

Isaiah 18:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.

Analysis

'They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.' The pruned branches become carrion for scavengers—complete waste and judgment. This depicts battlefield imagery: corpses left for birds and beasts, remaining through seasons ('summer...winter'). The comprehensive desolation indicates total defeat without burial—extreme dishonor in ancient culture. This judgment falls on those who opposed God's purposes through political maneuvering apart from divine guidance. The imagery appears throughout Scripture describing God's judgment on rebellious nations (Deuteronomy 28:26; Jeremiah 7:33; Ezekiel 39:4, 17-20). It emphasizes judgment's thoroughness and the dishonor of opposing God.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern warfare regularly left battlefield dead unburied as carrion—both practical (overwhelming numbers) and psychological warfare (terrorizing survivors and warning others). Assyrian reliefs graphically depict piles of enemy corpses, vultures, and dogs. The reference to seasonal permanence ('summer...winter') indicates lasting defeat, not temporary setback. This prophecy was fulfilled in various Ethiopian/Egyptian military defeats by Assyria: Eltekeh

(701 BCE), later campaigns by Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal. The graphic imagery served as warning: opposing God's purposes leads to complete, humiliating defeat. Only alignment with divine will provides security.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What does the carrion imagery teach about the dishonor and completeness of judgment?
2. How do battlefield depictions function as warning against opposing God's purposes?
3. Why is proper burial's absence significant in ancient Near Eastern honor/shame culture?

Interlinear Text

וְיִשְׁזַב	וְיִתְחַדֵּה	וְכָעֵד	בְּרִים	בְּהָמָת
They shall be left	together	and the fowls	of the mountains	and to the beasts
H5800	H3162	H5861	H2022	H929
בְּאָרֶץ	יְהִי	עַל	וְכָל	בְּהָמָת
of the earth	shall summer	and the fowls	and to the beasts	
H776	H6972	H5921	H5861	H3605
בְּאָרֶץ	עַל	תִּמְכַרְתָּ:		
of the earth	shall winter			
H776	H5921	H2778		

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 7:33 (Parallel theme): And the carcases of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray them away.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org