

Isaiah 19:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt, every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts, which he hath determined against it.

Analysis

'And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt, every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts, which he hath determined against it.' Dramatic reversal: formerly mighty Egypt fears tiny Judah. Not because Judah is militarily superior, but because of 'the counsel of the LORD of hosts'—divine purposes associated with Judah terrify Egypt. Mere mention of Judah causes fear—Egypt recognizes God's hand protecting Judah and judging Egypt. This reversal demonstrates that God's presence determines geopolitical realities, not military or economic factors. A weak nation aligned with God's purposes becomes fearsome; a strong nation opposing God becomes terrified. This anticipates how the Church, though apparently weak, conquers mighty empires through spiritual power (Acts 17:6 —'these that have turned the world upside down').

Historical Context

This reversal was fulfilled in 701 BCE when Assyria's massive army was destroyed while besieging Jerusalem (Isaiah 37:36-37). Egypt witnessed what God did defending Judah and recognized divine power. Sennacherib's own annals tacitly acknowledge failure to conquer Jerusalem. This event had lasting impact—surrounding nations recognized Yahweh's power, and Judah's tiny size relative to

Egypt became irrelevant. The principle repeated throughout history: weak believers aligned with God's purposes triumph over apparently superior opposition. Church history shows this pattern—persecuted Christians outlasting Roman Empire, missionaries conquering cultures through gospel, reformers overturning ecclesiastical corruption. Divine presence determines outcomes, not human strength.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What does weak Judah terrifying mighty Egypt teach about divine presence trumping human power?
2. How did the 701 BCE deliverance demonstrate this reversal of natural expectations?
3. In what ways does the Church similarly conquer through spiritual power despite apparent weakness?

Interlinear Text

אֶשׁר כָּל לִחְגָּא לְמִצְרַיִם יְהוָה אֶדְמָתָא ! הִיְתָה	
H1961	H834
And the land of Judah unto Egypt shall be a terror	H3605
H127	H2283
יִזְכֹּר יְהוָה אֶל יוֹ אֵת הַיִּפְחָד	
H2142	H853
every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid	H413
	H6342
הוּא אֲשֶׁר צָבָא וְיְהוָה עֲצַת מִפְּנֵי	
H6440	H834
in himself because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts	H1931
H6098	H6635
יֹעַז עָלָיו:	
H3289	H5921
which he hath determined	

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 14:24 (References Lord): The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:

Daniel 4:35 (Parallel theme): And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?