

Amos 3:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thus saith the LORD; As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear; so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria in the corner of a bed, and in Damascus in a couch.

Analysis

The shepherd metaphor is devastatingly ironic: **As the shepherd taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear** (פֶּאֲשֶׁר יָצַל הַרְאֵת מִפְּיו הַאֲרֵיה) —these aren't rescued sheep but proof of death for the shepherd's legal defense (Exodus 22:13). Similarly, **so shall the children of Israel be taken out** (כִּי יָנַצְלֻ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) —a remnant survives, but barely. **In the corner of a bed, and in Damascus in a couch** describes luxury furniture fragments—all that remains of their opulence.

The Hebrew **יָנַצְלָה!** (yinatz'lu) typically means 'delivered/rescued,' but here it's bitterly ironic: they're 'delivered' only as evidence of destruction. Like torn sheep parts, Israel will be reduced to fragments—a warning that affluence cannot protect from judgment.

Historical Context

This prophecy was fulfilled multiply: the Assyrian conquest left only remnants, the Babylonian exile scattered survivors, and even today the ten northern tribes remain 'lost.' The reference to Damascus (Syria) and luxury couches emphasizes that those trusting in wealth and political alliances would be first to suffer.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does this verse challenge the modern belief that material prosperity indicates God's favor?
2. What does it mean to be 'saved' yet only as a fragment—bearing permanent marks of judgment?
3. How should the reality of judgment as a consuming 'lion' shape Christian urgency in evangelism?

Interlinear Text

בָּרָע	הַ	יָנָצַל	וְ	כִּאֵשֶׁר	יְהֹוָה	אָמַר	כִּי
H7462		H5337		H834	H3068	H3541	
Thus saith	the LORD			be taken out		As the shepherd	
H559				H176		H3651	
מֵ	מֵ	שְׁתַיִם	כְּנֻעַם	אֲזֵל	בְּדַל	אֵזֶן	כִּי
of the mouth	of the lion	two	legs	or a piece	of an ear		
H6310	H738	H8147	H3767	H915	H241		
בְּנֵי	בְּנֵי	לִשְׁבָא	לִשְׁבָא	וְ	בְּשָׁמְרָה	וְ	
be taken out	so shall the children	of Israel	that dwell		in Samaria		
H5337	H1121	H3478	H3427		H8111		
מֵ	שָׁקָר	מֵ	שָׁקָר	בְּ	בְּ	בְּ	
in the corner	of a bed	and in Damascus	in a couch				
H6285	H4296	H1833	H6210				