

Isaiah 27:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Yet the defenced city shall be desolate, and the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness: there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof.

Analysis

Yet the defenced city shall be desolate, and the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness: there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof. After promises of restoration (vv.2-9), this verse describes ongoing desolation of enemy cities. **The defenced city** (ir betsura, עיר בְּצוּרָה, fortified city) likely refers to hostile capitals like Samaria, Damascus, or symbolically to all God-opposing powers. **Desolate...forsaken...like a wilderness** (badad...ne'ezav...kamidbar, בָּדָד...נֶעְזַב...כַּמִּדְבָּר) emphasizes complete abandonment.

The image of domestic animals grazing in ruins—**there shall the calf feed...lie down...consume the branches**—depicts pastoral peace replacing urban power. Ruins return to nature, cattle graze where armies once drilled. This judgment is permanent, contrasting with Israel's temporary exile. Isaiah 5:17 similarly pictures lambs grazing in ruins of the wealthy's estates. Babylon's prophesied desolation (Isaiah 13:19-22) where wild animals dwell rather than humans exemplifies this. Revelation 18 applies similar imagery to spiritual Babylon's fall.

Historical Context

Ancient fortified cities seemed invincible—massive walls, strategic locations, military might. Yet history proved Isaiah right: Samaria fell (722 BC), Damascus

conquered, Babylon destroyed (539 BC then gradually abandoned), Nineveh obliterated (612 BC). Archaeological tells (ruin mounds) throughout the Middle East testify to once-great cities now desolate. Rome fell, Constantinople fell, all earthly powers eventually crumble. Only God's kingdom remains forever (Daniel 2:44).

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What does the desolation of seemingly invincible 'defenced cities' teach about earthly power and security?
2. How should the temporary nature of all human kingdoms affect believers' priorities and allegiances?
3. What modern 'fortified cities' (institutions, ideologies, powers) does this verse warn will eventually fall?

Interlinear Text

עִיר כְּי	בְּצוּרָה	בְּדֵד	בְּנֵה	מְשָׁלָהּ
H3588				
city	Yet the defenced	shall be desolate	and the habitation	forsaken
H5892	H1219	H910	H5116	H7971
וְנִעְזְבָה	כַּמִּדְבָּר	יִרְעֶה שָׂם	עַל גֵּל	וְשָׂם
		H8033		H8033
and left	like a wilderness	feed	there shall the calf	
H5800	H4057	H7462	H5695	
וְיָרַב י	וְכָל הַ	סַעֲפֵיהֶ:		
and there shall he lie down	and consume	the branches		
H7257	H3615	H5585		

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 17:2 (Parallel theme): The cities of Aroer are forsaken: they shall be for flocks, which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid.

Isaiah 17:9 (Parallel theme): In that day shall his strong cities be as a forsaken bough, and an uppermost branch, which they left because of the children of Israel: and there shall be desolation.

Jeremiah 26:6 (Parallel theme): Then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth.

Jeremiah 26:18 (Parallel theme): Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest.

Micah 3:12 (Parallel theme): Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest.