

Isaiah 40:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

Analysis

The proportional imagery is staggering: all nations are like a drop from a bucket ('mar' - a single drop) and dust on scales (imperceptible weight) to God. This radically relativizes human power and politics—even mighty empires are infinitesimal before God's greatness. The Hebrew 'mishqal' (weight) suggests nations don't even register on God's scales of significance.

Historical Context

For Jews intimidated by Babylon's vast empire, this verse provided perspective: the nation that seemed overwhelming to them was negligible to God, easily removed.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does viewing earthly powers as God sees them change your response to intimidating circumstances?

2. What would change in your life if you truly believed nations are like dust on God's scales?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵתֶם כְּמַה רַבְדָּל מִשְׁמָךְ וְאֵתֶם כְּמַה רַבְדָּל מִשְׁמָךְ
 H2005 Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket as the small dust
 H1471 H4752 H1805 H7834

מִאֵתֶן בְּרֵא נְחַשֵּׁת בְּרֵא אֵתֶם כְּלֵדָה וְאֵתֶם כְּלֵדָה
 of the balance and are counted the isles as a very little thing
 H3976 H2803 H2005 H339 H1851

וְאֵתֶם כְּלֵדָה וְאֵתֶם כְּלֵדָה
 behold he taketh up

H5190

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 40:22 (Parallel theme): It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in:

Jeremiah 10:10 (Parallel theme): But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation.

Isaiah 29:5 (Parallel theme): Moreover the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away: yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly.

Isaiah 11:11 (Parallel theme): And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

