

Jeremiah 25:36

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

A voice of the cry of the shepherds, and an howling of the principal of the flock, shall be heard: for the LORD hath spoiled their pasture.

Analysis

A voice of the cry of the shepherds, and an howling of the principal of the flock, shall be heard: for the LORD hath spoiled their pasture. The phrase qôl ša'āqat hârō'îm wîlêlat 'abbîrê haššô'n (קֹל צָעַקְתָּ הָרֹויִם וַיָּלַת אֲבִירִי הַצָּאן) depicts the leaders' anguish when judgment arrives. Their confident arrogance turns to desperate wailing. The reason: kî šôdêd YHWH 'et-mar'îtâm (כִּי שׁׂׂדֵד יְהוָה אֶת-מֶרְעִיתָם) (for the LORD has destroyed their pasture).

The pasture imagery continues the shepherd metaphor—leaders lose the land and people they governed. The verb šâdâd (שָׁדַד, destroy/devastate) appears frequently in Jeremiah to describe Babylon's destruction. The leaders' grief comes not from repentance but from loss—they mourn their destroyed power and wealth, not their sin. This demonstrates false grief versus godly sorrow. Paul distinguished these: 'godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation...but the sorrow of the world worketh death' (2 Corinthians 7:10). The leaders' howling was worldly sorrow—grief over consequences without repentance toward God.

Historical Context

When Jerusalem fell and Judah's elite were executed or exiled, survivors reported hearing the cries and lamentations of the once-powerful. The book of Lamentations records this grief: 'How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she

become as a widow! she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary!' (Lamentations 1:1). But this grief focused on lost glory rather than forsaken covenant, proving the leaders had learned nothing even from judgment.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How can we distinguish between worldly sorrow (grief over consequences) and godly sorrow (grief over sin leading to repentance)?
2. What does the leaders' howling when 'their pasture is destroyed' teach about the difference between loving God versus loving what God provides?
3. In what ways might we grieve loss of comfort, status, or security while remaining impenitent toward actual sin?

Interlinear Text

בָּאֵן אָדִיכִים וְיָלֵל תְּכַעַק תְּכַעַק יְמִים קָרְבָּעַן כְּתָבְעַת
A voice of the cry of the shepherds and an howling of the principal of the flock

H6963 H6818 H7462 H3215 H117 H6629

מְרַעִיתָם: אֲתָה הִנֵּה שְׁדֵךְ כִּי
their pasture is heard for the LORD shall be heard hath spoiled

H853 H4830 H3068 H7703 H3588

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 4:8 (References Lord): For this gird you with sackcloth, lament and howl: for the fierce anger of the LORD is not turned back from us.

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