

Psalms 48:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail.

Analysis

Fear gripped the kings: 'trembling took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail.' The comparison to labor pains emphasizes both the intensity and the involuntary nature of their terror. They cannot control their fear--it seizes them as irresistibly as childbirth seizes a mother.

Historical Context

The imagery of labor pains for sudden judgment appears throughout prophetic literature (Isaiah 13:8; Jeremiah 6:24). It describes overwhelming, inescapable distress that transforms the powerful into the helpless.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. Why is the imagery of labor pains particularly apt for describing enemies' terror?
2. How does this reversal--warriors experiencing helpless pain--demonstrate divine power?

Interlinear Text

יְרֵא	אָחֲזוּ	שָׁם	וְיָלַד	כְּיֹלְדָה:
Fear	took hold	H8033	upon them there and pain	as of a woman in travail
H7461	H270		H2427	H3205

Additional Cross-References

Hosea 13:13 (Parallel theme): The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him: he is an unwise son; for he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children.