

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 (וְסָלַע מִמְּגֹר יְאָבוֹר, vesal'o mimmagor ya'avor)—he will pass over to his **סֶלָע** (selā, rock, stronghold) (מִמְּגֹר, from fear, terror). **And his princes shall be afraid of the ensign** (וְחַטְטוּ מִינְסָרָיו, vechattu mines saraw)—his **שָׂרִים** (sarim, princes, commanders) will **חָתַת** (chatat, be terrified, dismayed) from **נֵס** (nes, banner, ensign). **Saith the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem** (בָּאָמֵן-יְהָוָה אֲשֶׁר-אָוָר לוֹ, ne'um-YHWH asher-ur lo veTsiyon vetannur lo viYerushalaim)—Yahweh declares He has **אָוָר** (ur, fire, light) in Zion and **תָנָנָר** (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 **אָוָר** (ur, fire) dwells in Zion. This fire could be refining fire (purifying His people) or consuming fire (judging enemies). The **תָנָנָר** (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

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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