

Isaiah 18:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye.

Analysis

'All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye.' The universal address ('all inhabitants...all dwellers') indicates God's actions affect all nations, not just Israel/Judah. The 'ensign on mountains' (military banner/signal) and trumpet (shofar—warning/assembly call) announce divine action. God signals His intentions to all humanity—His judgments and deliverances occur on history's stage for universal witness. This demonstrates God's actions aren't parochial but cosmic, affecting all peoples. Reformed theology emphasizes God's universal sovereignty—He is Lord of all nations, not merely Israel's tribal deity. All peoples are accountable to Him regardless of covenant relationship.

Historical Context

Ancient warfare used visual signals (banners, fires, flags) on elevated positions and auditory signals (trumpets, horns) to coordinate military movements and warn populations. God uses this familiar imagery to describe His sovereign actions in history. The universal address means all nations will witness God's intervention—whether Assyria's judgment, Jerusalem's deliverance, or Ethiopia's humiliation. Historically, the 701 BCE deliverance had international repercussions—Assyrian and Babylonian records acknowledge the event, and it affected regional geopolitics. God's actions in history aren't hidden but visible to all nations, testifying to His power and sovereignty.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does the universal address teach about God's actions affecting all nations?
2. How do military imagery (ensign, trumpet) communicate God's sovereign historical interventions?
3. In what ways do God's historical acts serve as testimony to all peoples?

Interlinear Text

כָּל	יֹשְׁבֵי י	תֵּב ל	וְשׁ כְּנִי	אָרֶץ
H3605	All ye inhabitants	of the world	and dwellers	on the earth
	H3427	H8398	H7931	H776
כַּנְשָׂא	נִס	הַרִים	תִּרְא ו	וְכִתְּקוּ ע
ye when he lifteth up	an ensign	on the mountains	see	and when he bloweth
H5375	H5251	H2022	H7200	H8628
שׁוֹפָר ר	תִּשְׁמָעוּ:			
a trumpet	hear			
H7782	H8085			

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 5:26 (Parallel theme): And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly:

Isaiah 26:11 (Parallel theme): LORD, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.

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