

Isaiah 15:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Heshbon shall cry, and Elealeh: their voice shall be heard even unto Jahaz: therefore the armed soldiers of Moab shall cry out; his life shall be grievous unto him.

Analysis

Heshbon and Elealeh's cry reaching to Jahaz (about 20 miles) indicates either extraordinarily loud lamentation or the spread of calamity across the region. The armed soldiers crying aloud reverses expected military bravado—warriors reduced to weeping reveals total devastation. The phrase "his life shall be grievous unto him" (literally "his soul trembles within him") describes existential anguish, not mere physical suffering. This depicts the psychological trauma of military defeat and national collapse. The breakdown of military strength demonstrates that earthly power provides no ultimate security. Reformed theology emphasizes that only covenant relationship with the sovereign God provides true refuge; all other securities are illusions destined to fail under divine judgment.

Historical Context

Heshbon, originally an Amorite capital conquered by Israel (Numbers 21:25-26), became a border city between Israel and Moab. Elealeh and Jahaz were sites of Israel-Moab conflicts. The cities' agricultural wealth (vineyards and summer fruits mentioned in verses 8-9) made them strategic targets. Assyrian military campaigns typically combined psychological warfare (terror) with systematic destruction of economic infrastructure. The reduction of soldiers to tears would have been particularly shameful in ancient warrior cultures that prized stoic courage.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What does the weeping of armed soldiers reveal about the inadequacy of military power as ultimate security?
2. How do God's judgments often expose the futility of what nations trust instead of Him?
3. In what ways should Christ's followers distinguish between earthly security and eternal refuge?

Interlinear Text

וַתִּזְעַק	חֶשְׁבוֹן	וְעַל־עַל הַ	עַד	יַהֲזַח	נִשְׁמָע עַ
shall cry	And Heshbon	and Elealeh	H5704	even unto Jahaz	shall be heard
H2199	H2809	H500		H3096	H8085
קוֹלָם	עַל	כִּי	חֲלָצֵי י	מוֹאָב	יִרְיָעוּ
their voice	H5921	H3651	therefore the armed soldiers	of Moab	shall cry out
H6963			H2502	H4124	H7321
נַפְשׁוֹ	יִהְיֶה	לּוֹ:			
his life	shall be grievous	H0			
H5315	H3415				

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 48:34 (Parallel theme): From the cry of Heshbon even unto Elealeh, and even unto Jahaz, have they uttered their voice, from Zoar even unto Horonaim, as an heifer of three years old: for the waters also of Nimrim shall be desolate.

