

Isaiah 31:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.

Analysis

And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear (וְסָלַעַן מִמַּגּוֹר יַעֲבוֹר, vesal'o mimmagor ya'avor)—he will pass over to his סָלַע (sela, rock, stronghold) מִן־מַגּוֹר (min-magor, from fear, terror). **And his princes shall be afraid of the ensign** (וְחָתוּ מִנֵּס שָׂרָיו, vechattu mines saraw)—his שָׂרִים (sarim, princes, commanders) will חָתָה (chatat, be terrified, dismayed) from נֵס (nes, banner, ensign). **Saith the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem** (נְאֻם־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר־אֹר לֹו בִירוּשָׁלַם, ne'um-YHWH asher-ur lo veTsiyon vetannur lo viYerushalaim)—Yahweh declares He has אֹר (ur, fire, light) in Zion and תַּנּוּר (tannur, oven, furnace).

Sennacherib's retreat is terror-driven—his stronghold becomes a refuge from overwhelming fear. Even commanders panic at God's נֵס (nes)—possibly the banner of divine judgment or perhaps Jerusalem itself as God's ensign. The concluding phrase is remarkable: Yahweh's אֹר (ur, fire) dwells in Zion. This fire could be refining fire (purifying His people) or consuming fire (judging enemies). The תַּנּוּר (tannur, furnace) suggests God's holy presence that burns away impurity. Hebrews 12:29 echoes: 'For our God is a consuming fire.'

Historical Context

After the angel struck 185,000 Assyrian soldiers, Sennacherib fled to Nineveh (Isaiah 37:37). His retreat was ignominious—the mighty conqueror running in terror. The fire/furnace imagery connects to God's presence: pillar of fire, Sinai's

flames, glory filling Temple. God's presence in Zion meant both protection for inhabitants and terror for enemies. The same fire that warms also burns.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How is God's presence simultaneously comfort to His people and terror to His enemies?
2. What does it mean that God has His 'fire' and 'furnace' in Jerusalem—His purifying and judging presence?
3. When have you experienced God's 'fire'—either refining your impurities or defending you from enemies?

Interlinear Text

וְסִלְעוֹ	מִמֶּגֶד וּר	יָעֵב וּר	וְיָחַת ו	מִן ס		
to his strong hold	for fear	And he shall pass over	shall be afraid	of the ensign		
H5553	H4032	H5674	H2865	H5251		
שָׁכַן יוֹ	נֹאֵם	יְהוָה	אֲשֶׁר	א וּר	לּוֹ	בְּצִיּוֹן
and his princes	saith	the LORD	H834	whose fire	H0	is in Zion
H8269	H5002	H3068		H217		H6726
וְתֵנּוּ וּר	לּוֹ	בִּירוּשָׁלַם:				
and his furnace	H0	in Jerusalem				
H8574		H3389				

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 29:6 (References Lord): Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.

Malachi 4:1 (References Lord): For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

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