

Isaiah 32:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briars;
yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city:

Analysis

Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers (על אֶדְמָת עַמִּי קָרֵץ) —on the land (adamah, ground, land) of my people, קָרֵץ (qots, thorns) and שָׁמֵר (shamir, briars) will (alah, come up, spring up). **Yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city** (כִּי עַל-כָּל-בָּתִי מִשְׁׁוֹשָׁן) —on all houses of joy (masos, joy, gladness) in the joyous (alizah, joyous, exultant) city.

Thorns and briers evoke Genesis 3:18—curse-consequences of sin. Productive land reverting to wilderness signals divine judgment. Cultivated ground becoming thorn-infested wasteland shows covenant curses enacted (Deuteronomy 29:23, Hosea 10:8). The contrast heightens: 'houses of joy' become desolate. The 'joyous city' (Jerusalem) will be silenced. Lamentations 5:15 mourns: 'The joy of our heart is ceased; our dance is turned into mourning.' Jeremiah 7:34 warned: 'Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah... the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness.'

Historical Context

After Babylonian destruction (586 BC), Jerusalem lay in ruins for decades. Nehemiah (445 BC) found walls broken, gates burned (Nehemiah 1:3). Agricultural land abandoned during exile reverted to wilderness. Houses stood empty or rubble-filled. What was a joyous city of pilgrimage festivals became desolate. The

thorns and briars weren't metaphorical—literal vegetation reclaimed abandoned sites.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What 'thorns and briars'—consequences of sin—have you seen spring up in areas of disobedience?
2. How does the image of cultivated land reverting to wilderness picture spiritual backsliding?
3. What 'houses of joy' in your life need protection through faithfulness lest they become desolate?

Interlinear Text

עַל כֵּן תַּגַּל הַשְׁמָרָה
H5921 Upon the land of my people shall come up
H127 H5971 H6975 H8068 H5927 H3588 H5921

כֹּל בָּתִים קָרְבָּנִים וְשָׁמְשָׁנִים
H3605 yea upon all the houses of joy city in the joyous
H1004 H4885 H7151 H5947

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 22:2 (Parallel theme): Thou that art full of stirs, a tumultuous city, a joyous city: thy slain men are not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle.

Isaiah 34:13 (Parallel theme): And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls.

Isaiah 7:23 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass in that day, that every place shall be, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings, it shall even be for briars and thorns.

Hosea 9:6 (Parallel theme): For, lo, they are gone because of destruction: Egypt shall gather them up, Memphis shall bury them: the pleasant places for their silver, nettles shall possess them: thorns shall be in their tabernacles.

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