

Isaiah 8:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Analysis

This verse presents a stark paradox: God becomes both sanctuary and stumbling stone. For believers, He is a sanctuary (refuge, protection); for unbelievers, a stone of stumbling. This demonstrates the Reformed doctrine of particular redemption—God's saving purpose is particular, not universal. The 'gin and snare' imagery suggests judgment that traps the unwary. 'Both the houses of Israel' indicates comprehensive judgment affecting northern and southern kingdoms alike. The same gospel that saves some hardens others (2 Corinthians 2:15-16).

Historical Context

Fulfilled when both Israel and Judah stumbled over God's purposes. Israel fell to Assyria in 722 BC; Judah faced similar judgment in 701 BC, and ultimately Babylonian exile in 586 BC. Both kingdoms rejected God's word through the prophets. Ultimately, this prophesies how both Jewish houses stumbled over Christ, the chief cornerstone (Romans 9:32-33; 1 Peter 2:8). Jerusalem's inhabitants represent the covenant community specifically.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How can the same God who is our sanctuary become a stumbling stone to others?
2. What does this paradox teach about the dual effect of the gospel—salvation to some, hardening to others?
3. In what ways do people today stumble over Christ despite His offer of refuge?

Interlinear Text

וְהָיָה	לְמִקְדָּשׁ	וְלֹא בֶן	נֶגֶף	וְלִצֹּר
H1961	H4720	H68	H5063	H6697
And he shall be for a sanctuary	but for a stone	of stumbling	and for a rock	
וְלִמּוֹקֵי	לְפָנָיו	יִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּתֵי	לְשׁוֹנֵי
H4170	H6341	H3478	H1004	H8147
and for a snare	for a gin	of Israel	the houses	to both
וְלִישׁוֹנֵי	בְּתֵי	יִשְׂרָאֵל	לְפָנָיו	וְלִמּוֹקֵי
H3427	H3389			
to the inhabitants	of Jerusalem			

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 2:8 (Parallel theme): And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

Isaiah 28:16 (Parallel theme): Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.

Luke 2:34 (References Israel): And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;

Ezekiel 11:16 (Temple): Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come.

Psalms 11:6 (Parallel theme): Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.

Psalms 69:22 (Parallel theme): Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.

Proverbs 18:10 (Parallel theme): The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

Matthew 13:57 (Parallel theme): And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.