

Isaiah 26:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

Analysis

Divine Theophany for Judgment: The phrase "the LORD cometh out of his place" (Hebrew הִנֵּה יְהוָה יוֹצֵא מִמְּקוֹמוֹ, hinneh Yahweh yotse mimqomo) depicts God leaving His heavenly dwelling to execute judgment on earth. Similar language appears in Micah 1:3, emphasizing the fearsome nature of divine intervention.

Purpose of Coming: The infinitive לִפְקֹד (lifqod, "to punish") can mean "to visit" or "to attend to," here with negative connotation—divine visitation for judgment.

The phrase עוֹן יֹשְׁבֵי-הָאָרֶץ (avon yoshev-ha'arets, "iniquity of the inhabitants of the earth") indicates comprehensive judgment—not just Israel but all earth-dwellers.

Earth's Witness: "The earth also shall disclose her blood" (Hebrew וְגִלְתָּה הָאָרֶץ אֶת-דַּמָּהּ, v'gil'tah ha'aretz et-damah) personifies earth as revealing hidden murders, crimes covered but not forgotten. The verb גָּלָה (galah, "disclose/reveal") suggests uncovering what was concealed. **Eschatological Vision:** This prophecy points to final judgment when all hidden sin will be exposed and justice fully executed.

Historical Context

Isaiah's Apocalypse (Chapters 24-27): This section, dated to the 8th century BC during Isaiah's ministry, contains prophecies of universal judgment and ultimate restoration. Unlike Isaiah's oracles against specific nations, these chapters envision worldwide judgment, suggesting an eschatological or end-times focus.

Ancient Near Eastern Context: In the ancient world, unpunished bloodshed was believed to pollute the land (Genesis 4:10, Numbers 35:33). The concept of earth "disclosing her blood" reflects the belief that innocent blood cried out for justice. Isaiah's prophecy assures that no injustice escapes God's notice, and all hidden crimes will ultimately be brought to light and judged.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What is the significance of God "coming out of his place" rather than judging from heaven?
2. How does the earth "disclosing her blood" relate to biblical concepts of justice and the land being defiled by innocent bloodshed?
3. What does this passage teach about God's knowledge of hidden sins and ultimate accountability?
4. How should the certainty of coming judgment affect how believers live and pursue justice now?
5. In what ways does this prophecy find fulfillment historically, and what aspects remain future/eschatological?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	הִנֵּה	יְהוָה	יֵצֵא	מִמְקוֹמוֹ	לִפְקֹד
H3588	H2009	For behold the LORD	cometh out	of his place	to punish
		H3068	H3318	H4725	H6485
עוֹן	יֹשֵׁב	הָאֲרֶץ	עַל יוֹ	וְגִלָּתָהּ	
for their iniquity	the inhabitants	of the earth	H5921	also shall disclose	
H5771	H3427	H776		H1540	
הָאֲרֶץ	אֶת	דַּם יְהוָה	וְלֹא	תִכָּסֶה	עַל וְ
of the earth	H853	her blood	H3808	and shall no more cover	H5750 H5921
H776		H1818		H3680	
הָרוּגֶיהָ:					
her slain					
H2026					

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 18:4 (References Lord): For so the LORD said unto me, I will take my rest, and I will consider in my dwelling place like a clear heat upon herbs, and like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.

Isaiah 13:11 (Sin): And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

Job 16:18 (Blood): O earth, cover not thou my blood, and let my cry have no place.

Revelation 16:6 (Blood): For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.