

# Isaiah 29:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion.

## Analysis

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**It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty** (וְקַיָּה בַּאֲשֶׁר יִחְלֶם בְּרַעַב וְהַבָּה אָכֵל וְקַיִץ וְקִיקָּה) (vehayah ka'asher yachalom hara'ev vehineh okhel veheyqits vereyqah nafsho). Isaiah intensifies the dream metaphor with visceral hunger imagery. The ravenous man dreams of feasting but wakes to **his soul is empty** (וְקִיקָּה נְפָשָׁה) (reyqah nafsho)—his נְפָשָׁה (nefesh, soul/appetite) remains void. **Or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite** (וְהַבָּה שִׁיר וְנְפָשָׁה שׁוֹקְקָה) (vehineh ayef venafso shoqeqah)—he's שִׁיר (ayef, exhausted) and his soul שׁוֹקְקָה (shoqeq, craves/longs).

**So shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion**—the armies came to plunder, to satisfy their imperial appetite for conquest and treasure. Instead, they wake to devastating loss, their hunger for Jerusalem's wealth utterly unsatisfied. Their confident expectations of victory prove as illusory as a starving man's dream-feast.

## Historical Context

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Sennacherib's campaign aimed to enrich Assyria through tribute and plunder. His annals boast of taking 'thirty talents of gold, eight hundred talents of silver' from Hezekiah. Yet he failed to capture Jerusalem itself or depose Hezekiah—his primary goals unfulfilled. The dreamed feast of total conquest turned to the empty awakening of military catastrophe.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. How do God's enemies' confident expectations prove as empty as dream-food?
2. What does this teach about the futility of opposing God's purposes?
3. When have your own plans, made without God's direction, proven as unsatisfying as a dream-meal?

## Interlinear Text

## Additional Cross-References

**Isaiah 44:12** (Parallel theme): The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint.

**Psalms 73:20** (Parallel theme): As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.