

Isaiah 32:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When it shall hail, coming down on the forest; and the city shall be low in a low place.

Analysis

When it shall hail, coming down on the forest (וְבָרָד בָּרָדָת הַיָּעֵר) uvavad beredet haya'ar)—when בָּרָד (barad, hail) comes down בָּרָד (yarad) on the יָעֵר (ya'ar, forest). **And the city shall be low in a low place** (וְבָשְׂפֵלָה תִּשְׁפֵל הַעִיר) uvashiflah tishpal ha'ir)—the עִיר (ir, city) will be שָׁפֵל (shafel, brought low, humbled) in שְׂפֵלָה (shefelah, lowland, humiliation).

This difficult verse likely describes judgment on God's enemies while His people dwell securely (v. 18). The hail falling on the 'forest' may symbolize armies or nations (forests often represent kingdoms in prophetic literature). The city being 'brought low' could reference Babylon or other oppressing powers. While God's people experience peace (vv. 17-18), His enemies face humiliation. Revelation 16:21 describes eschatological hail judgment: 'great hail out of heaven... and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail.' God protects His own while judging enemies.

Historical Context

Hail as divine judgment appears throughout Scripture—Egypt's plagues (Exodus 9:18-26), Joshua's victory (Joshua 10:11), future tribulation (Revelation 8:7, 11:19, 16:21). Ancient peoples understood hail as divine weapon—destructive, uncontrollable by humans, falling from heaven. When God's people dwell securely, it's often because God has judged or restrained their enemies. Israel's peace in Canaan required Canaanite conquest.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does God's judgment on enemies enable His people's peace—are these realities separable?
2. What does it mean that God simultaneously blesses His people and judges His enemies?
3. How should awareness of coming judgment on wickedness affect our gospel urgency?

Interlinear Text

תַּשְׁפַּל	וּבְשִׁפְלָה	הַ	בְּרֵ דָת	בְּרֵ עַר	תַּחַת	וּבְרֵ דָת	תַּשְׁפַּל
When it shall hail	coming down	on the forest	in a low place	shall be low			
H1258	H3381	H3293	H8218	H8213			

בָּבּוּרָה:
and the city
H5892

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 28:17 (Parallel theme): Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.

Isaiah 30:30 (Parallel theme): And the LORD shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones.

Isaiah 28:2 (Parallel theme): Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.

Isaiah 26:5 (Parallel theme): For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust.

Zechariah 11:2 (Parallel theme): Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen; because the mighty are spoiled: howl, O ye oaks of Bashan; for the forest of the vintage is come down.

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