

Isaiah 21:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease.

Analysis

'A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease.' Isaiah receives a 'grievous' (harsh/hard) vision—prophets often distressed by revelations of judgment. 'The treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously'—Babylon's characteristic duplicity now turned against itself. God commands Elam (Persia) and Media to attack—these were the Medo-Persian Empire components that conquered Babylon. 'All the sighing thereof have I made to cease' likely refers to ending the groaning of nations Babylon oppressed. God's judgment on Babylon brings relief to victims. This demonstrates divine justice: oppressors eventually face oppression; treacherous dealers experience treachery. God orchestrates history to punish evil and vindicate victims.

Historical Context

The Medo-Persian alliance under Cyrus conquered Babylon in 539 BCE. Cyrus's own records (Cyrus Cylinder) present the conquest as liberation, claiming Babylon's gods supported him due to Nabonidus's impiety. The prophecy's specific naming of Elam and Media as agents demonstrates precision impossible without divine revelation—these nations weren't obvious conquerors 150 years prior. The

'sighing' that ceased included exiled Jews, whom Cyrus released (Ezra 1), and other oppressed peoples. Babylon's fall was celebrated by its victims as divine justice. This pattern repeats throughout history: oppressive empires eventually fall, often to forces they despised. God's justice operates certainly, if not always immediately.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What does treacherous Babylon experiencing treachery teach about divine justice's poetic nature?
2. How did Babylon's fall bring relief to oppressed nations?
3. Why does God specifically name Elam and Media as conquest agents?

Interlinear Text

חַז וְתִּזְכֹּר	קֶשֶׁה הַ	הִגִּיד	לִי	בִּזְיוֹן	בִּזְיוֹן
vision	A grievous	is declared	H0	dealeth treacherously	dealeth treacherously
H2380	H7186	H5046		H898	H898
וְשׂוֹד דָּ	וְשׂוֹד דָּ	עֲלֵי	עֵילָם	צֹרֵךְ	מִדִּיָּה
and the spoiler	and the spoiler	Go up	O Elam	besiege	O Media
H7703	H7703	H5927	H5867	H6696	H4074
אֲנָחַת הַ	הַשְּׁבִיטִי:				
all the sighing	thereof have I made to cease				
H585	H7673				

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 33:1 (Parallel theme): Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee.

Jeremiah 49:34 (Parallel theme): The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against Elam in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, saying,

Isaiah 24:16 (Parallel theme): From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.

Psalms 60:3 (Creation): Thou hast shewed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.

Revelation 13:10 (Parallel theme): He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Daniel 5:28 (Parallel theme): PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.