

Isaiah 24:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the fires, even the name of the LORD God of Israel in the isles of the sea.

Analysis

Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the fires (בְּאֻרִים, ba'urim)—This difficult phrase has sparked interpretive debate. The Hebrew אֹר (ur) can mean light, fire, or regions of light (east). Some translations render it 'in the east' (NIV), others 'in the fires' (KJV), still others 'in the valleys of light.' The ambiguity may be intentional: whether in fires of affliction or distant eastern lands, God deserves glory.

If 'fires' is correct, it commands worship through suffering—glorifying God not despite trials but in them. If 'east,' it parallels 'isles of the sea' (west), creating merism (totality through extremes): from east to west, glorify the LORD. Either way, the verse demands universal, unconditional praise.

Even the name of the LORD God of Israel (שֵׁם־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, shem-Yahweh Elohei Yisrael)—The 'name' represents God's revealed character, His reputation, His covenant identity. **In the isles of the sea** (בְּאֵי הַיָּם, be'iyei hayam) refers to Mediterranean coastlands and distant shores—Gentile territories. This prophesies Gentiles worshiping Israel's covenant God, fulfilled in the church's global spread.

Historical Context

The 8th century BC prophet envisions worship transcending ethnic and geographic boundaries—revolutionary for ancient Israel's particularistic context. While Israel often viewed YHWH as their national deity, prophets increasingly proclaimed Him

as universal sovereign deserving all nations' worship. Paul quotes similar themes when explaining Gentile inclusion (Romans 15:9-12). The early church saw these 'isles' prophecies fulfilled as the gospel reached Cyprus, Crete, Malta, and eventually Rome and beyond. By the 2nd century AD, Christianity had spread throughout Mediterranean coastlands exactly as Isaiah envisioned.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does the command to glorify God 'in the fires' challenge comfortable Christianity that expects blessing without suffering?
2. What does it mean to glorify God's 'name'—His revealed character and reputation—rather than merely using His name in worship?
3. How should Isaiah's vision of coastlands worshiping Israel's God inform Christian missions and cross-cultural evangelism today?

Interlinear Text

עַל	כִּי	בְּאֵרִים	כְּכֹד וְ	יְהוָה	בְּאֵיִל	הַיָּם
H5921	H3651	in the fires	Wherefore glorify	of the LORD	in the isles	of the sea
		H217	H3513	H3068	H339	H3220
שֵׁם	יְהוָה	אֱלֹהֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל:			
even the name	of the LORD	God	of Israel			
H8034	H3068	H430	H3478			

Additional Cross-References

Malachi 1:11 (References Lord): For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every

place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.

Isaiah 42:4 (Parallel theme): He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

Isaiah 60:9 (References God): Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the LORD thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.

Isaiah 51:5 (Parallel theme): My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust.

Isaiah 49:1 (References Lord): Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.

Isaiah 42:10 (References Lord): Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof.