

# 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

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**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** (נִפְעָרָה/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** (תֹּרֶן/toren)—a solitary flagpole or signal mast, stripped bare, isolated, visible to all. **And as an ensign on a hill** (נֶס/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

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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

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

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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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

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חֲמִשָּׁה	גִּבּוֹר	אֶחָד	אֶחָד	גִּבּוֹר	אֶחָד	אֶחָד	אֶחָד
thousand	One	at	the rebuke	One	at	the rebuke	of five
H505	H259	H6440	H1606	H259	H6440	H1606	H2568
וְיָנֻסוּ	עַד	אִם	נֹתְרֶתָם	כֵּתִיבָה	עַל	רֹאשׁ	
shall ye flee	H5704	H518	till ye be left	as a beacon	H5921	upon the top	
H5127			H3498	H8650		H7218	
הַגִּבּוֹרָה:	עַל	וְכִי	הָהָר				
on an hill	H5921	and as an ensign	of a mountain				
H1389		H5251	H2022				

## Additional Cross-References

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**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.