

Isaiah 16:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler: for the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land.

Analysis

"Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler." The word "covert" (seter) means hiding place, secret shelter. Protection "from the face of the spoiler" acknowledges a common enemy threatening both nations. The prophecy continues: "the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed"—demonstrating God's multi-level justice. He judges Moab for pride, yet also judges empires that brutalize nations. This reveals that instruments of divine judgment themselves face ultimate judgment.

Historical Context

The 8th-7th centuries BCE saw complex geopolitics as Assyrian expansion threatened all smaller kingdoms, forcing temporary alliances between enemies. The prophecy's fulfillment came as Assyria fell to Babylon (612 BCE), Babylon to Persia (539 BCE)—empires that executed God's judgments facing their own destruction. Archaeological evidence shows widespread devastation across the Levant during this period.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith

Revelation 20:12 – Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does mutual protection between enemies teach about unlikely cooperation under common threats?
 2. How does God's judgment of oppressors demonstrate His perfect justice?
 3. How do empires that execute temporal judgments face ultimate judgment themselves?

Interlinear Text

ל מז ס תר ס מז	מי מז מז מז מז	בְּרֵא נְדָמָה מְזֹאָב נְדָמָה בְּרֵא	dwell H0 Let mine outcasts with thee Moab be thou a covert H0
H1481	H5080	H4124	H1933 H5643

מִפְנִים	שָׁוֵךְ	אֶפְסִים	בְּמִזְבֵּחַ	לָהּ
to them from the face	of the spoiler	H3588	is at an end	for the extortioner

בְּאַרְצָה:	מִן	רַמִּס	תְּמֻוָּה	בָּזָד
out of the land	H4480	the oppressors	are consumed	the spoiler

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 14:4 (Parallel theme): That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!

Isaiah 9:4 (Parallel theme): For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.

Isaiah 51:13 (Parallel theme): And forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?

Malachi 4:3 (Parallel theme): And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.

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