

Isaiah 17:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.

Analysis

'The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.' Despite nations' terrifying power (rushing waters), God rebukes them and they flee. The verb 'rebuke' (gaar) indicates authoritative command silencing opposition. Invincible armies become 'chaff'—worthless husks blown away effortlessly. The imagery shifts from overwhelming flood to insignificant debris scattered by wind. This dramatic reversal demonstrates God's absolute sovereignty—what seems unstoppable to humans is nothing before divine power. The fulfillment came in 701 BCE when Assyria besieged Jerusalem but God destroyed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night (Isaiah 37:36).

Historical Context

The prophecy's fulfillment came during Sennacherib's 701 BCE siege of Jerusalem. After conquering 46 fortified cities in Judah, Assyria surrounded Jerusalem demanding surrender. Hezekiah prayed, Isaiah prophesied deliverance, and God's angel killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers overnight. Sennacherib fled, later assassinated by his sons (Isaiah 37:36-38). His own annals confirm the campaign but notably omit conquering Jerusalem, mentioning only shutting Hezekiah 'like a

caged bird'—tacit admission of failure. This miraculous deliverance demonstrated God's power over seemingly invincible empires, validating Isaiah's prophecies and Reformed theology's emphasis on divine sovereignty.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does God's rebuke transforming overwhelming floods into scattered chaff demonstrate absolute sovereignty?
2. What does this teach about proper perspective on threatening geopolitical forces?
3. How did the 701 BCE deliverance vindicate Isaiah's prophetic ministry and God's covenant faithfulness?

Interlinear Text

לְאֻמֵּי יָם	כִּשּׁוּא וּן	מַיִם יָם	רַבִּים	יִשָּׂא וּן	וְגַ עַר
The nations	like the rushing	waters	of many	shall rush	but God shall rebuke
H3816	H7588	H4325	H7227	H7582	H1605
בָּו	וְגַ ס	מִמֶּרֶם ק	וְגַ רַ	כֶּמֶץ	
H0	them and they shall flee	far off	and shall be chased	as the chaff	
	H5127	H4801	H7291	H4671	
הָרִים	לִפְנֵי י	ר וַח	וּכְגֹלֵג ל	לִפְנֵי י	סוּפָה:
of the mountains	before	the wind	and like a rolling thing	before	the whirlwind
H2022	H6440	H7307	H1534	H6440	H5492

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 9:5 (Parallel theme): Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.

Psalms 1:4 (References God): The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

Job 21:18 (Parallel theme): They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away.

Isaiah 29:5 (Parallel theme): Moreover the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away: yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly.

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