

Isaiah 8:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father,
and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of
Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria.

Analysis

The prophecy's time marker is precise: before the child reaches early speech (12-24 months), Assyria would plunder Damascus and Samaria. This specificity demonstrates God's absolute sovereignty over historical events and timelines. The 'riches of Damascus and spoil of Samaria' represents total defeat—religious, economic, and political subjugation. Assyria served as God's instrument of judgment against nations threatening His people. This illustrates the Reformed doctrine that God governs all nations and uses even pagan empires to accomplish His purposes.

Historical Context

This prophecy was fulfilled with remarkable precision. In 732 BC, Tiglath-Pileser III conquered Damascus, killing King Rezin and deporting the population (2 Kings 16:9). He also captured much of northern Israel. In 722 BC, Shalmaneser V and Sargon II completed Samaria's destruction. The 'king of Assyria' was initially Tiglath-Pileser III, later succeeded by these rulers. Assyrian annals record the immense plunder taken from these conquests, confirming Isaiah's prophecy.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does the precise fulfillment of this prophecy strengthen your confidence in God's control of history?
2. What does God's use of Assyria teach about His sovereignty over pagan nations and their rulers?
3. How can we trust God's timing in our own lives, knowing He controls all historical events?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	בְּטָרִם	יָדַע	הֵנָּה עַר	קָרָא	אָבִי
H3588	H2962	shall have knowledge	For before the child	to cry	My father
		H3045	H5288	H7121	H1
וְאִמִּי	יִשָּׁא אֵן	אֶת	חַיִּל	דָּמָשְׁקִי	וְאֶת
and my mother	shall be taken away	H853	the riches	of Damascus	H853
H517	H5375		H2428	H1834	
שָׁלַל	שְׁמֶר וֶן	לִפְנֵי י	מֶלֶךְ	אַשּׁוּרִי	
and the spoil	of Samaria	before	the king	of Assyria	
H7998	H8111	H6440	H4428	H804	

Additional Cross-References

Romans 9:11 (Parallel theme): (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)