

Isaiah 7:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired, namely, by them beyond the river, by the king of Assyria, the head, and the hair of the feet: and it shall also consume the beard.

Analysis

The metaphor of the LORD hiring 'a razor...by them beyond the river...the king of Assyria' to shave Judah's head, beard, and feet depicts total humiliation. Shaving head and beard symbolized disgrace and mourning (2 Samuel 10:4-5); feet may be euphemism for genitals, suggesting complete nakedness and shame. Assyria, Judah's chosen ally (Ahaz's decision), becomes God's instrument of judgment—ultimate irony. This demonstrates that what we trust in apart from God becomes our undoing.

Historical Context

Sennacherib's invasion (701 BC) devastated Judah, conquering 46 cities and besieging Jerusalem. The 'hired razor' metaphor proved grimly accurate as Assyria ravaged the land.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the imagery of total shaving communicate the completeness of judgment's humiliation?
2. What resources or alliances do we 'hire' that God may use as instruments of discipline?

Interlinear Text

בַּיָּם	בַּיָּמִים	בַּיָּמִין	בַּיָּמִין	בַּיָּמִין	בַּיָּמִין
In the same day	H1931	shave	shall the Lord	with a razor	that is hired
H3117		H1548	H136	H8593	H7917
בַּעֲבָר	נָפָר	בַּתְּלֵה	בַּתְּאֵשׁ	אֶת	פָּרָאשׁ
namely by them beyond	the river	by the king	of Assyria	H853	the head
H5676	H5104	H4428	H804		H7218
בְּרֵגֶל יָמִים	בְּגַם	אֶת	פְּזַק	תְּסִפָּה:	
and the hair	of the feet	H1571	H853	the beard	and it shall also consume
H8181	H7272			H2206	H5595

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 8:7 (Kingdom): Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks:

Isaiah 10:15 (Parallel theme): Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood.

Ezekiel 29:18 (Kingdom): Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it:

