

Isaiah 32:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks;

Analysis

Because the palaces shall be forsaken (ארמון נטש, ki-aron nutash)—the armon, palace, citadel) will be נטש (natash, forsaken, abandoned). **The multitude of the city shall be left** (המון עיר עזב, hamon ir uzav)—the המון (hamon, multitude, throng) of the עיר (ir, city) will be עזב (azav, left, abandoned). **The forts and towers shall be for dens for ever** (עופל בבחן כייה בעד מערות עד-עולם) (ofel vabachan hayah ve'ad me'arot ad-olam)—fortifications become מערות (me'arot, caves, dens) עד-עולם (ad-olam, forever). **A joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks** (משוש פראים מרעיה עדרים, mesos pera'im mir'eh adarim).

Urban centers become wilderness—palaces abandoned, populations exiled, fortifications repurposed as animal dens. The phrase עד-עולם (ad-olam, forever) uses prophetic hyperbole: seemingly permanent desolation. Wild asses (פראים, pera'im) roaming palace ruins depicts complete reversal from human civilization to animal wilderness. Zephaniah 2:13-15 prophesies similarly about Nineveh: 'flocks shall lie down... the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge... desolation shall be in the thresholds.' Jeremiah 9:11 warns Jerusalem will become 'a den of dragons.'

Historical Context

After 586 BC, Jerusalem's palaces, Temple, walls were destroyed or burned. Population was killed or exiled. Archaeological evidence shows abandonment layers—destruction debris, squatter occupation, minimal rebuilding. Though

Jerusalem was eventually restored (Ezra-Nehemiah), the prophecy conveys the totality of judgment. Jesus later prophesied similar destruction (AD 70): 'There shall not be left here one stone upon another' (Matthew 24:2).

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does seeing great cities or institutions fall into ruin demonstrate the fragility of human achievement apart from God?
2. What 'palaces' (achievements, securities, structures) in your life might be less permanent than they appear?
3. How should awareness that all earthly things can become 'dens for wild asses' affect priorities and investments?

Interlinear Text

בַּ	אַ	רָ	ם	וְ	נַ	עַ	רִ	בַּ	אַ	בְּ
H3588	Because	the	palaces	shall	be	forsaken	the	multitude	of	the
	H759			H5203			H1995		H5892	H5800
the	forts	and	towers	בְּ	עַ	דְּ	בְּ	מַ	עַ	וְ
H6076		H975		H1961	H1157		H4631	שְׁרָ	H5704	H5769
מַ	שְׁ	וְ	עַ	לְ	מְ	עַ	דְּ	עַ	וְ	בְּ
of	wild	asses	a	pasture	shall	be	for	ever	a	joy
H6501		H4829		H5739		H4631		H5704		H4885

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 25:2 (Parallel theme): For thou hast made of a city an heap; of a defenced city a ruin: a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built.

Isaiah 24:12 (Parallel theme): In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction.

Isaiah 24:10 (Parallel theme): The city of confusion is broken down: every house is shut up, that no man may come in.

Isaiah 27:10 (Parallel theme): Yet the defenced city shall be desolate, and the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness: there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof.

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