

Isaiah 30:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For through the voice of the LORD shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod.

Analysis

For through the voice of the LORD shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod (כִּי־מִקּוֹל יְהוָה יִחַת אֲשׁוּר בַּשֶּׁבֶט יַכֶּה)—The verse shifts from general judgment (vv. 27-30) to specific target: Assyria. The verb yechat (be shattered, dismayed) indicates total defeat. God's qol (voice) alone destroys them—no human army needed. The irony: Assyria, who 'smote with a rod' (ba-shevet yakkeh), receives her own medicine. She was God's shevet apo (rod of His anger, Isaiah 10:5) disciplining Israel; now God disciplines the discipliner.

This verse embodies lex talionis (law of retaliation) on national scale: the oppressor experiences the oppression he inflicted. Assyria terrorized nations with brutal warfare; God terrorizes Assyria with mere voice. Isaiah 37:36-37 records fulfillment: the angel of the LORD killed 185,000 Assyrians in one night without Israel lifting a weapon. Sennacherib fled in shame. This historical event typifies final judgment when Christ speaks and armies collapse (Revelation 19:15, 21). The lesson: instruments of judgment aren't exempt from judgment. Nations God uses to punish others will themselves be punished if they exceed their mandate or glory in violence. The executioner is accountable for how he executes.

Historical Context

Assyria dominated the ancient Near East (8th-7th century BC) through calculated terror—mass deportations, impalement, flaying captives alive. They besieged Jerusalem in 701 BC under Sennacherib. Isaiah prophesied their destruction; it

came that very night (2 Kings 19:35-36). Assyria never recovered, eventually falling to Babylon (612 BC). God's 'voice' destroyed them as prophesied—no human army could claim credit.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does God hold His instruments of judgment (like Assyria) accountable for how they execute His purposes?
2. What does Assyria's defeat teach about the limits of military power when confronting divine decree?
3. How should believers view oppressive powers: as operating independently or as operating within God's sovereign permission?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	מִקֵּץ וּלְ	יְהוָה	יִכָּתֵל	אֲשֶׁר וּרְ
H3588	For through the voice	of the LORD	be beaten down	shall the Assyrian
	H6963	H3068	H2865	H804
בַּשֵּׁבִי	יָכָה:			
with a rod	which smote			
H7626	H5221			

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 9:4 (Parallel theme): For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.

Isaiah 10:5 (Parallel theme): O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation.

Isaiah 11:4 (Parallel theme): But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

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