

Isaiah 9:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry; and he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied: they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm:

Analysis

The horror intensifies: desperate hunger leads to cannibalism. 'Snatch on the right hand' and 'eat on the left' suggest frantic, indiscriminate consumption—they devour anything available. 'Eat every man the flesh of his own arm' is likely metaphorical for self-destruction and possibly literal for siege cannibalism. 'They shall not be satisfied' indicates insatiable hunger—both physical and spiritual. This represents the ultimate degradation—humanity reduced to beast-like savagery through abandoning God.

Historical Context

Literally fulfilled during Samaria's siege (2 Kings 6:28-29 describes cannibalism during an earlier Syrian siege, prefiguring worse under Assyria). Siege warfare regularly produced such horrors in ancient Near East. Josephus records similar atrocities during Jerusalem's AD 70 siege. Lamentations 4:10 confirms cannibalism during Jerusalem's 586 BC siege. These unspeakable acts vindicate God's judgment—societies that reject Him descend to unimaginable depravity.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does this extreme imagery illustrate humanity's capacity for evil when restraining grace is removed?
2. What does the insatiable hunger represent spiritually for those who seek satisfaction apart from God?
3. How do we maintain human dignity and morality when societies around us descend into chaos?

Interlinear Text

עַל	וְיִגְזַּר	עַל	יְמִינֵךְ	וְיַעֲשֶׂה	וְאָכְלֶה:	עַל
And he shall snatch	H5921	on the right hand	H3225	H7456	and he shall eat	H5921
	H1504					H398
אֶל	אֶל	שָׁמֶן	עַל	שָׁבֵעַ	אֶל	בָּשָׂר
on the left hand	H3808			and they shall not be satisfied	every man	the flesh
	H8040			H7646	H376	H1320
וְאָכְלֶה:		וְיַרְעֵז				
of his own arm		and he shall eat				
	H2220					H398

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 49:26 (Parallel theme): And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.