

Zephaniah 2:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations: both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their voice shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the thresholds: for he shall uncover the cedar work.

Analysis

And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her—Nineveh's streets would become pastures. **All the beasts of the nations** likely means 'wild animals of every kind' rather than military nations.

Both the cormorant and the bittern (qa'at ve'qippod)—These are water birds, possibly pelicans and hedgehogs (translations vary). **Shall lodge in the upper lintels of it**—Birds nesting in abandoned palace doorframes depict utter desolation. **Their voice shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the thresholds**—Instead of human voices, bird calls. Instead of royal processions, rubble. **For he shall uncover the cedar work**—Nineveh's palaces featured cedar paneling (imported from Lebanon). Exposure to weather meant total ruin. Isaiah 34:11-15 uses similar imagery for Edom's judgment.

Historical Context

Excavations at Nineveh (modern-day Mosul, Iraq) confirm the prophecy's accuracy. The site was buried under dirt mounds for centuries, inhabited only by animals. Ashurbanipal's palace, once glorious with cedar and alabaster, lay in ruins exactly as described—exposed 'cedar work' visible in archaeological remains.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What does the image of birds nesting in palace ruins teach about the temporary nature of human glory?
2. How does God's specific attention to details like 'cedar work' demonstrate the precision of His prophetic word?
3. Where do you see modern 'Ninevehs'—powerful institutions or systems that seem permanent but face inevitable judgment?

Interlinear Text

וְיָרַבֵּץ וְבַתּוֹךְ הַיּוֹם כָּל עֲדָרִים חַיְתוֹ נְגַדְּלָה
shall lie down in the midst And flocks of her all the beasts of the nations
H7257 H8432 H5739 H3605 H2416 H1471

בְּצִבְתָּר יְהִי יְלִינָה בְּכַפְתָּר יְהִי כָּל
both the cormorant and the bittern in the upper lintels shall lodge
H1571 H1571 H7090 H3730 H3885

וְיָשֹׁגֵר קְרַב בְּמִלְוָן חַבְבָּלָה בְּתַבְעָן
of it their voice shall sing in the windows desolation shall be in the thresholds
H6963 H7891 H2474 H2721 H5592

עֲרָבָה אֲרַבְתְּ הַכְּרָב
the cedar work for he shall uncover
H3588 H731 H6168

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 22:14 (Parallel theme): That saith, I will build me a wide house and large chambers, and cutteth him out windows; and it is cieled with cedar, and painted with vermillion.

Amos 9:1 (Parallel theme): I saw the Lord standing upon the altar: and he said, Smite the lintel of the door, that the posts may shake: and cut them in the head, all of them; and I will slay the last of them with the sword: he that fleeth of them shall not flee away, and he that escapeth of them shall not be delivered.

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