

Isaiah 5:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat.

Analysis

The imagery of lambs feeding in former waste places and strangers eating ruins of the fat depicts complete reversal: covenant people displaced, their inheritance consumed by foreigners. This fulfills covenant curse that others would enjoy their labor (Deuteronomy 28:33). Yet the pastoral scene also hints at eventual restoration when judgment runs its course. The paradox of desolate places becoming pastures suggests God's ability to bring life from death.

Historical Context

Foreign settlers (Samaritans, Edomites) occupied depopulated Judean territory during exile. Post-exilic return faced resistance from these 'strangers' who had claimed the land.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does seeing covenant blessings transferred to 'strangers' warn against presuming on inherited spiritual privileges?

2. What hope exists even in images of judgment for God's restorative purposes?

Interlinear Text

וְרָעוּ	כִּבְשֵׁי יָם	כְּדִבְרֵם	וְחָרְבוּ אוֹת
feed	Then shall the lambs	after their manner	and the waste places
H7462	H3532	H1699	H2723
יְמֵה יֵם	גֵּר יֵם	יֹאכְלוּ:	
of the fat ones	shall strangers	eat	
H4220	H1481	H398	

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 7:25 (Parallel theme): And on all hills that shall be digged with the mattock, there shall not come thither the fear of briers and thorns: but it shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for the treading of lesser cattle.

Zephaniah 2:6 (Parallel theme): And the sea coast shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds, and folds for flocks.

Zephaniah 2:14 (Parallel theme): And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations: both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their voice shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the thresholds: for he shall uncover the cedar work.