

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** (כַּאֲשֶׁר יֵצֵיל הָרֶעָה מִפִּי הָאֲרִיָּה, ka'asher yatzil haro'eh mipi ha'aryeh)—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** (כֵּן יִנָּצְלוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל, ken yinatz'lu b'nei yisrael)—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 יִנָּצְלוּ (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.

