

Isaiah 16:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kir-haresh.

Analysis

"My bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kirharesh." The prophet's internal organs "sound" with grief—visceral, physical sorrow. Harp imagery suggests plaintive mourning music. The Hebrew mei (bowels) represents emotion's seat in ancient physiology—deepest feelings. Isaiah's grief matches Moab's, demonstrating that proclaiming judgment and mourning its necessity aren't contradictory. God takes no pleasure in the wicked's death (Ezekiel 33:11), grieving sin's consequences while maintaining justice. This models pastoral theology: ministers must feel judgment's weight, never becoming callous about divine wrath.

Historical Context

Ancient Hebrew understanding located emotions in internal organs (heart, kidneys, bowels) rather than brain. Deep sorrow was described as internal organs being moved or making sound. The harp (kinnor) frequently accompanied lamentations. Kirharesh represents Moab's strength, so mourning for it symbolizes grief over the entire nation. Isaiah's role involved both proclaiming judgment and embodying appropriate response—demonstrating how God's people balance truth and compassion.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does visceral grief over judgment model God's attitude toward the wicked's destruction?
2. What does Isaiah's compassion teach pastors about proclaiming difficult truths?
3. How should Christians balance confidence in God's justice with sorrow over sin's consequences?

Interlinear Text

עַל	כֵּן	מֵעַי	לְמוֹאָב	כַּכֵּן זֹר	יִהְיֶה וְ
H5921	H3651				
		Wherefore my bowels	for Moab	like an harp	shall sound
		H4578	H4124	H3658	H1993
	וְקִרְבִּי	לְקִירְהֶשׁ	חֶרֶשׁ:		
	and mine inward parts	for Kirharesh			
	H7130	H7025	H0		

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 15:5 (Parallel theme): My heart shall cry out for Moab; his fugitives shall flee unto Zoar, an heifer of three years old: for by the mounting up of Luhith with weeping shall they go it up; for in the way of Horonaim they shall raise up a cry of destruction.

Isaiah 63:15 (Parallel theme): Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained?

Jeremiah 48:36 (Parallel theme): Therefore mine heart shall sound for Moab like pipes, and mine heart shall sound like pipes for the men of Kir-heres: because the riches that he hath gotten are perished.

Hosea 11:8 (Parallel theme): How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.

Philippians 2:1 (Parallel theme): If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

Jeremiah 31:20 (Parallel theme): Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD.

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