

Jeremiah 12:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Mine heritage is unto me as a lion in the forest; it crieth out against me: therefore have I hated it.

Analysis

This verse explains divine withdrawal: 'Mine heritage is unto me as a lion in the forest; it crieth out against me: therefore have I hated it.' The shocking imagery presents Israel as a lion roaring defiance against God. 'Crieth out against me' (natenak alay qolah) indicates hostile roaring, not pleading prayer. 'Therefore have I hated it.' The Hebrew *saneti* (שָׂנֵאתִי, hated) must be understood relationally—God's protective love has become wounding abandonment because of Israel's aggression toward Him. Israel treated God as enemy; He responds accordingly.

Historical Context

The lion image inverts expectations—Israel becomes predator rather than protected flock. 'Hatred' in biblical usage often indicates relational distancing rather than emotional antipathy (Malachi 1:2-3, Luke 14:26 uses similar language). God hasn't stopped loving Israel but has withdrawn protective relationship due to their hostile rejection. The forest lion roaring represents covenant people becoming God's opponents.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does the lion imagery capture Israel's aggressive rejection of God?
2. What does divine 'hatred' mean when applied to God's covenant people?

Interlinear Text

הִיְתָה	לִי	נַחֲלָתִי	כְּאַרְיֵה	בְּיַעַר	נֹתֵן	עַל־
H1961	H0	Mine heritage	is unto me as a lion	in the forest	it crieth out	H5921
		H5159	H738	H3293	H5414	
בְּקוֹלִי	עַל	כִּי	שָׂנְאֵתִיָּהּ:			
H6963	H5921	H3651	against me therefore have I hated			
			H8130			

Additional Cross-References

Amos 6:8 (Parallel theme): The Lord GOD hath sworn by himself, saith the LORD the God of hosts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces: therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein.

Hosea 9:15 (Parallel theme): All their wickedness is in Gilgal: for there I hated them: for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house, I will love them no more: all their princes are revolvers.