

Isaiah 33:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And your spoil shall be gathered like the gathering of the caterpillar: as the running to and fro of locusts shall he run upon them.

Analysis

And your spoil shall be gathered like the gathering of the caterpillar (וְאִתְּכֶם אֶסְף־כְּמִשְׁכַּל הַחֲסִיל, ve'usaf shalalkhem osef hechasil)—your שָׁלַל (shalal, spoil, plunder) will be gathered like the אֶסְף־ (osef, gathering) of the חֲסִיל (chasil, caterpillar, locust). **As the running to and fro of locusts shall he run upon them** (כִּמְשַׁקַּי גְּבִים שׁוֹקֵק בּוֹ, kemashaq gevim shoqeq bo)—like the running (שָׁקַק, shaqaq, to run, rush) of גְּבִה (geveh, locusts).

After scattering the Assyrian army (v. 3), Judeans plunder the abandoned camp—like locusts stripping a field. The caterpillar (חֲסִיל, chasil) and locust (גְּבִה, geveh) imagery pictures thorough, swift gleaning. Joel 1-2 uses locust plagues as judgment metaphor. Here, Judah swarms over Assyrian spoil like locusts. Second Kings doesn't record this detail, but Isaiah 37:36 mentions 185,000 corpses—their equipment, supplies, and wealth would be massive. God transforms Judah from besieged victims to plunderers.

Historical Context

Ancient warfare involved plundering defeated enemies. When Assyrians fled, they abandoned siege equipment, weapons, provisions, treasures. Hezekiah had paid enormous tribute (2 Kings 18:14-16), impoverishing Judah. Now Judeans recover far more than was extorted. Exodus 12:35-36 shows similar pattern—Israelites

plundered Egyptians at the Exodus. God enriches His people through enemy wealth (Proverbs 13:22, 'the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just').

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does God sometimes transform loss into gain by giving you the 'spoils' of defeated enemies?
2. What does the locust imagery teach about the thoroughness and speed of God's provision after deliverance?
3. When have you experienced recovery that exceeded what was previously lost?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵסְףָּ	שְׁלֹלָךְ	אֶסָּף	הַחֹסֵי יֵל
shall be gathered	And your spoil	like the gathering	of the caterpillar
H622	H7998	H625	H2625
כַּמְּשֵׁחַ קָ	גִּבֹּרֵי יָם	שָׁלֹחַ קָ	בָּוֹ:
as the running to and fro	of locusts	shall he run	H0
H4944	H1357	H8264	