

Isaiah 25:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defenced city a ruin: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built.

Analysis

For thou hast made of a city an heap (כִּי שָׁמַתָּ מִעִיר לְגַל, ki samta me'ir legal)—The Hebrew גַּל (gal, heap) means a pile of ruins, rubble. God actively reduced a proud city to waste. **Of a defenced city a ruin** (עִיר מִבְצָר לְמַפֵּלָה, ir mivtsar lemapelah)—Even fortified cities (מִבְצָר, mivtsar, fortress-cities thought impregnable) collapse into ruins (מַפֵּלָה, mapelah, ruin, downfall).

A palace of strangers to be no city (אֶרְמוֹן זָרִים מִעִיר, armon zarim me'ir)—The foreigners' palace ceases to be a city at all, so thorough is the destruction. **It shall never be built** (לֵעוֹלָם לֹא יִבָּנֶה, le'olam lo yibaneh)—Perpetual desolation, never restored. This judgment is final and irrevocable.

The identity of this city is debated—Babylon? A composite representing all God-opposing powers? The ambiguity may be intentional: every proud, oppressive system eventually falls to divine judgment. Revelation uses similar imagery for 'Babylon the great' (Revelation 18:2, 21).

Historical Context

Isaiah's audience knew fortified cities seemed invincible—thick walls, strategic locations, military might. Yet history records their falls: Babylon (539 BC to Persia), Nineveh (612 BC to Babylon), Tyre (332 BC to Alexander). Each appeared permanent, yet 'never rebuilt' describes many ancient sites—archaeologists excavate heap ruins exactly as Isaiah prophesied. This vindicated God's word and

warned proud powers: human strength cannot withstand divine judgment. Jesus prophesied similar destruction for Jerusalem (Luke 19:44), fulfilled in 70 AD when Rome reduced the city to rubble. The lesson: every human system opposing God will ultimately become a 'heap.'

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What modern 'fortified cities' (systems of power, wealth, influence) appear permanent but will ultimately fall under divine judgment?
2. How does God's destruction of oppressive systems ('palace of strangers') demonstrate His justice and care for the oppressed?
3. What does 'it shall never be built' teach about the finality and completeness of God's judgments against evil?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	שָׁמַעְתָּ	יָמַע יִר	לֵגָ ל	קִרְיָה	בְּצוּרָה	לְמַפֵּלָה
H3588	For thou hast made	of a city	an heap	city	of a defenced	a ruin
	H7760	H5892	H1530	H7151	H1219	H4654
אֶרֶם וּן	זָרִים	יָמַע יִר	לְעוֹלָם	לֹא	יִבְנֶה:	
a palace	of strangers	of a city	it shall never	H3808	be built	
H759	H2114	H5892	H5769		H1129	

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 13:22 (Parallel theme): And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.

Isaiah 17:1 (Parallel theme): The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap.

Isaiah 25:12 (Parallel theme): And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls shall he bring down, lay low, and bring to the ground, even to the dust.

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