

# Numbers 24:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he looked on the Kenites, and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwellingplace, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock.

## Analysis

**And he looked on the Kenites, and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwellingplace, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock**—The Kenites (קִינִי Qeini, metalworkers/smiths), allied with Israel through Moses' father-in-law Jethro (Judges 1:16; 4:11), received a mixed oracle. Their **dwellingplace** (מוֹשָׁב moshav, habitation) was **strong** (עֵיטָן eitan, enduring/permanent), and their **nest in a rock** (קַן בַּסֵּלָא qan basela) suggested secure, elevated positioning like cliff-dwelling birds.

Despite apparent security, verse 22 predicts eventual captivity, teaching that no physical fortress substitutes for covenant relationship with God. Jesus warned against building on sand versus rock (Matthew 7:24-27)—the issue isn't location but foundation. The Kenites' metalworking skills provided economic security, but couldn't prevent later Assyrian captivity.

## Historical Context

The Kenites were nomadic metalworking clans descended from Cain (possibly) or simply named for their trade. Moses' father-in-law Jethro/Reuel was Kenite (Judges 1:16), establishing positive relationship with Israel. Some Kenites accompanied Israel into Canaan (Judges 1:16), while others remained semi-nomadic on Israel's margins.

## Related Passages

---

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

---

1. How does the Kenites' 'strong dwellingplace' that ultimately failed teach about false security in material prosperity?
2. What 'nests in rocks' (seemingly secure positions) might you trust more than relationship with God?
3. How does Kenite alliance with Israel (through Jethro) contrast with their predicted captivity, teaching that proximity to God's people doesn't guarantee protection without personal covenant relationship?

## Interlinear Text

---

וַיִּרָא	אֶת	הַקֵּינִי י	וַיֶּשֶׂא	מִשְׁלֹ	וַיֹּאמֶר	אֵיתָן
And he looked	H853	on the Kenites	and took up	his parable	and said	Strong
H7200		H7017	H5375	H4912	H559	H386
מִוֶּשֶׁבְךָ	וְשִׁימ	בְּסֶלֶע	קִנְיָ:			
is thy dwellingplace	and thou puttest	in a rock	thy nest			
H4186	H7760	H5553	H7064			

## Additional Cross-References

---

**Genesis 15:19** (Parallel theme): The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites,