

# Isaiah 30:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.

## Analysis

**One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one**—This reverses Deuteronomy 32:30's covenant blessing where "one could chase a thousand." Instead of supernatural multiplication of Israel's strength, there is supernatural multiplication of their terror. The Hebrew word **rebuke** (גַּעֲרָה/ge'arah) can mean a threatening roar or battle cry—a single enemy soldier's shout sends a thousand Israelites fleeing.

**Till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain** (לְתָרֵן/toren)—a solitary flagpole or signal mast, stripped bare, isolated, visible to all. **And as an ensign on a hill** (וְנֵס/nes)—a military standard or rallying flag. The image is desolate: once-mighty Judah reduced to a lonely pole on a barren hilltop, a monument to judgment, not victory. Yet nes also points forward—Isaiah later prophesies Messiah as an ensign/banner for the peoples (Isaiah 11:10).

## Historical Context

This prophecy was literally fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar's armies decimated Judah in 586 BC, leaving Jerusalem a desolate ruin. The covenant curses of Leviticus 26:36-37 came to pass: "the sound of a driven leaf shall chase them." The few survivors were left isolated in a devastated land, visible reminders of God's judgment against covenant rebellion.

## Related Passages

---

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

---

1. When has disobedience turned God's promised blessings into their opposite in your experience?
2. What does it feel like to be a 'beacon' of warning to others through your failures?
3. How does the dual meaning of 'ensign' (judgment and Messiah) reveal God's redemptive plan?

## Interlinear Text

---

מֵתָה	גָּעָב	תַּמְפִינִי	אַפִּתָּה	אַלְמָנִי	מֵפִינִי	גָּעָב	תַּמְפִינִי	אַפִּתָּה	מֵתָה
<b>thousand</b>	<b>One</b>	<b>at</b>	<b>the rebuke</b>	<b>One</b>	<b>at</b>	<b>the rebuke</b>	<b>of five</b>		
H505	H259	H6440	H1606	H259	H6440	H1606	H2568		
רְאֵשׁ	עַל	פָּתָח	נַעֲמָנִים	נַעֲמָנִים	פָּתָח	עַל	רְאֵשׁ	עַל	פָּתָח
<b>shall ye flee</b>	<b>till ye be left</b>	<b>as a beacon</b>	<b>upon the top</b>						
H5127	H5704	H518	H3498	H8650	H5921	H7218			
רְאֵשׁ	עַל	פָּתָח	הַגְּבֻשָּׁה:	הַגְּבֻשָּׁה:	רְאֵשׁ	עַל	רְאֵשׁ	עַל	פָּתָח
<b>of a mountain</b>	<b>and as an ensign</b>	<b>on an hill</b>							
H2022	H5251	H5921	H1389						

## Additional Cross-References

---

**Deuteronomy 28:25** (Parallel theme): The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

**Deuteronomy 32:30** (Parallel theme): How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up?

**Leviticus 26:36** (Parallel theme): And upon them that are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth.

**Joshua 23:10** (Parallel theme): One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the LORD your God, he it is that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you.

**Leviticus 26:8** (Parallel theme): And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.

**Proverbs 28:1** (Parallel theme): The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.