

Isaiah 21:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge,
O ye travelling companies of Dedanim.

Analysis

The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim.' Arabia receives a judgment oracle. Dedanites (Arabian tribe descended from Abraham through Keturah, Genesis 25:3) are told they'll lodge 'in the forest'—unusual for desert dwellers. This suggests displacement from normal routes and settlements due to invasion or calamity. Trading caravans forced into hiding in whatever cover exists indicates economic and security collapse. Arabia's strategic position along trade routes meant its stability mattered regionally. This prophecy demonstrates God's sovereignty extends to all nations, not just Israel's immediate neighbors. Every people group exists under divine oversight, subject to His judgments and purposes. The specific tribal identification shows detailed divine knowledge of even relatively minor peoples.

Historical Context

Arabian tribes like Dedan engaged in trade caravans connecting Middle East to South Arabia and beyond—incense, spices, precious goods. Assyrian and later Babylonian campaigns disrupted these trade routes, forcing tribes into marginal existence. Sargon II and Sennacherib's annals mention campaigns against Arabian tribes. The prophecy's fulfillment came through these disruptions—caravans unable to operate normally, tribes hiding from imperial armies, trade networks collapsing. This demonstrates that divine judgments affect economic systems broadly, not just military/political targets. Modern parallels include how regional instabilities disrupt trade, force migrations, and collapse economic networks. The

principle remains: God's judgments have comprehensive effects across entire systems, affecting even peripheral participants.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What does judgment on Arabian traders teach about divine sovereignty over all peoples?
2. How do geopolitical judgments cascade into economic disruptions for non-combatants?
3. Why does God reveal detailed knowledge of even relatively minor tribal groups?

Interlinear Text

מִשָּׁא	בְּעֶרְב	בֵּי עֵר	בְּעֶרְב	תֵּל יִנּוּ
The burden	in Arabia	In the forest	in Arabia	shall ye lodge
H4853	H6152	H3293	H6152	H3885
אֲנִי חֹמֶר וְחֵמֶר		דִּדָּנִים:		
O ye travelling companies		of Dedanim		
H736		H1720		

Additional Cross-References

1 Chronicles 1:32 (Parallel theme): Now the sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine: she bare Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And the sons of Jokshan; Sheba, and Dedan.

Genesis 25:3 (Parallel theme): And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim.

Ezekiel 27:15 (Parallel theme): The men of Dedan were thy merchants; many isles were the merchandise of thine hand: they brought thee for a present horns of ivory and ebony.

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