

Isaiah 28:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.

Analysis

And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. God explicitly cancels the false covenant of verse 15. **Your covenant with death shall be disannulled** (ve-kupar beritkem et-mavet, וְכִפֵּר בְּרִיתְכֶם אֶת־מַوֵּת, and your covenant with death shall be annulled/atoned) uses kapar (כִּפֵּר), often translated "atone" but here meaning "annulled, disannulled, made void." Their death-pact is canceled. **And your agreement with hell shall not stand** (ve-chozechem et-she'ol lo yaqum, וְחִזְקַתְכֶם אֶת־שָׁאֹל לֹא תָקֻם, and your vision/pact with Sheol shall not rise/stand) emphasizes total failure of their false security.

When the overflowing scourge shall pass through (repeating v.15's phrase) shows the judgment they thought exempt from will indeed come. **Then ye shall be trodden down by it** (vihyitem lo le-mirmas, וְהִיִּתְם לֹא לְמִרְמָס, you shall become to it a trampling)—not protected but crushed underfoot. Political alliances cannot save from divine judgment. Egypt, their supposed ally, fled before Babylon. Only covenant with God through Christ saves from death and hell. Jesus defeated death (1 Corinthians 15:54-57) and has keys of hell (Revelation 1:18). All other covenants are worthless parchment.

Historical Context

History vindicated Isaiah. Judah's alliance with Egypt failed; Jerusalem fell to Babylon (586 BC). Leaders who trusted political savvy were trampled by invaders. In AD 70, Jewish leaders' strategies failed before Rome. Every generation learns: covenants with death don't protect from death. Only Christ's New Covenant, sealed in His blood, conquers death and hell. Those outside Christ remain under death's power (Hebrews 2:14-15). No political, economic, or religious system except Christ defeats these ultimate enemies.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does the certainty of false covenants being 'disannulled' teach about trusting anything other than God?
2. How has Christ made a true covenant defeating death and hell, unlike the false agreements Isaiah condemns?
3. What false securities are you tempted to trust that will not stand when life's 'overflowing scourge' comes?

Interlinear Text

רִכְבָּם	בְּרִיתְכֶם	אֶת	מִתְּנִתָּה	מִתְּנִתָּה	אֶת
shall be disannulled	And your covenant	H854	with death	and your agreement	H854
H3722	H1285		H4194	H2380	
וְלֹא שָׁא וְלֹ	תַּקְמִים	שׁוֹטֵף	כִּי		
with hell	shall not stand	scourge	when the overflowing	H3588	
H7585	H6965	H7752	H7857		
יַעֲבֵר רֹ	לֹא וְיַחֲי יַחֲם	לִמְרֹמָסָה			
shall pass through	H1961	H0	then ye shall be trodden down	H4823	
H5674					

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 7:7 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.

Isaiah 8:10 (Parallel theme): Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us.

Isaiah 28:15 (Covenant): Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves:

Isaiah 28:3 (Parallel theme): The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet:

Daniel 11:40 (Parallel theme): And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.