sins, yet Scripture balances this with individual responsibility (Ezekiel 18) and recognizes that sin's consequences often affect descendants.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern practice often included killing a defeated king's sons to prevent future rebellion or restoration. When Babylon fell (539 BC), the royal line indeed ended—Belshazzar died, no sons succeeded. The principle extends beyond one dynasty: throughout history, evil regimes' ends often include elimination of the former ruling family. This raises ethical questions but also theological ones:

corporate solidarity means sin affects descendants; judgment sometimes requires breaking evil's intergenerational transmission. The ultimate hope is that Christ's line replaces all earthly dynasties—His kingdom has no end.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 – Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How do we balance corporate judgment (children affected by parents' sins) with individual responsibility before God?
2. What does the termination of evil dynasties teach about God's commitment to ending—not just limiting—wickedness?

Interlinear Text

בְּקָרִים	לְבָנָי	מְטַבָּעַ	בְּעֹז	אֲבוֹתָם
Prepare	for his children	slaughter	for the iniquity	of their fathers
H3559	H1121	H4293	H5771	H1
בְּלֹ	פָּנִים	וְמָלָא	וְאֶצְבָּעַ	תִּבְלַל
that they do not	rise	nor possess	the land	the face of the world
H1077	H6965	H3423	H776	H4390
עָרִים:				H6440
with cities				H8398

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 20:5 (Sin): Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

Matthew 23:35 (Parallel theme): That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

Leviticus 26:39 (Sin): And they that are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them.

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