

Isaiah 33:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee! when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee.

Analysis

Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled (הוֹי שׁוֹדֵד וְאַתָּה לֹא שְׁדוּד, hoy shoded ve'atah lo shadud)—woe to the שׁוֹדֵד (shoded, spoiler, plunderer, devastator) who wasn't שְׁדוּד (shadad, spoiled, plundered). **And dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee** (וּבִגְדָה וְלֹא־בִגְדוּ בּוֹ, uvoged velo-vagedu vo)—who acts treacherously (בִּגְדָה, bagad) though none was treacherous to you. **When thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee** (כִּתְּמַחַךְ וְיִבְגְּדוּ־בְךָ שׁוֹדֵד תִּשָּׂא, kahatimka shoded tushad kanelotka livgod yivgedu-vakh).

The eighth and final woe targets the treacherous destroyer—most likely Assyria, though applicable to any oppressor. The poetic justice is precise: lex talionis applied by divine hand. The spoiler will be spoiled; the betrayer will be betrayed. Assyria's empire, built on brutality and covenant-breaking, will experience the same. Revelation 13:10 states: 'He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword.' Judgment matches crime. Habakkuk 2:8 declares similar principle: 'Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant of the people shall spoil thee.'

Historical Context

Assyria conquered through terror—impaling captives, flaying alive, mass deportations, burning cities. They broke treaties routinely, invaded former allies. Isaiah prophesies divine reversal: Assyria will experience its own medicine. In 612 BC, Babylon and Medes destroyed Nineveh brutally—the spoiler spoiled. Sennacherib's assassination by his own sons (681 BC, Isaiah 37:38) exemplifies treachery repaid. God ensures moral justice even when delayed.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does this principle—spoilers being spoiled, betrayers betrayed—reveal God's moral governance?
2. When have you seen oppressors eventually experience the oppression they inflicted?
3. How should certainty of divine justice affect our response to current injustice and persecution?

Interlinear Text

ה וי	תושׁ ד	ל א	תושׁ ד
Woe	and thou wast not spoiled		and thou wast not spoiled
H1945	H7703	H859 H3808	H7703
	וּלְאִי	וּבְגָדוֹ	ב ו
and dealest treacherously		and dealest treacherously	
H898	H3808	H898	H0
כְּהַתְּמַךְ	תושׁ ד	תושׁ ד	
with thee! when thou shalt cease	and thou wast not spoiled	and thou wast not spoiled	
H8552	H7703	H7703	
כְּנִלְתֶּךָ	וּבְגָדוֹ	וּבְגָדוֹ	
and when thou shalt make an end	and dealest treacherously	and dealest treacherously	
H5239	H898	H898	
כִּי:			
H0			

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 7:2 (Parallel theme): For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

Isaiah 24:16 (Parallel theme): From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.

Revelation 17:17 (Parallel theme): For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

Isaiah 21:2 (Parallel theme): A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth. Go up, O Elam: besiege, O Media; all the sighing thereof have I made to cease.

Isaiah 10:12 (Parallel theme): Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.

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