

Isaiah 24:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The city of confusion is broken down: every house is shut up,
that no man may come in.

Analysis

The city of confusion is broken down—qiryat tohu (קִרְיַת תְּהוֹ) literally means "city of emptiness/chaos." Tohu appears in Genesis 1:2 describing pre-creation chaos ("without form")—judgment returns creation to primordial disorder. The city represents human civilization organized in rebellion against God (Gen 11:4, Babel's tower-city). **Broken down** uses shabar (שָׁבַר), depicting violent demolition—walls breached, structures collapsed.

Every house is shut up, that no man may come in—sagar (סָגַר, "shut up") indicates sealing or closing, possibly from plague quarantine (Lev 13:4) or defensive measures during siege. The phrase me-bo (מִבוֹא, "from entering") suggests complete isolation—no commerce, fellowship, or hospitality. The house (bayit, בַּיִת), normally the center of domestic life and security, becomes a prison or tomb. This previews Revelation 18:2's description of fallen Babylon as "the habitation of devils... the hold of every foul spirit."

Historical Context

The 'city of confusion' could reference any rebellious city, but many scholars identify it with Babylon, which Isaiah later depicts extensively (chapters 13-14, 47). Others suggest it represents all cities organized in autonomous rebellion against God. Ancient Near Eastern cities were centers of political power, economic activity, and often idolatrous worship. Their fortified walls provided security—but judgment breaches walls and empties streets. Archaeological evidence from

destroyed ancient cities (Lachish, Hazor, Jerusalem in 586 BC) shows burned houses sealed shut, sometimes with skeletal remains inside—graphic evidence of siege warfare and plague.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does the term 'tohu' (chaos/emptiness from Genesis 1:2) emphasize that judgment un-creates God's ordering work?
2. What does the 'city of confusion' represent in your life—areas organized around autonomous rebellion rather than submission to God?
3. How does this image of houses 'shut up' with no one entering challenge modern confidence in urban civilization and technology?

Interlinear Text

נִשְׁבַּר הַ	קִרְיָת	תְּ הוּ	סָגַר	כָּל	בֵּית
is broken down	The city	of confusion	is shut up	H3605	every house
H7665	H7151	H8414	H5462		H1004

מִבּוֹאֵי:

that no man may come in

H935

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 18:2 (Parallel theme): And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

