

Isaiah 16:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Take counsel, execute judgment; make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday; hide the outcasts; bewray not him that wandereth.

Analysis

Moab pleads: "Execute judgment, make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday; hide the outcasts, bewray not him that wandereth." This appeal to Judah shows remarkable role reversal—the proud Moabites now desperately seeking shelter. The phrase "make thy shadow as the night" requests complete concealment, shade so dense it resembles nighttime darkness even at noon. Shadow imagery represents protection, refuge, shelter from judgment's heat. The plea "bewray not" (reveal not/betray not) asks discretion. Reformed theology sees this as depicting all humanity's need for divine refuge—we are spiritual outcasts needing the shadow of the Almighty (Psalm 91:1).

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern customs included obligations to protect refugees seeking sanctuary, though enemies weren't guaranteed such protection. The irony is profound: Moab denied Israel passage during the Exodus (Numbers 20:18-21), now begging Israel for passage and protection. This reversal illustrates God's humbling of the proud through historical circumstances.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Moab's plea illustrate humanity's universal need for divine refuge from judgment?
2. What does this role reversal teach about God's sovereignty in humbling the proud?
3. How does Christ serve as our perfect hiding place from divine wrath?

Interlinear Text

הָבַ יְאוֹ	עֲצָה	עָשׂ וְ	פְּלִילָה	שׁ יֵתִי	כָּל יַל	צֵלְךָ
Take	counsel	execute	judgment	make	as the night	thy shadow
H935	H6098	H6213	H6415	H7896	H3915	H6738
בֵּית וְ	צֶהָר יָם	סִתְּרִי	נִדְחֵי יָם	נִדְ ד	לֹא	
in the midst	of the noonday	hide	the outcasts	not him that wandereth		H408
H8432	H6672	H5641	H5080	H5074		
תִּגְלִי:						
bewray						
H1540						

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 32:2 (Parallel theme): And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

1 Kings 18:4 (Parallel theme): For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.)