

Isaiah 26:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

LORD, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.

Analysis

"LORD, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them." This verse continues the theme of willful blindness receiving ultimate judgment. **"LORD, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see"** (יהָה/YHWH ramah yadkha bal-yechezyun)—ramah yadkha means "Your hand is lifted up," signifying God's power raised for action, either to strike in judgment or deliver His people. Bal-yechezyun (they will not see) indicates willful blindness to God's obvious activity. Even when God's hand is visibly raised, the wicked refuse to acknowledge His work.

"But they shall see, and be ashamed" (וְיָרְאֻוּ וְבַשְׁׂוּ/yechezu veyevoshu)—eventually their blindness will be overcome. Yechezu (they shall see) uses the same verb, but now forced seeing rather than willful blindness. Veyevoshu (and be ashamed) means to be put to shame, confounded, disappointed, humiliated. What they refused to see voluntarily, they will see involuntarily and be ashamed. **"For their envy at the people"** (מִקְנָאת עָז/qin'at am)—qin'at means jealousy, envy, zeal. They envied God's people, resented God's favor toward them, and opposed His purposes.

"Yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them" (אַף־אֵשׁ צָרִיךְ תְּאַכְּלָם) (af-esh tzareykha tokhlem)—af (yea, indeed) emphasizes what follows. Esh (fire) represents God's consuming judgment. Tzareykha (Your enemies) identifies them

by their hostility to God. Tokhlem (shall devour them) uses the verb "to eat, consume, destroy utterly." The fire prepared for God's enemies will consume those enemies themselves—a grim irony of self-destructive rebellion.

Historical Context

Throughout Israel's history, enemies who opposed God's people ultimately faced divine judgment—Egypt, Assyria, Babylon. Each empire that lifted itself against God was brought down. This pattern continues through church history—persecuting powers eventually fall while the church survives. The verse anticipates final judgment when every knee will bow and every tongue confess Christ's lordship (Philippians 2:10-11), including those who refused to see His majesty. Revelation 20:15 describes the lake of fire consuming God's enemies. What begins as willful blindness ends in forced recognition too late for repentance.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What does it reveal about human depravity that people can refuse to see God's hand even when 'lifted up' in obvious action?
2. How should the certainty of eventual forced recognition and shame motivate evangelism and warning?
3. What is the relationship between envy of God's people and opposition to God Himself?

Interlinear Text

בָּרוּךְ יְהֹוָה הָיְתָה הַדָּבָר כִּי מִתְּהִלָּה
the LORD is lifted up when thy hand H1077 but they shall see but they shall see
H3068 H7311 H3027 H2372 H2372

אַתָּה יְהֹוָה יְהֹוָה יְהֹוָה יְהֹוָה
and be ashamed for their envy at the people H637 yea the fire of thine enemies
H954 H7068 H5971 H784 H6862

תִּאְכַּלְתָּם:
shall devour
H398

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 10:27 (Parallel theme): But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

Isaiah 5:24 (References Lord): Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

Micah 5:9 (Parallel theme): Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off.