

Isaiah 17:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The cities of Aroer are forsaken: they shall be for flocks,
which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid.

Analysis

The cities of Aroer (likely referring to cities in the region) are forsaken, becoming pastures for flocks that lie down undisturbed. This vivid image depicts urban centers reverting to pastoral landscape—walls that once protected citizens now shelter only sheep. The phrase 'none shall make them afraid' emphasizes complete desolation; typically shepherds feared bandits or wild animals, but here total depopulation means even flocks graze safely. This agricultural reversal illustrates judgment's thoroughness—civilization replaced by pastoral simplicity. Theologically, it demonstrates that human glory (cities, culture, power) is transient; only God's kingdom endures.

Historical Context

Aroer cities in the Transjordan region were strategic locations controlling trade routes. Assyrian conquest systematically depopulated conquered territories, deporting skilled populations and leaving land underdeveloped. Archaeological surveys show many ancient cities in this region have destruction layers from 8th century BCE followed by abandonment or reduced occupation. The pastoral reversal described here reflects actual historical patterns following Assyrian campaigns—urbanized areas becoming grazing lands as population centers collapsed.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does cities becoming sheep pastures teach about the transience of human civilization?
2. How does depopulation demonstrate judgment's comprehensive nature?
3. In what ways should this warn against trusting in earthly securities like cities and walls?

Interlinear Text

עָזַב וְאֵת	עָרֵי י	עָרֵי ר	לְעֶדְרֵי יִם	תִּהְיֶינָה
are forsaken	The cities	of Aroer	they shall be for flocks	H1961
H5800	H5892	H6177	H5739	
וְיָכַד וְ	וְאֵין	מִמְחִידִם		
which shall lie down	H369	and none shall make them afraid		
H7257		H2729		

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 7:33 (Parallel theme): And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray them away.

Ezekiel 25:5 (Parallel theme): And I will make Rabbah a stable for camels, and the Ammonites a couchingplace for flocks: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

Deuteronomy 2:36 (Parallel theme): From Aroer, which is by the brink of the river of Arnon, and from the city that is by the river, even unto Gilead, there was not one city too strong for us: the LORD our God delivered all unto us:

Numbers 32:34 (Parallel theme): And the children of Gad built Dibon, and Ataroth, and Aroer,

Micah 4:4 (Parallel theme): But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it.

Zephaniah 2:6 (Parallel theme): And the sea coast shall be dwellings and cottages for shepherds, and folds for flocks.

Jeremiah 48:19 (Parallel theme): O inhabitant of Aroer, stand by the way, and espy; ask him that fleeth, and her that escapeth, and say, What is done?

Deuteronomy 3:12 (Parallel theme): And this land, which we possessed at that time, from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, and half mount Gilead, and the cities thereof, gave I unto the Reubenites and to the Gadites.