

Isaiah 33:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shalt not see a fierce people, a people of a deeper speech than thou canst perceive; of a stammering tongue, that thou canst not understand.

Analysis

Thou shalt not see a fierce people (אֶת־עַם נֹעֵז לֹא תִרְעֶה, et-am no'az lo tir'eh)—you won't see (רָאָה, ra'ah) the נֹעֵז (no'az, fierce, barbarous) people. **A people of a deeper speech than thou canst perceive; of a stammering tongue, that thou canst not understand** (עַם עִמְקֵי שִׁפְהַת מְשֻׁמוֹעַ נִלְעָג לְשׁוֹן אֵין בִּינָה, am imqey safah mishmoa nil'ag lashon eyn binah)—people of obscure (עִמְקֵי, amoq, deep, unintelligible) speech (שִׁפְהַת, safah), stammering (לִעָג, la'ag, mocking, foreign) tongue (לְשׁוֹן, lashon) without understanding (בִּינָה, binah).

The Assyrians—fierce warriors speaking incomprehensible Akkadian—will disappear from Judah's sight. Their foreign, harsh language terrorized (Isaiah 36:11-13 shows language as weapon). But God promises: no more foreign oppressors. Deuteronomy 28:49-50 threatened judgment via 'a nation... whose tongue thou shalt not understand'—covenant curse. Deliverance means curse-reversal. Ultimately, Pentecost reversed Babel—Holy Spirit gave understanding across language barriers (Acts 2:4-11), anticipating new creation where all worship in unity.

Historical Context

Assyrian was a Semitic language related to Hebrew but distinct—intelligible phrases but overall incomprehensible to average Judeans. Assyrian soldiers' harsh battle cries, commanders' intimidating speeches terrorized. After deliverance,

Assyrians withdrew—no more foreign garrison, no barbarian speech. Later, under Ezra-Nehemiah, Hebrew was re-established. Jesus's Kingdom transcends linguistic barriers—gospel proclaimed in all tongues (Mark 16:15, Revelation 7:9).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What 'fierce people' with incomprehensible motives or speech have threatened you, and how has God delivered?
2. How does the promise of no more barbarous oppressors anticipate new creation's peace?
3. How should the gospel's power to unite across languages shape your view of cultural and linguistic diversity?

Interlinear Text

אֶת H853	עַם a people H5971	נוֹעַז a fierce H3267	לֹא H3808	תִּרְאֶה Thou shalt not see H7200	עַם a people H5971	עֲמִיק י of a deeper H6012	שִׁפָּה speech H8193
מִשְׁמַע וְעַתָּה than thou canst perceive H8085		נִלְעַג of a stammering H3932		לִשָּׁה tongue H3956	אֵין H369		
בִּינָה: that thou canst not understand H998							

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 28:11 (Parallel theme): For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

Jeremiah 5:15 (Parallel theme): Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the LORD: it is a mighty nation, it is an ancient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say.

Exodus 14:13 (Parallel theme): And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.

2 Kings 19:32 (Parallel theme): Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it.

1 Corinthians 14:21 (Parallel theme): In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.